

DEPTHS AND HEIGHTS

NO. 2635

A SERMON
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**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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***“His Son, whom He has appointed Heir of all things, by whom He also made the worlds; who being the brightness of His Glory, and the express image of His Person and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had, by Himself, purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”
Hebrews 1:2.***

I HAVE nothing to do tonight but to preach Jesus Christ. This was the old subject of the first Christian ministers—“Daily in the Temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” When Philip went down to the city of Samaria, he “preached Christ unto them.” When he sat with the Ethiopian eunuch in his chariot, he, “preached unto him, Jesus.” As soon as Paul was converted, “straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues.” For once we count the venerableness of our subject well worthy of mentioning, we shall not be ashamed to preach what the Apostles preached and what martyrs and confessors preached! We hope to proclaim this glorious Gospel of the blessed God as long as we live! And we hope that when this generation of preachers shall have passed away, unless the Lord shall come, there will always be found a succession of men who shall determine to preach nothing “save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

For, after all, this is the subject which men most of all need. They may have cravings after other things, but nothing can satisfy the deep real need of their nature but Jesus Christ and salvation by His precious blood! He is the Bread of Life which came down from Heaven! He is the Water of Life of which, if a man drinks, he shall never thirst again! Hence, it becomes us to be often dwelling upon this theme, for it is most necessary to the sons of men. This is the subject which God the Holy Spirit delights to bless. I am sure that, other things being equal, He honors preaching in proportion to the savor of Christ that is in it! I may preach a great deal about the Church, but the Holy Spirit does not take of the things of Christ to glorify the Church. I may preach doctrine or practice apart from Christ—that would be giving the husk without the kernel—but where Jesus Christ sweetens all and savors all, there will the Holy Spirit delight to rest upon the ministry and make it quick and powerful to the conversion of men! And I am sure, dear Friends, that the preaching of Christ is always sweet in the ears of His own people. “Your

name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love You.” And this theme is most pleasing to God the Father, who loves to hear His Son extolled and exalted. He delights in His Son—and those who delight in Him are friends of God. When Jesus Christ is lifted up, it is as God the Father would have it! It is as the Holy Spirit would have it and, where this is the case, we may expect to have seals to our ministry and souls for our hire!

I want, at this time, as it were, to let Jesus Christ speak for Himself. I cannot speak for Him as He can speak for Himself. Shall I hold my candle to the sun, as if it needed it in order to reveal its light? No, certainly not! And, therefore, I shall, with studied plainness, try to set the text, itself, before you and so to speak of it that you may not so much remember what I have said of it as that you may remember the Subject, Himself. My theme is to be the Savior—the only Savior—the Savior who must save you or else you must perish, “for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” I am about to speak of Him and I think that all who are aware of the necessity of being saved will only want to hear about Him—and to know how they may get to Him and how He may be made their Savior. And if they can but be told this, they will be only too glad to listen!

So, first, I shall speak of *who the Savior is*. Let me read the text to you again. “His Son”—God’s Son—“whom He has appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His Glory, and the express image of His Person, and upholding all things by the word of His power.” That is who Jesus is! Then, in the second place, I shall speak of *what Jesus did*. “When He had by Himself purged our sins.” Then, thirdly, I want to tell you *what He enjoys*. After He had finished His great work of salvation, He “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

I. It is not possible that any language can fully express WHO JESUS IS. Yet, by the Holy Spirit’s gracious teaching, I must tell you what I know of Him.

First, *Jesus is God’s own Son*. What do I know about that wondrous Truth of God? If I were to try to explain it and to talk about the Eternal Sonship, I should but conduct you where I should soon be entirely out of my depth and, very likely, I would drown all that I could tell you in floods of words. Deity is not to be explained, but to be adored—and the Sonship of Christ is to be accepted as a Truth of Revelation and to be apprehended by faith, though it cannot be comprehended by the understanding. There have been many attempts made by the fathers of the Church to explain the relationship between the two Divine Persons, the Father and the Son. But the explanations had better never have been given, for the figures used are liable to lead into mistakes. Suffice it for us to say that in the most appropriate language of the Nicene Creed, Christ is “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God.” He is co-equal with the Father, though how that is, we know not. He stands in the nearest possible relationship to the Father—a relationship of intense love and delight, so that the Father says of Him, “This is My beloved Son.” Yes, He is One with the Father, so that there is no separating them, as He, Himself,

said, in reply to Philip's request, "Show us the Father," "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me."

Let me pause here and say to everyone who is seeking salvation—What a comfort it should be to you that He, who is come to save men, is Divine! Therefore, nothing can be impossible to Him. No, I do not say merely that He is Divine—I will go further and say that He is the Deity itself! Christ Jesus is God and, being God, there can be no impossibilities or even difficulties with Him. He is able to save you, whoever you may be! Though you have gone to the very verge of eternal ruin, you cannot have gone beyond the range of Omnipotence—and Omnipotence is inherent in the Godhead. O dear Friends, rejoice in this wondrous Truth of God—He that was a Babe at Bethlehem, was God Incarnate! He that, being weary, sat on the well at Sychar, was God Incarnate! He that had no where to lay His head was God Incarnate. And it is He who has undertaken the stupendous labor of the salvation of men and, therefore, men may hope and trust in Him! We need not wonder that when angels heard of Christ's coming to earth, they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," for God had taken upon Himself human flesh that He might save the sons of men. So, the first words in our text—"His Son"—are full of good cheer!

Now notice, in the next place, that *Jesus Christ is the "Heir of all things."* Of which Nature of Christ does the Apostle speak in this sentence, "whom He has appointed Heir of all things"? I do not think that Paul, here, separates the two Natures, so as to speak with absolute reference to either one or the other, but he speaks of the Person of Christ, and in that Person there is God, and in that same Person there is most surely and most truly, Man. But we must take this description of Jesus Christ as appointed "Heir of all things" in His Person as Man and as God and Man combined, for, as God, alone, Christ is necessarily, "Heir of all things" without any appointment. But in His complex Person as God and Man conjoined, the Father has appointed Him to be "Heir of all things."

Now, what does this mean but that Christ possesses all things as an heir possesses his inheritance—that Christ is Lord of all things, as an heir becomes lord and ruler among his brethren? This appointment is to be fully carried into effect by-and-by, for, "now we see not yet all things put under Him." Christ is Lord of all the angels—not a seraph spreads his wings except at the bidding of the "Heir of all things." There are no bright spirits, unknown to us, that are beyond the control of the God-Man, Christ Jesus. And the fallen angels, too, are obliged to bow before His Omnipotence. As for all things here below, material substances, men regenerate or unregenerate, God has given Him power over all flesh that He should give eternal life to as many as His Father has given Him. He has put all things under His feet, "and the government shall be upon His shoulders." He is Heir, or Master, and Possessor of all things—let me say, of all sorts of blessings and all forms of Grace, for, "it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." And, as surely as time revolves and you mark the fleeting minutes upon the dial's face, the hour is coming when Christ shall be universally acknowledged as King of Kings and Lord of Lords! Already I seem to hear the shouts go up from every part of the habitable globe and from all Heaven and all space, "Hallelujah! For

the Lord God, Omnipotent, reigns.” All must willingly, or else unwillingly, submit to His sway, for His Father has appointed Him “Heir of all things.”

To my mind, this is another wondrous encouragement to anyone who is seeking salvation. Christ has everything in His hand that is needed in order that He may save you, poor Sinner! Sometimes, when a physician has a sick man before him—suppose it is on board ship—he may have to say to him, “I think I could cure your disease if I could get such-and-such a medicine, but, unfortunately, I have not the drug within my reach.” Or the doctor might have to say to the sufferer, “I believe an operation would effect a cure, but I have not the instruments necessary for it.” Never will the great Physician of souls have to talk like that, for the Father has committed *all things into His hand*. Oh, have we not beheld Him as the Glory of the Father, full of Grace and Truth? You great sinner, you black sinner, Christ is not lacking in power to save you! And if you come and trust yourself in His hands, He will never have to look about to find the balm for your wounds, or the ointments or liniments with which to bind up those putrefying sores of yours! No, He is “Heir of all things.” So again I say, “Hallelujah!” as I preach Him to you as the blessed Savior of sinners, the Son of God, the “Heir of all things.”

Notice, next, that *Jesus Christ is the Creator* “by whom also He made the worlds.” However many worlds there are, we know not. It may be true that all those majestic orbs that stud the midnight sky are worlds filled with intelligent beings. And it is much more easy to believe that they are than that they are not, for, surely, God has not built all those magnificent mansions and left them untenanted! It were irrational to conceive of those myriads of stupendous worlds, vastly bigger than this poor little speck in God’s great universe, all left without inhabitants. But it matters not how many worlds there are—God made them all by Jesus Christ—“All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.”

I see Him standing, as it were, at the anvil of Omnipotence, hammering out the worlds that fly off, like sparks, on every side at each stroke of His majestic arm. It was Christ who was there—“the Wisdom of God and the Power of God,” as Paul calls Him—creating all things! I love to think that He who created all things is also our Savior, for then He can create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me. And if I need a complete new creation—as I certainly do—He is equal to the task! Man cannot create the tiniest gnat that ever danced in the summer evening’s ray. Man cannot create even a single grain of dust, but Christ created all worlds, so He can make us new creatures by the wondrous power of His Grace. O Sinners, see what a mighty Savior has been provided for you and never say that you cannot trust Him! I agree with good Mr. Hyatt who, when he was asked on his deathbed, “Can you trust Christ with your soul?” answered, “If I had a million souls, I could trust them all with Him!” And so may you! If you had as many souls as God has ever created and if you had heaped upon you all the sins that men have ever committed, you might still trust in Him who is the Son of God, “whom He has appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds.”

Now go a little further and see what Christ is next called—*the brightness of His Father's Glory*. Shade your eyes, for you cannot look upon this wondrous sight without being dazzled by it! The Revised Version renders it, “the effulgence of His Glory,” but I do not see much more in that expression than in the word, “brightness.” Some commentators say—and it is not a bad figure, yet we must not push any figure too far—that, as light is to the sun, so is Jesus to the Glory of God. He is the brightness of that Glory, that is to say, there is not any Glory in God but what is also in Christ. And when that Glory reaches its climax, when God the Ever-Glorious is most Glorious, that greatest Glory is in Christ. Oh, this wondrous Word of God—the very climax of the Godhead—the gathering up of every blessed Attribute in all its infinity of Glory—you shall find all this in the Person of the God-Man, Christ Jesus! There is a whole sermon in those words, “the brightness of His Glory,” but I cannot preach it tonight because then I should not get through the rest of my text.

So let us pass on to the next clause. “*And the express image of His Person.*” I said, a minute ago, “Shade your eyes,” but I might now say, “Shut them,” as I think of the excessive brilliance described by these words—“the express image of His Person.” Whatever God is, Christ is—the very likeness of God, the very Godhead of Godhead, the very Deity of Deity is in Christ Jesus—“the express image of His Person.” Dr. John Owen, who loves to explain the spiritual meaning in the Epistle to the Hebrews by the types in the Old Testament, which is evidently what Paul, himself, was doing, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit—explains the brightness of the Father's Glory by a reference to the Shekinah over the Mercy Seat, which was the only visible token of the Presence of God there. An extraordinary brightness is said to have shone forth from between the cherubim.

Now, Christ is God manifesting Himself in His brightness. But, on his forehead, the High Priest wore a golden plate, upon which was deeply engraved in Hebrew letters, the inscription, “Holiness to [or, of,] Jehovah.” Dr. Owen thinks there is a reference in this “express image of His Person”—this cut-out inscription of God, as it were—to that which was on the forehead of the High Priest and which represented the glorious wholeness or holiness of Jehovah, which is His great Glory. Well, whether the Apostle referred to this or not, it is for you and me to take off our shoes in the Presence of Christ, “the brightness of His Father's Glory, and the express image of His Person.” To me, these words are like the bush in which God dwelt, yet which was not consumed—they are all on fire—what more shall I say of them?

Now, Christ being all this that Paul describes, who will dare to turn his back on Him? If this is the Shepherd who has come to seek the lost sheep—O poor lost Sheep, will you not be found of Him? If this is God's Ambassador who comes clothed in the crimson robe of His own blood to redeem the sons of men—who will refuse the peace He brings?

Note yet, once again, what Christ is as I mention the sixth point in the Apostle's description—“*upholding all things by the word of His power,*” Just think of it! This great world of ours is upheld by Christ's word! If He did not speak it into continued existence, it would go back into the noth-

ingness from which it sprang. There exists not a being who is independent of the Mediator, save only the ever-blessed Father and the Spirit. "By Him all things consist," that is, continue to hold together. Just as these pillars uphold these galleries, or as the foundations uphold a house, so does Jesus Christ "uphold all things by the word of His power." Only think of it! Those innumerable worlds of light that make illimitable space to look as though it were sprinkled over with golden dust would all die out like so many expiring sparks, and cease to be if the Christ who died on Calvary did not will that they should continue to exist! I cannot bring out of my text all the wondrous Truths of God that it contains, I only wish I could. But, surely, if Christ upholds all things, He can uphold me. If the word of His power upholds earth and Heaven, surely, that same word can uphold you, poor trembling Heart, if you will trust Him! There need be no fear about that matter—come and prove it for yourself. May His blessed Spirit enable you to do so even now!

Where there is so much room, I might well tarry, but I must hasten on to the next point.

II. Follow me with all your ears and hearts while I now speak to you about WHAT JESUS DID.

He who is all that I have tried to describe, did what? First, *He effectually purged our sins*—"when He had, by Himself, purged our sins." Listen to those wondrous words! There was never such a task as that since time began. The old fable speaks of the Augean stable, foul enough to have poisoned a nation, which Hercules cleansed, but our sins were fouler than that! Dunghills are sweet compared with these abominations! What a degrading task it seems for Christ to undertake—the purging of our sins! The sweepers of the streets, the dishwashers of the kitchen, the cleansers of the sewers have honorable work compared with this of purging sin! Yet the holy Christ, incapable of sin, stooped to purge our sins! I want you to meditate upon that wondrous work and to remember that He did it before He went back to Heaven. Is it not a wonderful thing that Christ purged our sins even before we had committed them? There they stood, before the sight of God, as already existent in all their hideousness—but Christ came, and purged them. This, surely, ought to make us sing the song of songs! Before I sinned, He purged my sins away—amazing and strange as it is, yet it is so!

Then, further, the Apostle says that *Christ purged our sins by Himself*. That is, by offering Himself as our Substitute. There was no purging away of sin except by Christ bearing the burden of it, and He did bear it. He bore all that was due to guilty man on account of his violation of the Law of God, and God accepted His Sacrifice as a full equivalent, and so He purged our sins. He did not come to do something by which our sins *might be purged*, but He purged them *effectually, actually, really, completely*. How did He do it? By His preaching? By His Doctrine? By His Spirit? No, "By Himself." Oh, that is a blessed word! The Revised Version has left it out, but the doctrine is taught in the Bible over and over again. "Who His own Self bore our sins in His own body on the tree." "By His own blood He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of

the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" He gave Himself for us! Not only His blood, but all that constituted Himself—His Godhead and His Manhood. All that He had and all that He was, He gave as the ransom price for us! Can any of you estimate the value of that price? The acts of One, Divine as He is, are Divine actions, and there is a weight and force about them that there could not be about the deeds of the best of men or even of all the holy angels! "He by Himself purged our sins."

Now, let every Believer, if he wants to see his sins, stand on tiptoe and look up—will he see them there? No. If he looks down, will he see them there? No. If he looks around, will he see them there? No. If he looks within, will he see them there? No. Where shall he look, then? Where he likes, for he will never see them, again, according to that ancient promise, "In those days, and in that time, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none. And the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found, for I will pardon them whom I reserve." Shall I tell you where your sins are? Christ purged them and God said, "I will cast all their sins behind My back." Where is that? All things are before God. I do not know where *behind* God's back can be! It is nowhere, for God is everywhere present, seeing everything. So that is where my sins have gone—I speak with the utmost reverence when I say that they have gone where Jehovah, Himself, can never see them! Christ has so purged them that they have ceased to be! The Messiah came to finish transgression and to make an end of sin—and He has done it.

O Believer, if He has made an end of it, [sin] then there is an end to it and what more can there be of it? Here is a blessed text for you. I love to meditate on it often when I am alone—"As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." This He did on Calvary's Cross—there effectually, finally, totally, completely, eternally, He purged all His people from their sin by taking it upon Himself, bearing all its dreadful consequences, cancelling and blotting it out, casting it into the depths of the sea and putting it away forever! And all this He did, "by Himself." It was, indeed, amazing love that made Him stoop to this purgation, this expiation, this Atonement for sin! But, because He was who and what He was, He did it thoroughly and perfectly! He said, "It is finished," and I believe Him! I do not—I cannot—for a moment admit that there is anything to be done by us to complete that work—or anything required of us to make the annihilation of our sins complete! Those for whom Christ died are cleansed from all their guilt—and they may go their way in peace. He was made a curse for us, and there is nothing but blessing left for us to enjoy!

III. Now, lastly, I have to speak of WHAT CHRIST NOW ENJOYS. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." Here again I shall have to say that I am quite out of my depth. I have waters to swim in, but I am not a good swimmer in such blessed deeps as these.

There is an allusion here, no doubt, to the High Priest who, on the great Day of Atonement, when the sacrifice had been offered, presents himself before God. Now Christ, our great High Priest, having, once and

for all, offered Himself as the Sacrifice for sin, has now gone into the Most Holy Place and there He sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Notice, first, that *this implies rest*. When the High Priest went within the veil, he did not sit down. He stood, with holy trembling, bearing the sacrificial blood, before the blazing Mercy Seat. But our Savior now sits at His Father's right hand. The High Priest of old had not finished his work—the next year another atoning sacrifice would be needed! But our Lord has completed His Atonement, and now, “there remains no more sacrifice for sin,” for there remains no more sin to be purged. “But this Man, after He had offered one Sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified.” There He sits and I am sure He would not be sitting if He had not finished the salvation of His people! Isaiah long before had been Inspired to record what the Messiah would say, “For Zion's sake will I not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof goes forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burns.” But Christ is now resting! My eyes, by faith, can see Him sitting there, so I know that—

***“Love's redeeming work is done!
Fought the fight, the battle won.”***

Notice, next, that *Christ sits in the place of honor*—“at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Of course we are talking figuratively, now, and you must not interpret this literally. Jesus sits at the right hand of His Father, He dwells in the highest conceivable honor and dignity. All the angels worship Him and all the blood-washed host adore Him day without night. The Father delights to honor Him—

***“The highest place that Heaven affords
Is His, is His by right,
The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords,
And Heaven's eternal Light.”***

Not only does Jesus sit in the place of honor, but *He occupies the place of safety*. None can hurt Him, now! None can stop His purposes, or defeat His will. He is at the powerful right hand of God! In Heaven above and on the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth, and on every star He is supreme Lord and Master. And they that will not yield to Him shall be broken with a rod of iron! He shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel. So His cause is safe, His kingdom is secure, for He is at the right hand of Power.

And, last of all, Christ at the right hand of God signifies *the eternal certainty of His reward*. It is not possible that He should be robbed of the purchase of His blood. I tremble when I hear some people talk about the disappointed Christ—or about His having died at a chance to accomplish He knew not what—dying for something which the will of man might give Him if it would, but it might possibly be denied Him! I buy nothing on such terms as that! I expect to have what I purchase and Christ will have what He bought with His own blood—especially as He lives again to claim His purchase! He shall never be a defeated and disappointed Savior! “He loved the Church and gave Himself for it.” He has redeemed His loved ones from among men and He shall have all those whom He has pur-

chased. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Therefore, let us again say, "Hallelujah!" and fall down and worship Him!

It does seem to me that there is no proof of men's natural blindness that is so conclusive as this, that men will not go and trust in Jesus. O Sinners, if sin had left you sane in heart, you would come at once and fall down at His feet! There is all power laid up in Jesus and there is all the Father's love concentrated in Jesus, so come and trust Him! If you will but trust Him, you will prove that He has given Himself for you! That simple trust is the secret mark that distinguishes His people from all others. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." To those who rejected Him when He was upon the earth, our Lord said, "You believe not because you are not of My sheep, as I said unto you." O poor Souls, do you mean to wear forever the damning mark of unbelief? If you die with that brand upon your soul, you will be lost forever! Oh, may you have, instead, that blessed mark of faith which is the token of the Lord's people! May you even now hang out the scarlet line as Rahab hung it out of her window—the scarlet line of confidence in the crimson blood of Jesus! And while Jericho falls—while all the earth shall crumble in one common ruin—your house, though built upon the wall, shall stand securely and not one who is within its shelter shall be touched by the devouring sword, for all who are in Christ are in everlasting safety! How can they be otherwise, since He has purged their sins? God give to every one of you a part and lot among this blessed company, for His dear name's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: EPHESIANS 1.

We frequently read this chapter and the whole of this Epistle because it has been well remarked that the Epistle to the Ephesians is a body of divinity in miniature. Here all the great Doctrines of the Gospel are discussed. Here all the great precepts are laid down for the guidance of Believers. He who would understand the theology of Christ Jesus should read the Epistle to the Ephesians with great care.

Verses 1, 2. *Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father.* There must be "Grace" first. "Peace" comes afterwards. They seek heavenly blessings in the wrong order who try to gain peace, first, and then Grace. "There is no peace, says my God to the wicked." And he who has a peace which does not acknowledge Grace for its parent has a false peace—a peace where there is no peace! But let us first have Grace in our souls, then shall our peace be "as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea." Note here, as Luther has said on a corresponding verse in the Epistle to the Galatians, the Apostle says, "Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father"—and lest that terrible name should frighten us, he has joined there the name of God the Son and sweetly put in—

2. *And from the Lord Jesus Christ.* We can have nothing to do with an absolute God. It is *God in Christ* whom we love—whom we adore—who alone is our Savior!

3, 4. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.* The Apostle commences by laying down the great Doctrine of predestinating love. There is little Gospel preached where Election is denied. We marvel that some of us should be regarded as in error because we preach the Doctrine of God's Divine Sovereignty in giving Grace to men whereas, in former times, the opponents of that glorious system would have been reckoned as the heretics!

Turn to all the great creeds that are preserved and you shall find that Truth of God mentioned. Above all, we can scarcely conceive that any person who is a member or a minister of the Established Church and finding Divine Election in his own Church's articles, can, in the least degree, deny it! It is the glory of that Church [the Church of England] that it has a Calvinistic creed and it is so far in harmony with the Scriptures!

5, 6. *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His Grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved.* Adoption follows predestination. We were chosen of God before time began and the result of that choice is that He puts us into His family. In the fifth verse, the Apostle declares that the only reason for our adoption, or for our election, rests in the good pleasure of God Almighty. There is nothing in man which can merit God's regard and when we enter Heaven, we shall even there sing—

***“What was there in me that could merit esteem,
Or give the Creator delight?
'Twas even so, Father,' I must always sing,
‘Because it seemed good in Your sight.’”***

Mark here the channel through which all God's mercies run! Jesus Christ is the channel through which Grace flows to us. We are chosen in Him, we are adopted by Jesus Christ to Himself and we are “accepted in the Beloved.” It is said of that eminently holy man, Harington Evans, that, when near death, he asked his friends to give this message to his church. “Tell them,” he said, “I am accepted in the Beloved.” Can we say, my Brothers and Sisters, that we are accepted in the Beloved? Can we put our hand upon our heart and, each one, say, “I may not be accepted by my fellow creatures. I may not be acknowledged by them and, certainly, before my God, I can never be accepted in myself. But in the Beloved, clothed with His righteousness, and standing in His Person, as a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, I am ‘accepted in the Beloved’?”

7-10. *In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace; wherein He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him.* The main purpose of the Gospel is to exalt Christ and to glorify God. We forget God's great design if we look only

to humanity. If we regard salvation as a means of only lifting up our race from its fall and putting it among the princes, we have made a mistake. We must remember that God's Glory is a greater objective, even, than man's salvation! Not so much to save us did God give His Son, as to honor Himself and to glorify that Son of His! And we must always remember that the Gospel has for its chief aim the glory of all the attributes of the Divine Being. He has determined to gather together, at last, all things in Christ that are in Heaven and in earth.

Some foolish persons have wrested this text to prove the absurd doctrine of the final restitution of the lost. They have said that even the fallen spirits in Hell are to be restored! We find it not in this text—we have it particularly said, “things in Heaven and things on earth.” But there is no mention made of those concerning whom it was long ago said, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” I have often thought that these words of the angel are conclusive with regard to the eternity of future punishment. Once dead, immutability is stamped upon our state—once let us die and our destiny can never be changed—

***“There are no acts of pardon passed
In the cold grave to which we haste.
But darkness, death, and long despair,
Reign in eternal silence there.”***

But “things which are in Heaven, and which are on earth” are, “in the dispensation of the fullness of times,” to be gathered together in one, “even in Him.”

11-14. *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will: that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.* I cannot help remarking how continually the Apostle uses such expressions as, “in Christ,” “in whom,” “in Him.” He will not have a Doctrine apart from Christ! He will not mention a single blessing, or a single mercy, without Christ! I believe there is no way of preaching Gospel Doctrines truly apart from the Master. In Christ's own days, if you had asked one of His followers what he believed, he would not have been long telling you! He would not have pointed to 50 Doctrines, but he would have pointed to Christ and said, “I believe in Him.” You might have asked him, 50 times, “But what do you believe?” and he would have replied, “I believe in Him! He is, in Himself, the great embodiment of my faith! His Person carries within it all the great Doctrines which I receive from Him. He is the Truth! I believe Him and I believe *in* Him.” Let us learn, then, always to trace our mercies to Christ Jesus, to look upon every blessing as being the purchase of His blood and never to ask for any mercy, nor endeavor to obtain any blessing, except entirely in connection with Him. Let us say to Him—

***“You are the Way, the Truth, the Life!
Grant us that Way to know,***

***That Truth to keep, that Life to win,
Whose joys eternal flow.”***

15. “Therefore I, also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints.” Whether they live at Ephesus or elsewhere, whether they exactly agree with your opinion or not—

16-23. *Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what it the exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.* Calvin has a striking remark upon this verse, “the Church is the fullness of Christ.” “This is the highest honor of the Church that, until Christ is united to us, the Son of God reckons Himself, in some measure, imperfect.” And so He is, for what would a king be without his subjects? A mockery! Yes, and all the members of Christ’s mystical body—the Church—are necessary to make a whole Christ! If the very least Believer shall be absent at the last, Christ will not be complete. Even the Almighty Son of God will feel a lack within Himself, or He would, if it were possible that one of those whom His Father had given Him should not at last be found at His right hand! All the sheep of the Good Shepherd will be gathered into the heavenly fold! We rejoice to know that there is such a connection as this between ourselves and Christ! Here is our glory and our boast—and here is our trust! We believe that—

***“His honor is engaged to save
The meanest of His sheep.
All that His Heavenly Father gave
His hands securely keep.
Not death, nor Hell, shall ever remove
His favorites from His breast!
In the dear bosom of His love
They must forever rest.”***

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—414, 586, 387.

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

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

THE BEST OF ALL SIGHTS

NO. 1509

WRITTEN AT MENTONE,
BY C. H. SPURGEON.

“But we see Jesus.”
Hebrews 2:9.

IN Holy Scripture faith is placed in opposition to the sight of the eyes and yet it is frequently described as looking and seeing. It is opposed to carnal sight because it is *spiritual* sight—a discernment which comes not of the body, but arises out of the strong belief of the soul, worked in us by the Holy Spirit. Faith is sight in the sense of being a clear and vivid perception, a sure and indisputable discovery, a realizing and unquestionable discernment of fact. We see Jesus, for we are sure of His Presence. We have unquestionable evidence of His existence and we have an intelligent and intimate knowledge of His Person. Our soul has eyes far stronger than the dim optics of the body and with these we actually *see* Jesus. We have heard of Him and upon the witness of that *hearing* we have believed—and through believing there has come to us a new life which rejoices in new light and in opened eyes—and “we see Jesus.” In the old sense of sight we speak of Him as of one “whom having not seen we love,” but in the new sense, “we see Jesus.”

Beloved Reader, have you such a renewed nature that you have new senses and have you, with these senses, discerned the Lord? If not, may the Holy Spirit yet quicken you and, meanwhile, let us whom He has made alive assure you that we have heard His voice, for He says, “My sheep *hear* My voice.” We have “*tasted* the good Word of God.” We have *touched* Him and have been made whole. We have also known the *smell* of His fragrance, for His name to us is “as ointment poured forth.” And now, in the words of our text, “we see Jesus.” Faith is all the senses in one and infinitely more! And those who have it not are in a worse case than the blind and deaf, for spiritual life itself is absent.

I. Come, then, beloved Brothers and Sisters, whose eyes have been illuminated, let us muse awhile upon our privileges, that we may exercise them with delight and praise the Lord with them! First, let us regard the glorious sight of Jesus as COMPENSATION. The text begins with, “but,” because it refers to some things which we do not yet see which are the objects of strong desire. “We see not yet all things put under Him.” We do not as yet see Jesus acknowledged as King of kings by all mankind and this causes us great sorrow, for we wish to see Him crowned with Glory and honor in every corner of the earth by every man of woman born.

Alas, He is to many, quite unknown. He is rejected and despised by multitudes! In fact, He is by comparatively few regarded with reverence and love! Sights surround us which might well make us cry with Jeremiah, "Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears," for blasphemy and rebuke, idolatry, superstition and unbelief prevail on every side. "But," says the Apostle, "we see Jesus," and this sight compensates for all others, for we see Him now no longer made a little lower than the angels and tasting the bitterness of death, but, "crowned with Glory and honor!" We see Him no more after the flesh, in shame and anguish! But far more ravishing is the sight for we see His work accomplished, His victory complete, His empire secure!

He sits as a Priest upon the Throne, at the right hand of God, from now on waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. This is a Divine compensation for the tarrying of His visible kingdom, because *it is the major part of it*. The main battle is won! In our Lord's endurance of His substitutionary griefs and in the overthrow of sin, death and Hell by His personal achievements, the essence of the conflict is over. Nothing is left to be done at all comparable with that which is already performed! The ingathering of the elect and the subjection of all things are comparatively easy of accomplishment now that the conflict in the heavenly places is over and Jesus has led captivity captive! We may look upon the conquest of the kingdoms of this world as a mere routing of the beaten host now that the power of the enemy has been effectually broken by the great Captain of our salvation.

The compensation is all the greater because our Lord's *enthronement is the pledge of all the rest*. The putting of all things under Him, which as yet we see not, is guaranteed to us by what we do see. The exalted Savior has all power given unto Him in Heaven and in earth—and with this, "all power," He can, at His own pleasure, send forth the rod of His strength out of Sion and reign in the midst of His enemies! With Him are all the forces necessary for universal dominion. His white horse waits at the door and whenever He chooses, He can ride forth conquering and to conquer! At a word from His lips the harlot of Babylon shall perish, the false prophet shall die and the idols of the heathen shall be utterly abolished. The empire of wickedness is as a vision of the night, a black and hideous nightmare pressing on the soul of manhood, but when He awakes, He will despise its image and it shall melt away.

Turn we then, wiping our tears away, from the wretched spectacles of human superstition, skepticism and sorrow to the clear vision above us in the opened Heaven! There we see "the Man," long promised, the Desire of all nations, the Deliverer, the death of Death, the Conqueror of Hell—and we see Him not as one who girds on His harness for the battle, but as one whose warfare is *accomplished*, who is waiting the time appointed of the Father when He shall divide the spoil! This is the antidote to all depres-

sion of spirit, the stimulus to hopeful perseverance, the assurance of joy unspeakable!

II. Nor is this sight a mere compensation for others which, as yet, are denied us—it is, in itself, the *cause* of present EXULTATION. This is true in so many ways that time would fail us to attempt to enumerate them. “We see Jesus” and in Him *we see our former unhappy condition forever ended*. We were fallen in Adam, but we see in Jesus our ruin retrieved by the second Adam. The legal Covenant frowned upon us as we beheld it broken by our first federal head. The new Covenant smiles upon us with a whole Heaven of bliss as we see it ordered in all things and sure in Him who is Head over all things to the Church. Sin once doomed us to eternal despair, but not now, for He who has put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself has justified His people by His Resurrection!

The debt no longer burdens us, for there, in eternal Glory, is the Man who paid it once and for all! A sight of Jesus kills each guilty fear, silences each threat of conscience and photographs peace upon the heart. There remains nothing of all the past to cause a dread of punishment, or arouse a fear of desertion, for Christ who died always lives to make intercession for us, to represent us before the Father and to prepare for us a place of everlasting rest! We might see ourselves as dead under the Law were it not that He has blotted out the handwriting which was against us. We might see ourselves under the curse were it not that He, who was once made a curse for us, now reigns in fullness of blessing! We weep as we confess our transgressions, but we see Jesus and sing for joy of heart, since He has finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness!

The same is sweetly true of the present, for *we see our present condition to be thrice blessed by virtue of our union with Him*. We see not as yet our nature made perfect and cleansed from every tendency to evil—rather do we groan, being burdened because of the sin which dwells in us—the old man which lusts and rebels against the blessed dominion of Grace. And we might be sorely cast down and dragged into despair were it not that, “we see Jesus” and perceive that in Him we are not what the flesh would argue us to be. He represents us most truthfully and looking into that mirror we see ourselves justified in Christ Jesus, accepted in the Beloved, adopted of the Father, dear to the Eternal heart! Yes, in Him raised up together and made to sit together in the heavenlies!

We see self and blush and are ashamed and dismayed, “but we see Jesus” and His joy is in us and our joy is full. Think of this, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, the next time you are upon the dunghill of self-loathing. Lift up, now, your eyes and see where He is in whom your life is hid! See Jesus and know that as He is, so are you before the Infinite Majesty! You are not condemned, for He is enthroned! You are not despised nor abhorred, for He is beloved and exalted! You are not in jeopardy of

perishing, nor in danger of being cast away, for He dwells eternally in the bosom of the Lord God Almighty! What a vision is this for you, when you see Jesus and see yourself complete in Him, perfect in Christ Jesus!

Such a sight effectually *clears our earthly future of all apprehension*. It is true we may yet be sorely tempted and the battle may go hard with us, but we see Jesus triumphant and by this sign we grasp the victory! We shall, perhaps, be subjected to pain, to poverty, to slander, to persecution and yet none of these things move us because we see Jesus exalted and, therefore, know that these are under His power and cannot touch us except as He grants them His permission to do so. Death is at times terrible in prospect, but its terror ceases when we see Jesus who has passed safely through the shades of the sepulcher, vanquished the tyrant of the tomb and left an open passage to immortality to all His own!

We see the pains, the groans and dying strife—see them, indeed, exaggerated by our fears—and the only cure for the consequent alarm is a sight of Him who has said, “He that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.” When we see Jesus—past, present and to come—we are summed up in Him and over all shines a glorious life which fills our souls with unspeakable delight!

III. Thirdly, “we see Jesus” with most glad EXPECTATION. His glorious *Person* is to us the picture and the pledge of what we shall be, for “it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He; for we shall see Him as He is.” In infinite love He condescended to become one with us here below, as says the Apostle, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.” And this descent of love on His part to meet us in our low estate is the assurance that His love will lift us up to meet Him in His high estate! He will make us partakers of *His Nature*, inasmuch as He has become partaker of *our nature*.

It is written, “Both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” What bliss is this that we should be like the Incarnate God! It would seem too good to be true, were it not after the manner of our Lord to do great and unsearchable things for us! Nor may we alone derive comfort as to our future from His Person—we may also be made glad by a hope as to His *place*. Where we see Jesus to be, there shall we also be! His Heaven is our Heaven! His prayer secures that we shall be with Him where He is, that we may behold His Glory. Today we may be in a workhouse, or in the ward of a hospital, or in a ruinous hovel, “but we see Jesus” and we know that before long we shall dwell in the palace of the great King!

The Glory of Jesus strikes the eyes at once and thus we are made to exult in His position, for it, too, is ours. He will allow us to sit upon His Throne, even as He sits upon the Father’s Throne. He has made us kings

and priests unto God and we shall reign forever and ever. Whatever of rest, happiness, security and honor our glorious Bridegroom has attained, He will certainly share it with His spouse—yes, and all His people shall know what it is to be heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ, if we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified together! How soon our condition shall rise into complete likeness to the ascended Lord, we cannot tell, but it cannot be long and it may even be a very short time. The veil of time is, in some cases very thin—another week may be the only separation.

And then! Ah, then! We shall see Jesus and what a sight will it be! Heaven lies in that vision. 'Tis all the Heaven our loving hearts desire! The sight of Jesus which we now enjoy is a foretaste of the clearer sight which is reserved for us and, therefore, it will be a happy wisdom to be much in the enjoyment of it. A thousand things tempt us away and yet there is not one of them worth a moment's thought in comparison! What are works of art and discoveries of science compared with our Beloved? What are the gems which adorn the brow of beauty, or the eyes which flash from the face of loveliness, if placed in rivalry with Him?

Other matters, weighty and important, call for our thoughts and yet even these we may place in a second rank when Jesus is near. We may not be doctors of divinity, much as we would desire to be deeply instructed in the Truths of God, "but we see Jesus." Into many mysteries we cannot pry, "but we see Jesus." Where the Divine Sovereignty harmonizes with human responsibility is too deep a problem for us, "but we see Jesus." The times and the seasons baffle us, the dispensation of the end is dark to us, "but we see Jesus." Glory over us, you far-seeing Prophets! Deride us, you deep-glancing philosophers! We leave you to your boasting! We are poor, short-sighted beings and know but little—but one thing we know—whereas we were once blind, now we see and, "WE SEE JESUS!"

This sight has made us unable to see many things which now dazzle our fellow men. They can see priestly power in a certain set of men like themselves. This we cannot see, for "we see Jesus," as ending the line of sacrificing priests and bestowing a common priesthood upon all the saints. Many see great wisdom in the various schools of doubt in which we see nothing except pretentious folly, for "we see Jesus" and all human wisdom pales before the wisdom of God which is perfected in Him! Certain of our brethren see perfection in the flesh, "but we see Jesus." Others see the Church and their own sect, "but we see Jesus!" A few see nothing but their own separateness from everybody else and the peculiar excellence of their exclusiveness, "but we see Jesus."

Come, Beloved, let us get to our secret chambers of communion and see Jesus there as from the hill of Pisgah! Let us turn the pages of Scripture and see Jesus there amid the beds of spices! Let us frequent ordinances, especially the breaking of bread, and see Jesus there! Let us watch in our experience as we are conformed unto His sufferings and see

Him there! Let us go into the field of holy labor and, as we gird ourselves and put on the yoke of service, let us see our Master there! Yes, in *all things* let us learn to see our Lord, for Nature and Providence, experience and Scripture are hung with mirrors which reflect Him!

Till the day breaks and the shadows flee away, let us continue to gaze upon Him, till our eyes shall actually see Him for ourselves and not another! Be this the grand distinction of our lives—whatever others may see or not see, “WE SEE JESUS!”

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

SEEING JESUS

NO. 771

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

“We see Jesus.”
Hebrews 2:9.

THE Apostle, in this verse, does not claim to have seen the Lord in the flesh, although he boasts in another passage that he has done so, and asserts it as one of the proofs of his Apostleship. He is not, indeed, in this text referring to any seeing of the Lord by mortal eyes at all—he is speaking of *faith*—he means a *spiritual* sight of the Lord Jesus Christ. The point to which I shall have to draw your attention this evening is that sight is very frequently used in Scripture as a metaphor, an illustration, a *symbol* to set forth what faith is.

Faith is the eye of the soul. It is the act of looking unto Jesus. In that act, by which we are saved, we look unto Him and are saved from the very ends of the earth. We look to Him and we find salvation. So far as seeing with these *natural* eyes of ours is concerned it is the very opposite of faith. We have heard people speak as though they wished they had lived in the Savior’s day and could have seen Him. It must have been a great privilege to those who were spiritually-minded, but it was no privilege (as they know now, alas, to their regret), to those who were spiritually *blind*—for many of those who saw our Lord and heard Him preach, rose up in wrath to thrust Him out of the synagogue, and cast Him down the brow of the cliff.

Instead of being overawed by His sweet majesty, or won by that love which sat upon His brow, they scoffed at Him, said He was a Samaritan, had a devil, and was mad! Even the sight of Jesus Christ upon the Cross did not convert the men that stood there, but they thrust out their tongues and called Him by ignominious titles and increased the sorrows of His death by their scornful expressions. To see Jesus Christ with the natural eye is nothing, my Brothers and Sisters, for this shall be the lot of *all men!* They shall look on Him whom they have pierced and shall weep and wail because of Him.

The sight of Him, when He shall come in the latter days to judge the earth in righteousness, will be the source of terror to the wicked so that there can be no kind of benefit, certainly no saving blessing, from such a sight of Jesus Christ with the eyes as will be afforded even to lost spirits. The Apostle is speaking of the *spiritual* eye here. He is speaking of that *mental* vision which God affords to those who have had their eyes anointed with heavenly eye salve by the Holy Spirit that they may see. And our business tonight is, first of all, to show why faith is so frequently compared to the sense of sight.

I. Let us, in the first place, give our attention for a few minutes TO THE REASON WHY FAITH IS COMPARED TO SIGHT. Is not sight, in many respects, the noblest of all the senses? To be deprived of any of our senses

is a great loss, but perhaps the greatest deprivation of all is the loss of sight. Certainly, whatever may be the degree of pain that may follow the loss of any other sense, they who lose their sight lose the noblest of human faculties.

For observe, in the first place, that sight is marvelously quick. How wondrously fast and far it travels! It does not take you an hour to make a journey from one part of the country to another by your eyes. You are on a mountain and you can see 50 or a 100 miles, as the case may be, and you see it by the simple opening of the eyes. It is all there. Your thought is flashed far away in an instant, in the twinkling of your eye. Standing on some of the Alpine summits, you look far and wide and see lakes spread at a distance beneath your feet. And far away there is a range of black mountains, or of hills clothed with snow.

You know they are, perhaps, 200 miles distant, but in a moment you are there! So quick does the sense of sight travel that we go to the moon or to the sun without knowing that any space of time is taken up by our eyes traveling there! And those remote stars which the astronomers tell us are so distant that they can scarcely compute how far off they are, yet my eye travels to them in a second of time when I gaze upon the starry firmament! So quickly does sight travel—and equally rapid is the action of *faith!*

Brethren, we know not where Heaven may be—where the state, the place called “Heaven” is—but faith takes us there in contemplation in a single moment. We cannot tell when the Lord may come—it may not be for centuries yet—but faith steps over the distance in a moment and sees Him coming in the clouds of Heaven, and hears the trumpet of resurrection! It would be very difficult, indeed, it would be impossible for us to travel backward in any other chariot than that of faith, for it is faith which helps us to see the creation of the world when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy!

Faith enables us to walk in the garden with our first parents and to witness the scene when God promised that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head. Faith makes us familiar with Patriarchs and gives us to see the troubles and trials of kings. Faith takes us to Calvary’s summit and we stand and see our Savior as plainly as did His mother when she stood sorrowfully at the foot of the Cross. We this day can fly back to the solemn day of Pentecost and feel as if we could hear the mighty rushing wind, and see the cloven tongues sitting upon the chosen company, so swiftly does faith travel!

And, best of all, in one moment faith can take a sinner out of a state of death into a state of life, can lift him from damnation into salvation, can remove him from the land of the shadow of death, where he sat in affliction and irons, and give him the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness! O Sinner, you can get at Christ in a moment of time! No sooner has your heart trusted Jesus than you are with Him—united to Him!

You need not say, “Where is He? I would fly to Heaven if I could but find Him, or dive under Hell’s most profound wave if I could but embrace Him.” He is near you, so near that the act of faith conveys you at once into

His bosom, plunges you into His blood, clothes you with His righteousness, adopts you into the family of God and makes you co-heir with Jesus Christ—joint-heir with Him in all things! See, then, why faith is like sight, because of the rapidity of its operations, requiring no time so that a dying sinner, believing in Jesus, is saved at the 11th hour, needing not to go roundabout to do penances, and pass through probationary periods and I know not what besides! He may come to Jesus, weary, and worn and sad. And the road to Jesus, though it seems long to some, is so short that one step takes you there. You have but to leave self behind, and trust in Him, and you are with Him! “We see Jesus.” Faith, then, is like sight for its quickness.

Is not faith like sight, too, in the second place, for its largeness? It is a wonderful faculty, that of sight. Your eyes and mine take in at once the whole of this building with all the assembled company. These eyes will next, if they are placed at a point of vantage, take in the entire city of London with the whole of its populous streets. Give the eyes but the opportunity, let the sun go down, and they will take in all the thousands of worlds that stud the brow of night. What is there which the eye cannot grasp, and mark you, not the eye of the great and mighty only, but of the poorest also? Yes, the little insignificant eyes of the lark can take in as much, no doubt, as the big eyes of the bull. And the smallest eyes that God creates He enables to compass great things.

A marvelous thing is that eye, darting its shafts everywhere, sending its rays around and embracing all things. Now, just such a power is *faith*. What a faculty faith has for grasping everything, for it lays hold upon the past, the present, and the future! It pierces through most intricate things and sees God producing good out of all the tortuous circumstances of Providence. And what is more, faith does what the eyes cannot do—it sees the Infinite! It beholds the Invisible! It looks upon that which eye has not seen, which ear has not heard—it sees beneath the veil that parts us from the land of terror, and, moved with fear—it makes us fly to the Savior!

Faith sees through the pearly gate, and, beholding the glory of the better land, it makes us fly to Jesus who bears the keys of Paradise at His waist. Faith sees—I know not how to describe fully what faith sees—what is there she does *not* behold? She sees even God Himself, for though in my finite conception I cannot grasp God, and my understanding can only perceive, as it were, His train and skirts, yet my *faith*, with awful comprehension, can take in the whole of God and believe what she does not know, and accept what she cannot comprehend!

Oh, wondrous faculty of faith! God give it to you, my dear Hearer! God give you more and more of it so that it may be to you the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, and that all comprehending faculty shall enable you to say—

***“All things are mine, the gift of God,
The purchase of a Savior’s blood.
This world is mine, and worlds to come.
Earth is my lodge, and Heaven my home.”***

Again, sight is a most remarkable faculty, because, in the judgment of most men, it is very sure. We believe that we are often deceived by hearing. We are inclined, often, when we hear a story, to say, “I would believe

that if I saw it, but I would not otherwise. I have been so often deceived by hearing tales that I cannot always credit what my ears tell me.”

We know how, by feelings, we are readily enough deceived, like Isaac, who would not have given his blessing to Jacob had not his eyes waxed dim, and his touch deceived him. But “seeing is believing,” according to the world’s proverb. When a man *sees* a thing, then he says he *knows* it, though, indeed, of late years especially, we have learned that even sight itself is not always to be trusted, for the most extraordinary illusions have been practiced upon persons for amusement and have become a part of the apparatus of pleasure and philosophy. You cannot believe your own eyes nowadays!

You see a great many things, or think you see them, which are not there. And things which you could declare to be in such-and-such a position turn out not to be there at all—it is merely some reflection, or some delusion, simple enough when explained—but most puzzling until it is opened up to you. However, sight is generally regarded by men to be the most sure of all our faculties. If we see a thing, there it is—there is no questioning it.

Now faith has this certifying power in a much *higher* degree, for the faith which is of the operation of God and which distinguishes His own elect, is *infallible*. The faith of God’s people will not believe a lie. It is written that “if it were possible,” such-and-such “would deceive the very elect,” but it is not possible. Where faith takes the Word of God as her basis, and rests upon it, she becomes an infallible faculty, and we may depend upon that which she reveals to us. It is a glorious thing to know certainties, such as the existence of God, and the Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure. Such blessed certainties as the effectual Atonement which has put away the sin of the Lord’s people and such certainties as the enjoyment of the Presence of the Holy Spirit in His indwelling power within our soul. May we have much of this faith which is like sight for its certifying power!

Once more, is not faith wondrously like sight from its power to affect the mind, and enable a man to realize a thing? What I mean is this. That eminent preacher in America, Mr. Beecher, frequently used to address his audience upon Negro slavery. his touching eloquence never failed to move his people to an abhorrence of the thing and to a sympathy with those who smarted under its power. But on one occasion, as I have been told, he wished to produce an extraordinary feeling in order to raise a large sum of money for a certain purpose.

He therefore spoke enthusiastically upon the sorrows of a beautiful girl, almost white, but still with sufficient African blood in her veins for her master to claim her for his slave—and she was about to be sold far south for the worst of purposes. Mr. Beecher wanted to touch the hearts of his people to purchase her liberty, that she, their Sister in Christ, might be freed. He had spoken earnestly, but to produce the required effect he called her from her seat, and bade her stand up in the midst, and you may guess that that morning there was no difficulty in collecting all the needed funds to set her free. The sight of the slave-girl had moved their hearts as the preacher’s words could not do.

Now, it is so usually. We talk about poverty, but when do you feel your hands go into your pockets so freely as when you have been visiting a poor family where the little ones are crying for bread, and where the parents have no means for providing for them? You feel for orphans. Many of us do very sincerely, but we never felt for them so thoroughly as when we began to deal with them and to see them and their widowed mothers. In our newly-founded Orphanage—for which I would bespeak your help continually—we have had already to deal with many fatherless ones. We have come more than ever into contact with them and we feel that the fatherless are, indeed, objects of pity, for the sight of them and of the widows has put the thing forcibly before us.

We have heard of one who, being cold in the streets and seeing a poor shivering family, thought that winter was very hard, and that when he got home he would take care to put by some money to buy blankets for them. But when he had sat down by the fire, and thoroughly warmed himself and partaken of his cheerful meal, he thought the weather must be changed, and that it was not so bad a thing, after all, to have a little winter. And so the blankets were never bought, and the poor were never cared for. There is nothing like *sight*, my Brothers and Sisters, to convince—notwithstanding the moment when sight is over, feelings may depart.

Now faith has also this mighty reasoning power in even a higher degree. If it is *real* faith it makes the Christian man, in dealing with God, feel towards God as though he saw Him. It gives him the same awe, and yet the same joyous confidence which he would have if he were capable of actually beholding the Lord. Faith, when it takes a stand at the foot of the Cross, makes us hate sin and love the Savior just as much as though we had seen our sins placed to Christ's account and had seen the nails driven through His hands and feet and seen the bloody scourges as they made the sacred drops of blood fall—

***“We were not with the faithful few
Who stood Your bitter Cross around.
Nor heard Your prayer for those who slew,
Nor felt that earthquake rock the ground.
We saw no spear pierce Your side—
Yet we can feel that You have died.”***

Faith realizes the thing and thus becomes “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Hence the glory and the beauty of faith.

Now, many of you have heard about the wrath of God but it has all been forgotten. You have heard about the judgment and the wrath of God to come afterwards. You have heard of the Atonement, and the power of Jesus to put away sin. But you have had no effect produced upon your minds, because, as the Apostle puts it, “It was not mixed with *faith* in them that heard it.” But if you had had faith in that which was proclaimed, and had come savingly to trust in the Truth of God which was presented as the grounds of your salvation, you would have been moved, and stirred, and excited, and led to hate sin and to fly to Jesus! God grant to us, then, that we may have more and more faith. I have thus, I trust, at sufficient length shown the parallel between faith and sight.

II. And now we shall spend a minute or two upon another thought, namely, that FAITH, THE SIGHT OF THE SOUL, IS HERE SPOKEN OF AS A CONTINUOUS THING. “We see Jesus.” It does not say, “We *can* see Jesus”—that is true enough—the spiritual eye can see the Savior. Nor does it say, “We *have* seen Him.” That also, glory be to God, is a delightful fact! We have seen the Lord, and we have rejoiced in seeing Him. Nor does the text say, “We *shall* see Him,” though this is our pride and our hope, that “when He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is.”

The text says, “We see Jesus.” We see Him *now* and *continually*. This is the common habit of the Christian! It is the element of his spiritual life. It is his most delightful occupation. It is his constant practice. “We see Jesus.” Dear Brothers and Sisters, I am afraid some of us forget this. For instance, we see Jesus Christ as our Savior, we being sinners still. And is it not a delightful thing always to feel one’s self a sinner, and always to stand looking to Christ as one’s Savior, thus beholding Him evermore? “As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, even so walk you in Him”—not merely sometimes coming to Him as you came at first, but evermore abiding in Him.

“To whom coming”—always coming, constantly coming—“as unto a living stone.” I was present at a meeting of Believers a short time ago when a conversation of this kind occurred. A Brother in the Lord, one of the most fervent men I know, said that sometimes when his piety flagged and his heart grew cold, he found it a very blessed thing to go and visit the sick and the dying. He found this to be such a sweet restoration to his faith that he recommended us all, as often as we could, to frequent dying beds.

Now another Brother who was present, who preaches the Gospel, but who at the same time is a butcher, said he thanked God he did not need to go to a dying bed to see Jesus and to get his heart set right. He said that he had had as sweet fellowship with God in Camden Town Market as he ever had in the House of Prayer. And he said that he found it best always to live as his Brother wished to live *sometimes*, namely, always conscious of sin and always looking to the Sin-Offering. Come to Jesus, then, as you came at first! Fly to the fountain always as needing constant cleansing—not as though you had not been washed, but still abiding—continuing in blessed recognition of your present cleansing that flows from the fountain filled with blood.

It is very sweet to remember that the fountain we sing about as being opened in Jerusalem, is opened “for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem”—not so much for sinners, though it is opened for them, as for Believers—“for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” Let us always be coming to it! And each morning and each night, let this be the cry of our spirit, “Still guilty, still vile, still polluted, we see Jesus, and, seeing Him, we know that we are saved.”

Should not this, also, be the mode of our life in another respect? We are now disciples. Being saved from our former conversation, we have now become the disciples of the Lord Jesus. And ought we not, as disciples, to be constantly with our Master? Ought not this to be the motto of our life, “We see Jesus”? We should not regard the commands of Jesus Christ as being a law left to us by a departed Master whom we cannot see, and to

whom we cannot fly. Is it not better to believe that Christ is a *living* Christ, that He is in the midst of His Church still, observing our order, noting our obedience or our disobedience, a Master absent in one sense, but still in another point of view ever present, according to His promise—“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”? We should—

**“Stay with Him near the tree,
Stay with Him near the tomb.
Stay till the risen Lord we see,
Stay watching ‘till He come.”**

My Brethren, could we be so frequently cold and careless if we could always see Jesus? Would our hearts be so hard towards perishing sinners if we always saw that face which was bedewed with tears for them? Do you think we could sit still, or grow worldly, or spend all our energies upon ourselves if we could see the Crucified, who though “He saved others, Himself He could not save”? I wish I could always come here to preach Jesus “seeing” Him by my side, and feeling in my heart that I was preaching in my Master’s Presence. I would that you could always come into this place, both at Prayer Meetings and at all other times, feeling, “The Master is here. Let us bow as in His sight. Let our worship be given—not to One who is blind, and who will not see us—but to One who beholds us all and sees our inmost thoughts.”

As disciples we should be more punctual in our obedience, more consistent in our imitation of Jesus if we had Him always before us. The Romanist puts up the crucifix idol before his eyes. Well, let us put up Christ in our *spirits*. He wears the cross on his bosom. Let us carry Christ in our heart, still thinking of Jesus, seeing Him at all times. Would it not also, dear Friends, be very much for our comfort if we were to see Jesus always as our Friend in our sojourn here? “Henceforth,” He says, “I call you not servants, but I have called you friends.”

You are very poor, my dear Brother. Do you see Jesus? He was poorer than you. You have somewhere to go to sleep tonight, but He could say, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head.” Are you racked with pain tonight? Let it help you to see Jesus. You are not “exceedingly sorrowful even unto death,” nor are your griefs to be compared with His. Have you been deserted and betrayed? See Jesus kissed by Judas! Have you been denied by some friend who promised to be faithful? Look into the face of Jesus as He turns to Peter! Does death itself stare you in the face? Remember Him who, “being found in fashion as a Man, humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.”

We would never be alone if we could see Jesus, or at least, if we were, it would be a blessed solitude! We would never feel deserted if we could see Jesus—we would have the best of Helpers. I know we would not feel weak if we always saw Him, for He would be our strength and our song. He would become our salvation. The bitter waters of Marah—the afflictions and troubles of the day would all be sweet if this tree were cast into the flood for us, and if Jesus were brought, in solemn meditation, into contact with our spirits. Oh, to see Jesus!

You *have* seen Him as your Savior—you desire to see Him as your Master. Oh, to see Him as your Friend upon whose bosom you can still lean

your aching head, into whose ear you can ever pour your tale of sorrow! Through the wilderness you may continually come up leaning on your Beloved, and with Him you may have perpetually such sweet enjoyments, that earth, desert as it is, shall seem to blossom like a garden of roses and your spirit shall enjoy Heaven below!

Again, would it not be much better for us, dear Friends, if we were to see Jesus as our Forerunner? I do not know whether it is so with the most of you, but while some of us rejoice in the prospect of Heaven, yet the thought of death is sometimes surrounded with much gloom. It cannot be an easy thing to go down amidst the chill darkness of the river, and there to be separated, the soul from the body, and to leave this earthly tabernacle behind an inheritance to *worms*. It has a hideous appearance to us sometimes.

Even the Apostle himself shuddered a little at it when he said, “Not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon.” Death seems a bitter pill to us all, and unless it is swallowed up in victory—and the victory takes away the sting of death—the hour of dissolution will be bitter. But do you not think that our thoughts of gloom about death sometimes arise from a forgetfulness that Jesus will be with us? If our faith could see Jesus as making our bed in our sickness and then standing by our side in the last solemn article to conduct us safely through the iron gates—should we not, then, look upon death in a very different light? You know how Watts’s hymn puts it—

***“Oh if my Lord would come and meet,
My soul should stretch her wings in haste,
Fly fearless through Death’s iron gate,
Nor feel the terrors as she passed.
Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are,
While on His breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there.”***

My dear Brothers and Sisters, gathering up all I should like to have said, but cannot say, into one, it is this—if we see Jesus as being always with us, from morn till eve, in life and in death—what noble Christians it will make us! Now we shall not get angry with each other so quickly. We shall see Jesus! We cannot be angry when that dear loving face is in view. And when we have been affronted we shall be very ready to forgive when we see Jesus. Who can hate his brother when he sees that face, that tender face, more marred than that of any man? When we see Jesus, do you think we shall get worldly? Would you have spoken as you did across the counter today, Brother, had you seen Jesus?

My dear Friend, would you have been as you have been to your work-fellow? Would you have spoken as you did to your servants? Would you have acted as you did to your master had you seen Jesus? They say “a master’s eye does much.” Certainly the Presence of Jesus would do much! “The master’s eye does more than both his hands,” they say. Oh, for that consciousness of the eyes of Jesus, which shall be like the hands of Jesus molding us according to His will. “We see Jesus.”

Now, I hope you do see Jesus as you sit in the pews there. Sometimes on Sunday, when the Lord helps the preacher, and Christ is evidently set forth among you, you have seen Jesus. But will you see Him after you

have gone down those steps? Will you see Him when you get home to your houses? Will you see Him the next morning in the workroom, or at the business, or in the market? This is not quite so easy, and yet I hold that if we had more Divine Grace we would see Christ just as well in the market, among the baskets of fruit, as we can at the Tabernacle sitting in our pews! We would see Him quite as well if we were driving a horse, or walking along Cheapside, as when we are in our closets, bowing the knee. For that is true Grace which is with us always, and that is the Presence of Jesus which abides with us forever. That is true piety which shines the fairest in the midst of worldly cares. May we each one of us have this—and may it be the expression of our life—“We see Jesus”—and then we shall be able to go farther and say, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

III. I shall detain you just a minute or two longer for a third point about our sight of Jesus, namely, we have said that faith is like sight, and that our faith should be a present Grace in active operation. But there may be this reflection about our present sight of Christ, that **SOMETIMES OUR FAITH, LIKE OUR SIGHT, IS NOT QUITE CLEAR.** You do not always see, I suppose, equally well. There are many things that affect the optic nerves, and we know that in fair weather we can see a greater distance than we can in cloudy weather.

I was at Newcastle, some time ago, in a friend’s house and when I went up to the top window and looked out, he said, “There is a fine view, Sir, if you could but see it. We can see Durham Cathedral from here on Sunday.” “On Sunday!” I said, “how is that?” “Well, you see all that smoke down there, all those furnaces, and so on? They are all stopped on a Sunday, and then, when the air is clear, we can see Durham Cathedral.” Right away I thought—ah, we can see a great deal on a Sunday when the smoke of the world is gone for a little time! We can see all the way to Heaven, then. But sometimes, what with the smoke we make in business, and the smoke the devil makes, and the smoke that sin makes, we can scarcely see anything at all!

Well, since the natural sight has to undergo variations, both from itself within and from the smoke without, and from the state of the weather—we must not wonder if our faith undergoes variations, too. It ought not to do so, but sometimes it does, There are seasons when we realize that Christ is ours. Glory be to His name, if all the devils in Hell would speak to the contrary, yet we know that our Beloved is ours, and that we are His! We are sure of it. Though all the angels in Heaven should come and deny it, we would face them, and say, “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.”

But there are other times when the same Believer sings Newton’s hymn, but whenever he does, he ought to sing it alone, for fear anybody should catch the contagion of it—

**“Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought:
Do I love the Lord or no,
Am I His or am I not?”**

There are hours when some of us would be glad to creep into a mouse hole or hide ourselves in a nutshell—we feel so little, so insignificant—our faith is at so miserable an ebb that we know not what to do. Well, let us not be astonished as though we were not the children of God because of this. Everything that has life has variations. A block of wood is not affected by the weather, but a living man is! You may drive a stake into the ground and it will feel no influence of spring, summer, autumn, or winter—but if the stake is alive and you drive it into the soil where there is moisture—it will soon begin to sprout! And you will be able to tell when spring and winter are coming by the changes that take place in the living tree. Life is full of these changes—do not wonder, then, if you experience them.

Again, faith, like sight, is not only subject to variations, but it has great growth. Our children, in a certain sense, see as truly when they are a day old as when they are grown up to be 20 years old. But we must not suppose that they see as accurately, for they do not. I think observations would teach us that little children see all things as on a level surface, and that distant objects seem to them to be near, for they have not yet received experience enough to judge of the relative position of things. That is an *acquired* knowledge, and no doubt very early acquired but still it is learned as a matter of mental experience.

And let me say, though you may not have noticed it, all our measures of distance by the eye are matters which have to be gained by habit and observation. When I first went to Switzerland with a friend from Lucerne, we saw a mountain in the distance which we were going to climb. I pointed out a place where we should stop half-way up, and I said, “We shall be there in about four and a half hours.” “Four and a half hours!” my friend said, “I’d undertake to walk it in ten minutes.” “No, not you.” “Well, but half an hour!” He looked again, and said, “*Anybody* could get there in half an hour!” It seemed no distance at all.

And yet when we came to toil up, the four and a half hours turned into five or six before we reached the place! Our eyes were not accustomed to mountains, and we were not able to measure them. It is only by considerable experience that you get to understand what a mountain is and how a long distance appears. You are altogether deceived and do not know the position of things till you become wiser. And it is just so with faith. Faith in the Christian, when he first gets it, is true and saving—but it is not in proportion. The man believes one doctrine, perhaps, and that is so delightful that it swallows up every other. Then he gets hold of another and he swings that way like a pendulum—no doctrine can be true but that one.

Perhaps in a little time he swings back like a pendulum the other way. He is unsteady because while his faith perceives the Truth of God, it does not perceive the *harmonies* of the Truths of God. His faith, for instance, may perceive the Lord Jesus Christ, but as yet it has not learned the position which Christ occupies in the great economy of Divine Grace. He is half-blind, and cannot see very far. He has sight, but it is not the sight which he will yet receive. Like the blind man who, when our Lord healed

him, saw men at first as trees walking, he comes, in due time, to see clearly, for Grace always goes on in its work—it will never halt half-way.

Regardless, at first all is obscure and confused. Just as when you pass from darkness into light you are unable to bear it, you are dazzled and need a short time to accustom your eyes to the brilliance. But in due time the eyes are strengthened and you can bear more and more light till you again see with comfort. Let us ask, then, of the Lord, that He will increase our faith till the mental eyes shall become clear and bright, and that we be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, to be with Christ, and to see Him as He is. If you have but little faith remember that that will save you. The little diamond is as much a diamond as the Kohinoor. So little faith is as truly the faith of God's elect as the greatest faith!

If you but see Jesus, though it is but by the corner of your eye, yet if you see Him, you shall be saved! And though you may not see as much of Christ as advanced Believers do, yet if you see enough of Him to trust Him, to rely on Him entirely—your sins, which are many, are forgiven—and you shall yet receive Grace for Grace until you shall see Him in His Glory. However, always be praying, “Lord, increase our faith.”

The last thing I have to notice about this true faith in Christ as sight is that it is at all times a very simple thing to look. Look! No one needs go to a grammar school or to a university to look. Look! The smallest child, as we have said, can look—the most illiterate and untaught can look. If there is life in a look, glory be to God for such a provision because it is available for each one of us! Sinner, if you would be saved, there is nothing for you to think upon but Christ. Do your sins trouble you? Go to Him and trust in Him—and the moment you look to Him you are saved. “Oh,” says one, “but I cannot do that! My faith is so weak.”

Well, when I walk about and see a beautiful sight, very seldom do I think about my own sight—my mind is occupied with the sight—and so let it be with you. Never mind those eyes—think more about the vision to be seen. Think of Christ. It would be a pitiful thing if, when there were some great procession in the streets, all you thought about was your own eyes. You would see but very little. Think less about your *faith*, and more about *Jesus*—

**“Weary Sinner! Keep your eyes
On the atoning Sacrifice.
View Him bleeding on the tree,
Pouring out His life for you.
Cast your guilty soul on Him,
Find Him mighty to redeem!
At His feet your burden lay.
Look your doubts and fears away.”**

Turn over and over in your mind the great transaction on the Cross. I have sometimes said to young seekers, Go home and spend an hour deliberately reading about the death of Christ. And then picture it in your mind's eye, for it is in that way that faith comes. Through the Holy Spirit's power we come to believe that story by thinking upon it, seeing Jesus in it, and then following on and giving it the full acceptance of our spirit. Go to the Cross *for* faith if you cannot go *with* faith, and the Lord grant that you may find in Jesus—

***“True belief and true repentance,
Every Grace that brings us near,”***

so that you, too, may say with us, “We see Jesus.”

What is there in this world which is worth looking at in comparison with Him? All else is like the mirage of the desert which appears but to fade away, deluding the weary traveler with hopes of rest and refreshment, and leaving him sick at heart because all has passed as the baseless fabric of a dream, leaving not a wreck behind. Can you gain anything by watching the bubbles on the stream of time? Will they shake your death thirst and cool your brow in the article of death? Is there anything of healing in the uplifted images of earthly gold, honor, wisdom, and power? You have tried them—well, how do they answer?

I know of one who, traveling over a pass in Italy one evening, secured a light to help him over a dangerous and difficult part of the way further on. It was not needed till the narrow steep descent was reached. In fact, it was in the way till then, and just as the traveler came to the very spot where it was required, it went out and left him in utter darkness! So it is full often in the sinner’s experience who travels in the dark—his lights go out when most needed. Oh, far better, then, to walk in daylight, using the eye of faith in the clear sunshine of Gospel light from the Sun of Righteousness! Walk in the light. Come to the light, and live seeing Jesus—

***“We would see Jesus, for the shadows lengthen
Across this little landscape of our life.
We would see Jesus’ our weak faith to strengthen,
For the last weariness, the final strife.
We would see Jesus, the great Rock foundation,
Whereon our feet were set by Sovereign Grace.
Nor life nor death, with all their agitation,
Can then remove us if we see His face.
We would see Jesus—sense is all too blinding,
And Heaven appears too dim, too far away.
We would see You, to gain a sweet reminding
That You have promised our great debt to pay.
We would see Jesus: this is all we’re needing—
Strength, joy, and willingness, come with the sight!
We would see Jesus, dying, risen, pleading;
Then welcome day, and farewell mortal night!”***

The Lord send you away with His blessing, for Jesus’ sake.

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THE CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION NO. 2619

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, APRIL 23, 1899.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 19, 1882.**

***“For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things,
in bringing many sons to Glory, to make the Captain of their
salvation perfect through sufferings.”
Hebrews 2:10.***

OBSERVE, dear Friends, how glorious God is. The description given here by the Apostle contains but few words, and those nearly all little ones, but how full of meaning they are! “Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things.” Here you have God set forth as being both the beginning and the end of everything! All things are *for* Him—to do His bidding, to accomplish His purpose, to act forth His Glory and this because all things are *by* Him—in their first creation, in their subsequent preservation and in all that is yet to come of them! Of whom speaks the Apostle this but of the Triune God, to whom be glory forever and ever? Of whom speaks He this—if we would be still more exact—but of the Father who has made His Son perfect in bringing many sons to Glory? It is the Father “for whom are all things, and by whom are all things.”

And, my dear Brothers and Sisters, the Apostle was wisely guided by the Holy Spirit to give this title to the Father in this particular place. Sometimes, in prayer, men call God by one or another of His names and each name may be correct, yet it may not be well chosen for that special occasion. But you will notice that if the Holy Spirit describes either God the Father or the Lord Jesus by any term other than His usual name, the title is always very wisely chosen and is most appropriate in that place. Now, in the matter of our salvation, we need One, “by whom are all things,” for none but the Creator can create us anew in Christ Jesus. No one who has less power than the Divine Preserver of men can keep us from falling. And none but the Divine Being who encompasses all things within the range of His Infinite mind, can guard us against the many terrible perils on the way to Heaven. If ever we are to be brought to Glory, it must be by the God “by whom are all things.” And certainly, if we are brought there, as I pray that we all may be—it will be by Him “for whom are all things”—and we shall forever adore the mystery of His Grace which landed us safely on the heavenly shore!

Every part of the great plan of salvation sets forth the splendor of the Grace of the Most High God. What do we see in our election but His Grace? What do we see in our redemption but His Grace? What do we

see in our conversion but His Grace? What do we see in our justification, sanctification, adoption and final preservation but His Grace? By Him, in Grace as well as in Nature, are all things—and for Him, in Grace as well as in Nature, are all things. Unto Him belongs both the power and the glory, the two must always go together. He works all our works in us and to Him be all the praise, world without end!

We start, then, with this as a sort of keynote—that the great Father, who has purposed our salvation, is able to fully carry out what He has planned, for by Him are all things. And He also has an admirable reason for accomplishing it, because it will bring Him glory, and for Him *are* all things. If our salvation would degrade His name in any sense or respect. If the salvation of sinners would even obscure the severity of His justice, it might be a question as to whether it would ever be accomplished. But, since there is nothing about this work but what will bring Him honor and glory, we rest assured that, having put His hand to it, He will not withdraw His arm until He has fully accomplished His eternal purpose to the praise of the glory of His Grace!

Our text sets before us some most precious Truth concerning our Lord Jesus Christ and His people. First, here is *a high enterprise*—the bringing of many sons to Glory. In the second place, this enterprise is being carried out by *an ordained Captain*—there is a Captain of our salvation through whom the many sons are to be brought to Glory. And, thirdly, we are to notice *the becoming work of the Father upon Him who is Captain*. “For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to Glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

I. First, then, here IS A HIGH ENTERPRISE—the bringing of many sons to Glory.

I think that you will find the historical parallel of this enterprise in the Lord’s great work of bringing the tribes of Israel out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, through the wilderness and into Canaan. The Lord, in His deliverance of His ancient people, gives us a type of what He is doing and will do for all His chosen. The exodus was not merely the bringing of the people out of Egypt into the wilderness, for then they might truly have said to Moses, “Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness?” But the whole transaction was not completed, the enterprise was not finished, until all those whom the Lord intended to bless had actually crossed the Jordan and had taken possession of the promised land. He led not the children of Israel merely out of Egypt, but He led them into Canaan—and His leadership of them through the desert is a picture and emblem of Christ’s leadership of the many sons whom He is bringing to Glory. I want you to think of the salvation of the redeemed in that light.

To begin at the end, *the Lord Jesus is bringing many sons to Glory*, just as God brought His ancient people into Canaan. The ultimate destination of every Believer is eternal Glory. There is not one of us who will be perfect and complete until we stand at the right hand of God, even the Father. There is no secondary position where some of the redeemed may be satisfied to remain, but the many sons are all to be brought to “*Glory*.”

That is the word—one of the biggest words that can be spoken by any mortal mouth. Do you know all its meaning? No, my Brothers and Sisters, you do not, and there is another word that comes before it—“The Lord will give *Grace* and *Glory*.” Do you know all the meanings, even, of, “*Grace*”? No, you do not—yet you have tasted of God’s *Grace* and if you know not all the meaning of that of which you daily partake, I am sure you do not know the meaning of that, “*Glory*,” which you have not yet obtained.

Heaven is rightly called, “*Glory*.” I do not doubt that it is a very glorious place. People have written books in which they have sought to give us some idea of Heaven as perfecting all the joys of our earthly domestic life. And artists have tried to depict the plains of Heaven, but the books and the works of art are equally worthy to be burnt, for they fall so infinitely short of what the reality must be that they are only a caricature and a mockery of what “*Glory*” must really be. No, Beloved, no tongue can tell what it is, and no pencil can depict the *Glory* of the place, itself, the Father’s House, where the many mansions are—

**“*Eye has not seen it, my gentle boy—
Ear has not heard its sweet songs of joy!*”**

Nor shall your imagination be able to bring these things down to you, for there is a *spiritual* *Glory* which must far exceed all the glories of which you know anything on earth!

I think, also, that Heaven is called, “*Glory*,” because its inhabitants follow glorious pursuits. What they are doing there all day long, I shall not attempt to guess, but we are told that “the Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face and His name shall be on their foreheads.” They will have enough to do to cast their crowns at His dear feet who gave them all the joy they have—and to make known to principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God! Of this we are quite sure—all their pursuits will be glorious, there will be nothing low, nothing groveling, nothing selfish done in Heaven—certainly, nothing wearisome, nothing laborious that can bring sweat to the brow, again, that comes here because of the Curse. No, it is a glorious place where the happy dwellers are engaged in glorious pursuits!

And they also have glorious pleasures. They realize to the fullest what David said, “In Your Presence is fullness of joy. At Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore.” Did you ever think—have you the power to conceive—what the pleasures of God must be? What is the joy of the Lord—the infinite satisfaction of the Eternal—the profound bliss of Him who is most blessed forever? It is that joy, that bliss, that peace of which they shall have a share, as the Master says to each one of them, “Enter you into the joy of your Lord.” As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high is God’s joy above our joy. Therefore we cannot attempt to describe it, but we can only say of it that the joy of Heaven is *Glory*! The bliss of Heaven is “from *Glory* to *Glory*” forever and ever!

And, as Heaven is a glorious place for glorious pursuits and glorious pleasures, so all there will be glorious persons. There is not one low or mean inhabitant of Heaven! There are many there who were despised on

earth—the lowly and the suffering and the persecuted—but they are no longer despised. God has put eternal honor upon them. They are all priests and kings unto God! The priestly garments they wear are more grand than Aaron's raiment of glory and beauty and in their royal robes they keep high holiday, where the sun goes down no more, and the days of their mourning are forever ended. It is all glorious and I do not wonder that Heaven is called, "Glory," and that we have so little said about it. There is just this great word—"Glory"—which by itself says more than I would be able to say if I kept you here till the clock tolled out the midnight hour!

This is the high enterprise of God, to bring His many sons to Glory. I call it a high enterprise, and so it is, for *He will bring them to Glory despite all difficulties*. Where do the redeemed begin their march? Down there, at the iron furnace, where they have lain among the pots, and where their slavery has been hard and cruel. Their march begins with Pharaoh to oppose them, but, with a high hand and an outstretched arm, God brings them up out of the bondage of Nature, and out of the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God! How gloriously does He lead them through the Red Sea and destroy their adversaries with the precious blood of Jesus, till the depths have covered them, and there is not one of them left! And the rest of the passage of His people, from that high day at the Red Sea onward till they reach Glory—what is it but a march of miracles, an ever-moving panorama of wonders? I do but speak of the experience of the true Christian when I say that he is opposed from within and from without and that he is his own greatest enemy—and that is not saying a small thing when I remind you that the world, the flesh and the devil are all leagued against him!

It is with push of pike that I make my way to Heaven, disputing with my fierce foe every inch of the road. Yet I shall win the day, for He, "by whom are all things," has undertaken to lead His sons to Glory—and He *will* lead them there! If they had to cut their way through a whole legion of devils, as when men reap their path through a thick cornfield, yet should they, everyone of them, pass through unharmed! If there were seven thousand Hells between them and Heaven, yet they would reach it in safety because He, "for whom are all things, and by whom are all things," has determined to bring them there! Yet it is no easy march and it will be no little glory that shall redound to Him who will lead us all through the wilderness and bring us to the Canaan which is above, that is, to "Glory."

I want you to notice, next, that this high enterprise on God's part is concerning *the bringing of "many sons to Glory."* In the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, we read about Mr. Great-Heart, who had a tough task to lead those women and children all the way to the Celestial City. They caused him a deal of trouble and he is a picture of many a Christian minister. Some of us have not to go before a few faint-hearted pilgrims, but we have to lead hundreds, or even thousands! Every morning before breakfast, I have to kill a giant for somebody or other, and hard fighting it is! And as soon as ever I have killed him, I hear one of the dear children crying out that he is going to be eaten up alive by another, so that I

have to keep my sword always drawn! It is no easy task to be, under Christ, helping to bring some of these sons to Glory!

But think of the work that God has undertaken—to bring many sons to Glory—untold millions of them! I shall not attempt to use figures to represent the numbers of the saved, for I believe my Master's redeemed ones will be as the dew of the morning, as the drops of the spray, as the sands on the seashore and far excelling the starry hosts marshaled on the midnight plains. Many sons will be brought to Glory by the great Father. Sometimes, in the old days of war, there used to be a number of little ships wanting to cross the sea, but the privateers were on the watch, so the seamen were afraid to hoist the sail and get away from the shelter of the shore, for they would soon be caught by their enemies, like doves by the hawk. Well, what was done? There they lay, in port, until His Majesty sent down a man-of-war, perhaps two or three, to be a convoy. Then the little ships would all be safe—their crews need not any longer be afraid of the Frenchmen or the Spaniards. So is it with those who are under the protection of God. We, weak little vessels, could never, by ourselves, reach our desired haven, but, lo, the Lord High Admiral of the seas and the great Emperor of the land has come forth in the majesty of His power to conduct us to Glory! And we shall get there safely, even though our enemies should be beyond all count. It was a grand thing when those convoys brought many little ships into harbor, but what a fleet the Lord will bring into the Fair Havens of eternal happiness! We read that on one occasion, when the Lord Jesus was crossing the Sea of Galilee, "there were also with Him other little ships." And there are still with Him many other little ships, but He will bring them all safely into the harbor. Let the enemy attack them if he dares to do so, but their Protector will preserve them all, for it is His purpose to bring many sons to Glory.

I have not yet said all I need to say about this high enterprise, for perhaps the chief wonder of it all is that He, "for whom are all things, and by whom are all things," *has resolved to bring to Glory many sons*. They shall, all of them, be His sons! Oh, what a marvel it is that they should be His sons! Who will have them for sons? I am sure that there is many a man who might be ashamed to take for sons those whom God takes—the most depraved, debased and fallen—whom men have passed by, as those to whom they could not even speak. The Lord, in Infinite Love, has taken them to be His children and He has said of them, "I will be a Father to them, and they shall be My sons and daughters." But, oh, what a work is needed in order to turn these rebels into children! What a wonder of Grace it is that they should first be regenerated and so get the nature of children! And then that they should be adopted and so have the status of children! And then that they should be sanctified and so exhibit, from day to day, those qualities that must be found in the children of a holy God! To make them sons is, indeed, an amazing work!

God did not do as much as that for the people in the wilderness. In that respect, the type broke down, for the Israelites would not be God's sons. He acted as a father towards them, but they were rebels against Him and, therefore, the carcasses of that first generation fell in the wil-

derness. What a mercy it is that God does not now write the Law on tablets of stone, but on the fleshy tablets of our hearts! And the Law of God being written there, He gives us the Grace to obey it and, especially, He gives us Grace to believe in Jesus and to receive Him! John wrote, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." And it is still true of all who receive Him and believe on His name! Oh, what a mercy it is that guilty sinners may so receive the adoption of children! What a blessed thing it is that God will not only bring us to Glory, but that we shall be sons when He gets us there! He will bring us to Glory as *sons*—we shall be His sons while on the road and we shall be acknowledged as His sons in the presence of the entire universe in that day when the righteous shall "shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father," for that is the glorious Kingdom to which He is going to bring us!

Blessed be His name that He should ever make us sons and resolve to bring us to Glory! Ah, well, He has set His heart upon doing it and He can do it—therefore let us again bless and praise His holy name!

II. Now I turn to my second point, which is concerning THE ORDAINED CAPTAIN. God intends to bring "many sons to Glory," but He means to do it by the hand of a chosen Captain, greater than Joshua, who will fight for His people and conduct them safely into the Canaan of "Glory."

The word here translated, "Captain," is, in another place, rendered, "Author," and, in yet another passage, "Prince." In fact, it is twice translated, "Prince." But I feel perfectly satisfied to take the term as our Authorized Version gives it and to say that *the Lord our God leads His people to Glory by a Captain*. He might have done it, if so it had pleased Him, by His own power and might, apart from a Mediator, but He has not done so. He has ordained everything by the hand of a Mediator and it is an essential part of His arrangement of the whole system of Grace that the Father should work by the Son to bring the many sons to Glory, that the Son should bring them there by being the Captain in their midst, representing Him among men, being clothed with His power, effecting His Divine purpose for them. God will bring no sons to Glory except through this Captain! None may ever hope to enter Glory except by Christ Jesus! He Himself has said, "I am the way." And He is the only way. Therefore, woe be to those who refuse to come to God by Him! God will bring all His sons to Glory, but it must be by the Captain whom He has ordained. Let us think for a little while what a captain is and what a captain has to do, for that will help us to understand the office and work of the Captain of our salvation.

First, then, the Lord Jesus Christ has come to conduct us to Glory by *making all arrangements for the march*. There is a great deal of responsibility connected with the leader of an army, not only in deciding as to where his troops shall encamp for the night, but where they shall march on the morrow, and in what direction they will be likely to be needed many days ahead. The commissariat of an army requires great thoughtfulness and care on the part of the leader and our Captain, the Lord Jesus Christ, has made all necessary arrangements for His people between

here and Heaven! I am quite sure that we shall never come to a halting place between here and Glory, of which we shall be able to say that no provision has been made for us there. *Providence*, or seeing beforehand, is always at work on behalf of the Lord's people. God is always looking ahead and Christ makes every arrangement for the salvation of all His people, even down to the minutest details. He is a most blessed Captain.

A captain's work, after he has arranged for the march, is, next, to *give the word of command*. "Go," he says, or, "Stay." "Do this," or, "Be still." The soldier's one business is to obey his orders. He has not any right to choose what he will do. His marching orders are to be his law. Now, the Lord Jesus Christ will lead many sons to the Glory of His Father by giving those gracious commands which always bring a blessing with them whenever they are obeyed.

Captains, however, do more than command, for, if they are wise, they *lead the way*. I have heard that a Turkish officer says to his men, "Go along," and stays behind and watches the soldiers. But when a British officer cries, "Come on!" he leads the way! That is what our Lord has done. In the sternest fight, He is always conspicuous, and there is no weary march that He bids us tramp in which He does not foot it at our side. You shall never climb so high that you will not find the footprint of the Crucified there, nor shall you be called to descend even into the depths of the sea but you shall find that He has been there, too, for He leads us always as the Captain of our salvation!

It is a captain's business, also, to *encourage his men*. How often the presence of a true leader has effected more for the army than all their own strength could do! When Basing could not be taken by the Parliamentary troops in Cromwell's day, "Old Noll" went down and he took Basing, directly, as he did every other place that he determined to capture! And infinitely more glorious is the Captain of our salvation, whose Presence secures victory to the most discouraged band if they do but see Him, and say, "It is He!" The next word is, "Be not afraid," for where He comes, devils fly. The earth shakes at the Presence of the Christ of God! It is the captain's business to encourage his men, and that our great Captain does continually!

Sometimes it is the captain's delight to *reward his followers*. A wise leader gives words of praise when they are deserved and, on special occasions, he distributes more substantial things. As for our blessed Lord, His gracious commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant," would more than repay us for the toils of a lifetime—even if our lifetime were longer than Methuselah's! Let us, then, be faithful and true as we have such a Captain as our Lord Jesus Christ who can do for us all that captains should do for their soldiers, and a great deal more.

Now, seeing that it is the will of the Lord to lead us to Glory by the Captain of our salvation, I want you to be worthy of your Leader. Do you not think that, sometimes, we act as if we had no Captain? We fancy that we have to fight our way to Heaven by the might of our own right hand and by our own skill, but it is not so. If you start before your Captain gives you the order to march, you will have to come back. And if you try to fight without your Captain, you will rue the day. "Oh," says one, "but I

have been thinking today what I shall do if such-and-such happens.” My dear Brother, it would be a great deal better for you to remember that “the Lord lives,” and to leave the thinking and arranging in His hands. There are a great many *ifs* in the world that are like a swarm of wasps—if you let those *ifs* out, they will sting you from head to foot! But there is one glorious *if* that will kill them all! It is this—if the Lord Jesus Christ could fail—if He could desert us, then all would be lost! That kills all the other *ifs*, because it is an impossible *if*. He cannot fail us or leave us! He must live, He must conquer and while that is the case, the other *ifs* do not mean anything to us. Therefore, cast yourselves on your Captain’s care. March onward though you cannot see your way! Fly at the enemy though they seem to outnumber you by ten to one, for greater is He that is for you than all that can be against you! Be not afraid of *anything*, for your Captain is equal to all emergencies.

When the Lord our God chose Him as our Leader and Commander, He laid help upon One that was mighty. He did not take some poor weak mortal to be the captain of such a company as we are! He did not even select an angel for this great task. He exalted One chosen out of the people who was most suitable for the position—and God’s wisdom would be dishonored if Christ were found incapable of bringing the many sons to Glory! But He is blessedly capable of all that is required of Him—and the ancient prophecies concerning Him shall be completely fulfilled! “He shall not fail nor be discouraged.” “and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands.”

III. Thus far, then, we have seen that the Great Father will bring His many sons to Glory by a Captain. But the meat of the text lies in the part we have now to consider, and that is, THE BECOMING WORK OF THE FATHER UPON OUR CAPTAIN. “It became Him, in bringing many sons to Glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

God always acts becomingly and, therefore, *it was right that Christ should suffer*. I have sometimes heard discussions as to whether the Lord might not have saved sinners without a Mediator, or, if through a Mediator, whether we might not have been saved by some other method without the death of Christ. I do not think it is right for us to form any kind of judgment upon that matter, but to say, as our risen Lord said to His disciples, “It behooved Christ to suffer.” It was becoming that Christ should die. “It pleased the Lord to bruise Him.” It was a seemly and proper thing, in the sight of Him, “for whom are all things, and by whom are all things,” that we should be saved by a Mediator, and that the chosen Mediator should not have us apart from His own terrible sufferings.

It was becoming that *our Captain should be made perfect, complete, fully equipped for saving us by suffering*. The agony could not be left out. The cup must not pass from Him without His drinking its awful contents. It was becoming that Christ should be poor—so He had not where to lay His head. It was becoming that He should be hungry—so He fasted for 40 days. It was becoming that He should sweat great drops of blood. It was a becoming thing in the sight of God that there should be suffering on the part of His chosen Captain. It was becoming that He should be spit upon—that He should be mocked—that He should be scourged—that He

should be nailed to a tree—that He should be parched with fever and, in awful depression of spirit, should cry, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” It was becoming that all this should happen and, therefore, it did happen. Let that be a sufficient answer to us whenever we are asked any questions about Christ’s suffering—*it was becoming in God’s sight.*

And let those who deny the Atonement, and those precious critics who sneer at every hymn that tells of the agonies of Christ, understand that it was becoming that He should endure all this and that we are not ashamed to sing of what God counts becoming. I, for one, mean still to sing—

**“His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o’er His body on the tree.”**

I mean, still, to sing—

**“Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut its glories in,
When God, the mighty Maker, died
For man, the creature’s sin.”**

Even though it seems to some as if we knew Christ after the flesh, I would rather know Him so than not at all. And some seem to wish *not* to know Him at all. They want, especially, to get rid of the blood—“the offense of the Cross” has not yet ceased—it is still a cause of stumbling to a great many! But, oh, I pray you who are offended at the Cross, not to think that you will ever get to Heaven, for God and you would not agree, there, for He counts the Cross becoming, and you count it foolishness—so there is a radical difference of opinion between you two and one Heaven would not hold you! You must get agreed with God about that matter, or else, depend upon it, you will never enter the pearly gates! You must honor the Son even as you honor the Father, and honor the Son in His blood and wounds and in all His agony and death, or else you shall not come where the Father takes pleasure in the Well-Beloved.

Further, the text seems to say that *it was becoming that Christ should be made perfect through suffering.* There are many points in which Christ could not save us without suffering. He could not be a perfect Substitute unless He bore our sin and shame. He could not be a perfect Sympathizer unless He bore our suffering. This, perhaps, is the main point in which Christ is perfected. He becomes capable of entering into all the griefs that disturb the many sons whom He is to lead to Glory. In our Elder Brother, the heir of all things, there is an epitome of all the sorrows of all the rest of the family. In Christ there is every pang that rends the heart, every grief that forces tears from the eyes—except such griefs as are sinful and could not enter into His holy bosom—but everything that is inevitable to flesh and blood, to hearts that break, spirits that are depressed and everything of that kind, Jesus knows.

Sometimes I have been where none of you have ever been, but I have never been where I could not find Christ. And some of you, my dear Brothers and Sisters, have been in heartbreaking trouble that I never knew. But the Master has been there, if the Pastor has not, and if the dearest Christian friend has not—and so He has become perfect through suffering. “I know their sorrows,” He says, “I know their sorrows, not by

having read or heard about them, but by having suffered them.” Of all the bitter medicine in the great apothecary’s store, Christ has had a draught. He knows all about them and this makes Him “perfect through sufferings.”

Finally, it was becoming on the part of God, “for whom are all things, and by whom are all things,” that He should perfect His Son as our Captain through sufferings. But the original Greek gives us a fuller meaning than this—that God should glorify His Son. It is becoming on God’s part that He should give to Christ everything that can make Him glorious and honorable. Seeing that He bowed His head to suffer and to die, it was right that God should raise Him from the dead, that He should set Him at His own right hand, that He should crown Him with many crowns, that He should grant Him to “have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.” It is becoming that Christ should have all honor and Glory paid to Him, that men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. In prayer, when I need an argument that I know will prevail with God, I say to Him, “Father, glorify Your Son! You love Him, look at Him, is He not lovely in Your eyes as the suffering, obedient Son of Your love? Do You not admire Him beyond all conception? Therefore, hear my supplication and grant my petition for His sake.”

I like, sometimes, to leave off praying and singing, and to sit still, and just gaze upward till my inmost soul has seen my Lord. Then I say, “He is inexpressibly lovely. Yes, He is altogether lovely!” If He is that to my poor eyes, which are so dull and dim that they cannot half discern His beauties, what must He be in the eyes of God? In the eyes of God He is so precious that, as my text says, “It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things”—it was becoming even in Him, “in bringing many sons to Glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings”—glorified beyond all imaginable glory and to have universal homage paid to Him throughout the universe forever and ever! God sees it to be becoming and, therefore, we delight in it. Amen and amen!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
HEBREWS 2:1-15.**

Verse 1. *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.* We have heard them. Do not let us forget them! Let them not be like the driftwood which goes floating down the stream. Let us make a desperate effort to retain them in our memories and, above all, to ponder them in our hearts.

2, 3. *For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? They could not trifle with the angels’ message without receiving just punishment from God. Much less, then, can we trifle with Christ’s Gospel! We have not an angelic savior, but God Himself, in the Person of His Son, has deigned to be the Mediator of the New Covenant. Therefore, let us see to it that we do*

not trifle with these things. You see, dear Friends, that we need not be great open sinners in order to perish—it is merely a matter of *neglect*. See how it is put here. “How shall we escape, if we *neglect* so great a salvation?” You need not go to the trouble of despising it, or resisting it, or opposing it. You can be lost readily enough simply by neglecting it. In fact, the great mass of those who perish are those who neglect the great salvation!

3. *Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto me by them that heard Him.* The Apostles and the other followers of our Lord constantly bore witness to His miracles and His Resurrection.

4. *God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will.* Those who doubt the Truth of the Gospel, or who say they do, are often found believing historical statements that are not half as well proved. A man sits down and reads a book of the Gallic wars and he believes that Julius Caesar wrote it—yet there is not a half or a *tenth* as much evidence to prove that he did write it as there is to prove that our Lord Jesus lived, died and rose again from the dead! The witness to the truth of these great matters of fact has been borne by God, Himself, with signs, wonders and miracles. Honest and true men, Apostles and others, have witnessed them—and they have also been certified by Incarnate Deity, even by the Lord who deigns to speak to us by His Spirit. We cannot, therefore, trifle with this Gospel without incurring most serious guilt!

5. *For to the angels He has not put in subjection the world to come, of which we speak.* We are the preachers of it—not the angels! And the great Author and Finisher of our faith is the Man, Christ Jesus—not an angel. We have not, now, the ministry of angels, but the ministry of men, by whom the Lord of the angels sends His messages to their fellows.

6-8. *But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that You are mindful of him? Or the son of man, that You visit him? You made him a little lower than the angles; You crowned him with glory and honor, and did set Him over the works of Your hands: You have put all things in subjection under his feet.* This was the original status of man. God made him to be His vicegerent on earth and he would still hold that position were it not that since he has rebelled against his own Sovereign, even the beasts of the field take liberty to be rebellious against him. Man is not now in his original estate and, therefore, he no longer rules. And we see many men who are very far from being royal beings, for they are mean and groveling. Yet the glory of man is not all lost, as we shall see.

8, 9. *For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus.* Here is the representative Man who is supreme over all. “We see Jesus.”

9. *Who was made a little lower than the angels for suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He, by the Grace of God, should taste death for every man.* Oh, how glorious it is to realize our position in Christ and to see how He has lifted us up, not merely to the place from which the first Adam fell, but He has made us stand so securely there

that we shall not again descend around the ruins of the Fall! Glory be to His holy name!

10, 11. *For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to Glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.* The Christ and the Christian are one—the Man, Christ Jesus, and the men whom He redefined are one! He has so become partaker of our nature that now we are one family and He is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters. Am I addressing any who are ashamed of Christ, or who are ashamed of God’s poor people, and who would not like to be known to be members of a poor Church? Ah, how you ought to be ashamed of *yourselves* for having any such pride in your hearts, for Christ is not ashamed to call His people brethren! Oh, what wondrous condescension! He has done this many times in the Psalms where He speaks of His brethren.

12. *Saying, I will declare Your name to My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise to You.* That is a quotation from the 22nd Psalm.

13. *And again, I will put My trust in Him.* Thus entering into the very faith of His people!

13, 14. *And again, Behold I and the children which God has given Me. Inasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood.* As you know to your cost, for perhaps you have aches and pains about you at this very moment. Verily, you are “partakers of flesh and blood.” Perhaps you are suffering from despondency and depression of spirit. If so, that reminds you that however much you may, in spirit, sometimes soar to Heaven, yet you are still “partakers of flesh and blood.”

14, 15. *He also, Himself, likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.* He so took upon Himself flesh and blood as to die in our nature, that thus He might slay death, and might set us free from all fear of death. Do you not see that if the representative Man, Christ Jesus, died, He also rose again, and also that so will all who are in Him rise, too? If you are in Him, You shall rise again! Therefore, fear not to lie down in your last sleep, for the trumpet shall awaken you and your bodies shall be molded afresh like to His glorious body and your soul and body together shall dwell in infinite bliss forever! “Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—289, 336, 294.

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

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

CHRIST—PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS NO. 478

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 2, 1862,
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”
Hebrews 2:10.***

BELIEVING that God foreknows all things, we cannot but come to the conclusion that He foreknew the Fall and that it was but an incident in the great method by which He would glorify Himself. Foreknowing the Fall and foreordaining and predestinating the plan by which He would rescue His chosen out of the ruins thereof, He was pleased to make that plan a manifestation of all His attributes and, to a very great extent, a declaration of His wisdom.

You do not find in the method of salvation a single tinge of folly. The Greeks may call it folly, but they are fools, themselves. The Gospel is the highest refinement of wisdom, yes, of Divine wisdom and we cannot help perceiving that not only in its main features, but in its little points, in the details and the minutiae, the wisdom of God is most clearly to be seen. Just as in the making of the tabernacle in the wilderness, not a single loop or clasp was left to human chance or judgment, so in the great scheme of salvation, not a single fragment was left to the human will or to the folly of the flesh.

It appears to be a Law of the Divine action that everything *must* be according to the fitness and necessity involved in perfect wisdom—“*It behooved* that Christ should suffer.” And in our text we find, “*It became Him* from whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” It seemed to be but the order of natural fitness and congruity, in accordance with the Nature and Character of God, that the plan of salvation should be just what it is.

Oh, how careful should we be who have to preach it, never to alter it in the slightest degree! How important it is that we should lift our prayers to Heaven that God would give us a clear understanding! First, of what we have to teach. And then a clear method of teaching what we have learned, so that no mistake may be made here. For one mistake here would mar that express image of God which shines in the Gospel, and prevent our hearers from seeing the beautiful fitness and proportion which are so adapted to reveal the perfect Character of God.

We say the plan *must* be what it is. It could not be otherwise so as to be in keeping with the Divine Character. And, therefore, it is imperative upon us that we make no alteration in it, no, not of a single word, lest we should hear the Apostle’s anathema hissing through the air like a thun-

derbolt from God—“If we or an angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel than that you have received, let him be accursed!”

Our text invites us to the consideration of three particulars—first, *that Christ is a perfect Savior*. Secondly, *that He became so through sufferings*. And thirdly, *that His being made perfect through sufferings will ennoble and dignify the whole work of Divine Grace*. “It became Him”—it seemed fitting—that in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

I. To begin, then, first of all with the joyous thought, so well known to you all but so necessary still to be repeated, that **THE LORD JESUS IS A PERFECT SAVIOR**.

1. For, first, *He is perfectly adapted for the work of saving*. The singular constitution of His Nature adapts Him to His office. He is *God*. It was necessary that He should be so. Who but God could sustain the enormous weight of human guilt? What but Divinity was equal to bear the awful load of wrath which was to be carried upon His shoulders? What knowledge but Omniscience could understand all the evil, and what power but Omnipotence could undo that evil? That Christ is God must ever be a theme for grateful admiration to His people.

They who reject the Divinity of Christ can have but a poor foundation to rest upon. The fickle sand would seem to be more stable than the basis of their hope. It is enough for one man to work out his own obedience—more than enough for one man to bear wrath for himself. How, then, could he do it for others, and for those countless multitudes whose ruin was to be retrieved? But, Beloved, we know that had He only been God, yet still He would not have been fitted for a perfect Savior, unless He had become *Man*.

Man had sinned. Man must suffer. It was man in whom God’s purposes had been for a while defeated. It must be in man that God must triumph over His great enemy. He *must* take upon Himself the seed of Abraham, that He may stand in their stead and place, and become their federal Head. An angel, we believe, could not have suffered on the tree. It would not have been possible for an angelic nature to have borne those agonies which the wrath of God demanded as an expiation for guilt.

But when we see the Lord Jesus before us, being verily the Son of Man, and as certainly, the Son of God, we perceive that now Job’s desire is granted. We have a Daysman that can lay His hands on both, and touch humanity in its weakness, and Divinity in its strength. He can make a ladder between earth and Heaven, can bridge the distance which separates fallen manhood from the perfection of the eternal God. No Nature but one so complex as that of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, would have been perfectly adapted for the work of salvation.

And as He was adapted in His Nature, so, Beloved, it is very clear to us that He was also adapted by His *experience*. A physician should have some acquaintance with disease—how shall he know the remedy if he is ignorant of the malady? Our Savior knew all because, “He took our infirmities, and He bore our sicknesses. He was tempted in all points, like as we are.” He looked not at sin from the distance of Heaven, but He walked, and lived in the midst of it. He did not pass hurriedly through the world as one might hastily walk through an hospital without clearly under-

standing the disease—He lived His more than thirty years in the very center of it, seeing sin in all its shapes.

Yes, seeing it in shapes that you and I have not yet seen. He saw it in demoniac forms, for Hell was let loose for a season, that the combat might be the more terrible, and the victory the more glorious. He saw sin carried to its most aggravated extent, when it crucified God, Himself, and nailed Jesus, the Heir of Heaven, to the accursed tree. He understood the disease. He was no charlatan. He had studied the whole case through. Deceitful as the human heart is, Jesus knew it. Fickle as it is in its various appearances—versatile as it is in its constantly varying shapes—Christ knew and understood it all. His life-long walking of the hospital of human nature had taught Him the disease.

He knew the *subjects, too, upon whom to operate*. He knew man, and what was in man. Yes, better than the most skilled surgeon can know by experiment, He knew by experience. He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sorrows. He was, Himself, the Patient, Himself the Medicine. He took upon Himself the nature of the race He came to save, and so every feeling made Him perfect in His work. Every pang instructed Him. Every throb of anguish made Him wise, and rendered Him the more accomplished to work out the purposes of God in the bringing of the many sons unto glory.

If you will add to His perfect experience *His marvelous Character*, you will see how completely adapted He was to the work. For a Savior, we need One who is full of love, whose love will make Him firm to His purpose, whose love will constrain Him to yoke every power and talent that He has to the great work. We want One with zeal so flaming that it will eat Him up. Of courage so indomitable that He will face every adversary rather than forego His end. We want One, at the same time, who will blend with this brass of courage, the gold of meekness, and of gentleness.

We want One who will be determined to deal fearlessly with His adversaries, who will put on zeal as a cloak, and will deal tenderly and compassionately with the disease of sin-sick men. Such an One we have in Christ. No man can read the Character of Christ with any sort of understanding without saying, “That is *the Man* I want as my Friend.” The argument which Christ used was a very powerful one—“Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me.” Why? “*For I am meek and lowly in heart.*”

The Character of Christ qualifies Him to be the world’s Savior, and there is something in His Character, when properly understood, which is so attractive, that we may well say—

**“His worth if all the nations knew,
Surely the whole world would love Him, too.”**

If we had to make a Savior ourselves and it were left to a Parliament of the wisest senators of the race to form an ideal personage who should just meet man’s case, if the Divine One had lent us His own wisdom for the occasion, we could only have desired just such a Person as Christ is.

In Character, we should have needed just such traits of Nature and of Spirit as we see in Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God. We think, therefore, we may safely say to every unconverted man, Christ is adapted to be a Savior to you. We know that the saints, without our saying it, will respond, “Yes, and He is just fitted to be a Savior to us.” Man, yet God! Bone of our bone, and yet counting it not robbery to be equal with God! Sufferer

like ourselves, bearer of all the ills of manhood, and yet, unlike us, free from sin, holy, harmless, undefiled—qualified in all respects to undertake and accomplish the great work! Jesus, You are a perfect Savior to us!

2. Furthermore, as Christ is thus perfectly adapted, so *He is perfectly able to be a Savior*. He is a perfect Savior by reason of ability. He is now able to meet *all the needs* of sinners. That need is very great. The sinner needs *everything*. The beggar at the door of Christ asks not for crumbs or grain, but needs all that Christ can give. Nothing short of all-sufficiency can ever meet the wants of a poor son of Adam fallen by sin. Christ Jesus has all fullness dwelling in Himself. “More than all in Christ we find”—pardon in His blood. Justification in His righteousness. Wisdom in His teaching. Sanctification in His Spirit.

He is the God of all Grace to us. Deep as our miseries, and boundless as our sins may be, the mines of His unfathomable love, His Grace, and His power exceed them still. Send a spirit throughout all nations to hunt up the most abject of all races—discover, at last, a tribe of men degenerated as low as the beasts. Select out of these the vilest, one who has been a cannibal. Bring before us one lost to all sense of morality, one who has put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter, light for darkness, and darkness for light. Let that man be red with murder, let him be black with lust.

Let villainies infest his heart as innumerable and detestable as the frogs of Egypt’s plague—yet Christ is able to meet that man’s case. It is impossible for us to produce an exaggeration of the work of sin, and the devil, which Christ shall not be able to overtop by the plenitude of His power. “He is able to save *unto the uttermost* them that come unto God by Him.” That Divine Word which made Heaven and earth is able to make a new creature in Christ Jesus. And that power which never can be exhausted, which after making ten thousand times ten thousand worlds could make as many more, is all in Christ—and is linked with the virtue of His merit and the prevalence of His blood. And therefore He has all power in Heaven and in earth to save souls.

As He has this power to meet all needs, so He can meet all needs *in all cases*. There has never been brought to Christ a man whom He could not heal. If born blind, a touch of His finger has given sight. If lame, He has made men leap like a hart! Yes, and though dead, the voice of Christ has made Lazarus come forth from his tomb. Some troubled consciences think their case is not in the list of possible cures. Let us assure them it must be. I would like to know who is the vilest sinner, for if I knew him I should feel delighted to behold him, since I should see a platform upon which my Lord’s Grace might stand to be the more gloriously resplendent in the eyes of men.

Are you the vilest of the vile this morning? Do you feel so? Does Satan say you are so? Then I pray you do my Master the honor to believe that He is still able to meet your case, and that He can save even you. Though you yourselves are the ends of the earth, the very raveling of the garment of manhood, yet “look unto Him and be you saved, all you ends of the earth, for He is God and besides Him there is none else.” As He can meet all cases, so He can meet all cases *at all times*. One lie of Hell is to tell sinners that it is too late. While the lamp holds out to burn, the vilest sinner that returns shall find mercy in Christ.

At the eleventh hour He saved the thief. Let not this be a reason for your procrastination—that were ungrateful. Let it, however, be a cause for hope—that were reasonable. He is able to save you *NOW*. Now, at this hour, at this very moment, if you trust Him, you are saved. If now, without an hour's delay to retire to your chamber, without even five minutes' time elapsing in which to prepare your soul for Him—if *NOW* you can believe that Christ can save you, He will do it, do it at this moment! His cures are instantaneous! A word and it is done. Swift as the lightning's flash is the accomplishment of His purpose of free Grace.

As the lightning flashes from the west even to the east, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be at His last great advent. And so is it in His marvelous advent into the hearts of sinners whom He ordains to save. Able to meet all cases, able to meet them at this very hour is Christ. Sinner, Christ is perfectly able to save you, and to save you perfectly. I know the will and wit of man want to be *doing* something to begin salvation. Oh, how wicked is this! Christ is Alpha, why would you take His place and be an Alpha to yourselves?

I have had this week two cases in which I have had to hold a solemn argument with troubled souls about this matter. Oh, the "ifs" and "buts" they put up! The "perhaps," and "and," and, "Oh, I don't feel this," and "I don't feel that!" Oh, that wicked questioning of Christ! While talking with them, endeavoring to comfort them, and I hope not unsuccessfully, I was led to feel in my own mind what an awful crime it is to doubt God, to doubt Him that speaks from above, to doubt Him when He hangs bleeding on the tree.

While it seemed to me to be such a hard thing to bring a sinner to trust Christ, yet it did seem, on the other hand, such a sin of sins, such a masterpiece of iniquity that we do not trust Christ at once. Here is the plan of salvation—trust Christ and He will save you. But they say, "I do not feel enough." Or else, "I have been such a sinner." Or else, "I cannot feel the joy I want." Or else, "I cannot pray as I would." Then I put it to them. Do you trust Christ? "Yes," they will say, "I do trust Christ, and yet am not saved." Now, this makes God a liar, for He says, "He that believes in Him is not condemned, and he that believes on Him has everlasting life."

When a soul professes to trust Christ and yet says, "I am afraid He will not save me," what is this but telling the Eternal God to His face that He is a liar? Can you suppose a grosser infamy than this? Oh, that men were wise, that they would take God at His Word. That they would believe that Christ is a perfect Savior. That they do not need to help Him at the first, but to understand that He is able to begin with them just where they are! That He can lift them up from all the hardness of their hearts, and the blackness of their souls to the very gates of Heaven! He is a perfect Savior, Soul! And a perfect Savior for you!

You know the old story of the brazen serpent. There may have been some very wise persons who, when the brazen serpent was lifted up, would say, "I cannot look there and be healed, for, you see, I do not feel the venom in my veins as my neighbor does." The man is bitten and his veins are swelling, but he says he does not *feel* the pain so acutely as his neighbor, and he does not feel the joy of those who are healed, or else he would look. "If some angel would come," he says, "and tell me that the

brazen serpent was set up on purpose for me, and that I am ordained to be healed by it, then I would look.”

There is a poor ignorant man over there who asks no questions. He does just as he is told. Moses cries, “Look, look, you dying! Look and live!” And, asking no questions about what he has *felt*, or what he *was*, or what he *should* feel, yonder poor soul just looks and the deed is done. The flush of health runs through him, and he is restored, while the questioner, the wise man in his own conceit, too wise indeed, to do as he is told, perishes through his own folly—a victim to the serpents but yet more a victim to his own conceit.

Christ is a perfect Savior to begin with you, and He will also be a perfect Savior to carry on the work. He will never want your help. He is a perfect Savior to finish the work. He will bring you, at last to His right hand, and enthroned with Him in light, you shall bless and praise the name of God that He provided a perfect Savior for men.

3. Once more, let me remind you *that Christ is a perfectly successful Savior*. I mean by this that, in one sense, *He has already finished the work of salvation*. All that has to be done to save a soul, Christ has done already. There is no more ransom to be paid. To the last drachma He has counted down the price. There is no more righteousness to be worked out. To the last stitch He has finished the garment. There is nothing to be done to reconcile God to sinners. He has reconciled us unto God by His blood. There is nothing wanted to clear the way to the Mercy Seat.

We have a new and living way through the veil that was rent, even the Body of Christ. There is no need of any preparation for our reception on the part of God. “It is finished,” was the voice from Calvary. It meant what it said, “*It is finished.*” Christ has finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness. And, as He has been successful in doing all the work for us, so, *in every case where that work has been applied, perfect success has followed.*

Produce a single case where an application has been made to Christ without success. Find a single soul in whom Christ has commenced His work, and then left it. You do hear of some who fall from Divine Grace—produce them. We are told of some who are children of God today, and children of the devil tomorrow—produce them. We are told that whom once He loves, He may leave—produce those whom He has ever left. Let them be seen. Hold them up to the gaze of men and devils—the patients in whom Christ’s medicine did work awhile but failed to produce a lasting cure.

Heaven were clothed in sackcloth if such a discovery were made, for if He has failed to keep on earth, why not in Heaven? Hell were echoing with infernal laughter if one such instance were found, for where were the honor of God’s Word and promise? We challenge you, you princes of darkness, and you who make the vast assembly of the damned in Hell, we challenge you to produce in all your ranks a single case of one who trusted in Christ that He would deliver him, and yet Christ cast him away. Or one in whom the new spirit was infused, and regeneration worked, and who, after all, fell and perished like the rest.

Lift up your eyes to Heaven. Innumerable as the stars are the spirits redeemed by Christ’s blood! So many as they are, they are all witnesses to

the fact that Christ is a perfect Savior. That He is no professor who does not perform, for He has carried them all there, and as we gaze upon them, all can say, “You have redeemed them unto God by Your blood.” You can save and perfectly save, O Lord Jesus Christ!

Now, I have thus dwelt upon the perfect adaptation, the perfect ability, and the perfect success of Christ. Our text tells us *that it became Him, for whom are all things, that He should give us such a Savior*. “For whom are all things,” says the Apostle. That is, all things are made for His glory. Now, it could not have been for God’s glory to give us an imperfect Savior—to send us One who would mock us with hopes which could not be fulfilled! It would have been a tantalizing of human hope, which I do not hesitate to pronounce an awful cruelty, if any but a complete and perfect Savior had been presented to us.

If it had been partly works and partly Grace, there had been no Grace in it. If it had been necessary for us to *do* something to make Christ’s Atonement efficacious, it would have been no Atonement for us. We must have gone down to the pit of Hell with this as an aggravation, that a God who professed to be a God of mercy, had offered us a religion of which we could not avail ourselves—a hope which did but delude us—and make our darkness the blacker. I want to know what some of my Brethren in the ministry, who preach such very high doctrine, do with their God’s Character.

They are told to preach the Gospel to every creature, but they very wisely do not do it, because they feel that the Gospel they preach is not a Gospel suitable to every creature. So they neglect their Master’s mandate and single out a few. I bless my Master that I have an available Gospel, one that is available to you this morning, for “whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.” And I hold that it were inconsistent with the Character of Him, “for whom are all things,” and that it were derogatory to His honor if He should have sent to you a salvation that would not meet your case—if He should have sent me to preach a Gospel to you which could not completely save. But, glory be to God, the salvation which is here preached, the salvation taught in this Book, brings *all* to you, and asks *nothing* from you.

Moreover, Paul calls our God—“Him by whom are all things.” It would be inconsistent with the Character of Him by whom are all things if He had sent a part-Savior—for us to do part ourselves, and for Christ to do the rest. Look at the sun. God wills for the sun to light the earth—does He ask the earth’s darkness to contribute to the light? Does He question night, and ask it whether it has not in its somber shades something which it may contribute to the brightness of noon? No, my Brethren! Up rises the sun in the morning, like a giant to run his race, and the earth is made bright. And shall God turn to the dark sinner and ask him whether there is anything in him that may contribute to eternal light?

No! Up rises the face of Jesus, like the Sun of Righteousness, with healing beneath His wings. And darkness is, at His coming, light. See, too, the showers. When the earth is thirsty and cracking, does the Lord say unto the clouds, “Wait until the earth can help you and can minister unto its own fertility”? No, verily, but the wind blows and the clouds cover the sky and upon the thirsty earth the refreshing showers come down. So is it

with Christ—waiting not for man—asking nothing from us, He gives us of His own rich Grace, and is a complete and perfect Savior. Thus much, then, upon our first head. I would we had more time for our second. But we will pass to it at once.

II. CHRIST WAS MADE A PERFECT SAVIOR THROUGH SUFFERINGS.

He was not made perfect in Character by His sufferings, for He always was perfect—perfect God, perfect Man. But He was made officially perfect, perfect as the Captain of our salvation through His sufferings, and that in four ways.

By His sufferings He became perfect as a Savior *from having offered a complete expiation for sin*. Sin could not have been put away by holiness. The best performance of an unsuffering being could not have removed the guilt of man. Suffering was absolutely necessary, for suffering was the penalty of sin. “In the day you eat thereof,” said God to Adam, “you shall surely die.” Die then He must. Nothing short of death could meet the case. Christ must go to the Cross. He must suffer there—yes, and He must bow His head and give up the ghost—or else no atonement for sin had been possible.

The curse came upon us as the result of sin. “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them.” Now had Christ been ever so perfect, yet had He never suffered, He never could have taken our curse. “Cursed is everyone that hangs on the tree,” but without the tree, without the Cross, Christ had not been our Substitute. And all He did could have been of no use to us. Being crucified, He became accursed. Being crucified, He died, and thus He could make perfect expiation for sin. Sin demanded punishment—punishment must consist of loss and of pain.

Christ lost everything, even to the stripping of His garments. His Glory was taken from Him. They made nothing of Him. They spat in His face. They bowed the knee and mocked Him with bitter irony. There must be pain, too, and He endured it. In His body there were the wounds, and the fever which the wounds produced. And in His soul there was an exceeding heaviness even unto death, and an agony which no tongue can tell, for we have no words in which to speak of it. We believe that this agony was commensurate with the agonies of the lost in Hell.

Not the same agony, but an equivalent for it. And remember, not the equivalent for the agony of *one*, but an equivalent for the hells of all that innumerable host whose sins He bore—condensed into one black draught to be drained in a few hours. The miseries of an eternity without end, miseries caused by a God infinitely angry because of an awful rebellion—and these miseries multiplied by the millions for whom the Man Christ Jesus stood as Covenant Head. What a draught was that, men and Brethren! Well might it stagger even Him!

And yet He drained that cup, drained it to its utmost dregs. Not a drop was left. For you, my Soul, no flames of Hell—for Christ the Paschal Lamb has been roasted in that fire. For you, my Soul, no torments of the damned, for Christ has been condemned in your place. For you, my Spirit, no desertion of your God—for He was forsaken of God for you. It is done, it is finished, and by Your sufferings, Jesus, You have become perfect as the expiation of Your people’s sins. My Brethren, remember that your sins

are perfectly expiated. Do not let them trouble you as to punishment. The punishment has gone. Sins cannot lie in two places at one time. They were put on Christ and they cannot be on you.

In fact, your sins are not to be found. The Scapegoat has gone, and your sins will never be found again. Your sins, if they were searched for, could not be discovered. Not by the piercing eye of God can a single blemish be found in you. So far as the punishment of the Law is concerned, it is finished, and Christ is a perfect Savior. Again, if Christ had not suffered, He could not have been perfect as a Savior, *because He could not have brought in a perfect righteousness*. It is not enough to expiate sin. God requires of man perfect *obedience*. If man would be in Heaven, He must be perfectly obedient.

Christ, as He took away our guilt, has supplied us with a matchless righteousness. His works are our works. His doings are, by imputation, our doings. But a part of obedience is a patient endurance of God's will. Patience is no mean part of the full obedience of a sincere soul. Christ must, therefore, suffer hunger, and cold, and nakedness, throughout life—that He may be capable of the virtue of patience. An obedience even unto death is now the only perfect form of obedience. The man who would keep the Law of God perfectly must not start back even at martyrdom. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength," would now require death to consummate it.

It was not possible for the Master to have made the robe, woven from the top throughout without seam, unless the scarlet thread of crucifixion had run along its edge. But now, my Soul, Christ is your perfect Savior, for He presents you with a perfect righteousness. There is nothing more to do. Neither my living, nor my dying can make my righteousness more complete. No doing, no laboring, no denying, no suffering are needed to finish that which Christ began. "It is finished." Put on your robe, O Christian! Walk ever in it. Let it be your wedding dress. Angels admire you! God Himself accepts you! Coming into His wedding feast, He sees you with this garment on, and He asks you not how you come here, but bids you sit down and feast forever, for you are such as even He can keep company with in His glory.

Yet, thirdly, it was necessary that Christ should suffer to make Him a perfect Savior so far as His sympathy goes. After sin is washed away and righteousness imputed, we yet want a Friend, for we are in a land of troubles and of sorrows. Now, if Christ had not suffered, He could not have been a faithful High Priest, made like unto His Brethren. We should never have had that sweet text—"He was tempted in all points, like as we are, yet without sin," if He had not suffered. But now He knows all shapes of suffering. It is not possible that even out of the thousands now in this house there should be one heart whose case Christ cannot meet—

***"In every pang that rends the heart
The Man of Sorrows had a part."***

Disease, sickness of body, poverty, need, friendlessness, hopelessness, desertion—He knows all these. You cannot cast human suffering into any shape that is new to Christ. "In all their afflictions He was afflicted." If you feel a thorn in your foot, remember that it once pierced His head. If you have a trouble or a difficulty, you may see there the mark of His hands, for He has climbed that way before. The whole path of sorrow has His

blood-bedabbled footsteps all along, for the Man of Sorrows has been there, and He can now have sympathy with you. “Yes,” I hear one say, “but my sorrows are the result of sin.”

So were His—not His own—yet the result of sin they were. “Yes,” you say, “but I am slandered, and I cannot bear it.” They called Him a drunken man and a wine-bibber. Why, when you once think of the sufferings of Christ, yours are not worth a thought! Like the small dust of a balance that may be blown away with the breath of an infant, such are our agonies, and our trials, when compared with His. Drink your little cup—see what a cup He drained! The little vinegar and gall that fall to your share, you may gladly receive, for these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are not worthy to be compared to the sufferings through which He passed.

Finally, upon this point. He thus became perfect *as our Exemplar*. This, too, was necessary in bringing many sons unto glory, for we come to Heaven by following the example of Christ, as well as by being washed in His blood. “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” That holiness is best of all promoted by an investigation of Christ’s Character, and a studious imitation of all its points. Now had Christ not suffered He could not have been an Example to us. We should have said, “Yes, yes, He may be an Example to unsuffering angels, but not to men who have to tread the hot coals of the furnace.” He could have afforded no example of patience if He had never suffered.

He could never have taught us to forgive if He had never felt injuries. He could not have trained us to holy courage if He had never fought a battle. He could never have shown us the way to make tribulation work experience, and experience hope, if through tribulation He had not Himself waded to His Throne. We want not an example taken from princes to be applied to peasants. We need a poor man to be an example for the poor. We want a man who lives in private to teach us how to live in retirement. We want one who fears not the face of crowds to show us how to walk in our public ways. We want, if we would meet the case of fallen humanity, a man just like the Savior, who passed through all the various phases of life, was in all companies, was shot at from all quarters, was tempted in all points like as we are, and this could not have been if He had been led in quiet ways along a path of joy.

He must do business on the tempestuous deeps. His ship must rock, His anchor drag, the thick darkness and the lightning must gather round Him. They did so, and thus the Captain of our salvation was made perfect *through sufferings*, as an Example for our imitation. I would that we might each of us know Him in the efficacy of His blood, in the glory of His righteousness, in the sweetness of His sympathy, and in the perfection of His example—for then should we know Him to the joy of our hearts forever.

III. And now, our last point—CHRIST’S HAVING BEEN MADE PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS WILL ENNOBLE THE WHOLE WORK OF DIVINE GRACE.

“It became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory”—that is the great work—“to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” The whole thing will work for His glory. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, how this will glorify God

at the last—that Christ, the Man, should have been perfect through sufferings! How this will glorify Him in the eyes of *devils*! Looking upwards from their beds of fire where they bite their iron bands in vain, how they will see the wisdom and power of God as more than a match for the wisdom and might of their leader!

It was in man that they defeated God. In man God *destroys* them. They trampled on man's heel—man has broken their head. They took away from man the transient crown of his Eden-glory. Man wears the unfading crown of immortality. Man, even Man, sits upon the Throne of Godhead, and that Man, crowned with light, and glory everlasting, was a Man who did encounter Satan—who met him, too, on fair grounds—not a Man shielded from pain. Not a Man who had an immunity from internal or external distress. But a Man full of weakness, full of infirmity, like other men and yet, through God in alliance with His manhood, more than a conqueror and now reigning forever and ever!

Milton, I think it is, supposes that this may have been the reason for Satan's first rebellion—he could not bear that an inferior race should be lifted up to be set above himself on God's Throne. Whether this is so or not, it must certainly be an aggravation to the misery of that proud arch-traitor, that now man, man, man in whose image God was defeated, is heir of all things, King of kings and Lord of lords! How greatly will God be exalted that day *in the eyes of lost spirits*.

Ah, you that shall perish—God grant there may be none such here!—if you shall ever perish in Hell, you will have to glorify God as you see Christ, who was made perfect through sufferings, reigning there. You will not be able to say, "My damnation lies at God's door," for you will see in Christ a suitable Savior. You will have to look up and say, "Yes, He who was preached to me on Sundays was God. He could save me. He whom I was bid to trust in was Man and could sympathize with me, but I would not come unto Him that I might have life." In letters of fire you shall see it written, "You knew your duty, but you did it not." And even your moans and groans, as you suffer, shall be but an utterance of this awful Truth of God—"Great God, You are just, no, You are doubly just. Just, first, in damning me for sin. Just, next, in trampling me under foot, because I trampled under foot the blood of the Son of God, and counted His Covenant an unholy thing."

Your weeping and wailing shall be but the deep bass of the awful praise which the whole universe, willingly or unwillingly, must give to Him who has provided a perfect Savior, and made Him perfect through sufferings. Oh, my Brethren, what delight and transport will seize *the minds of those who are redeemed*! How will God be glorified then! Why, every wound of Christ will cause an everlasting song! As we shall circle His Throne, rejoicing, will not this be the very summit of all our harmony? "You were slain and have redeemed us unto God by Your blood."

We must not say what God could do, or could not do, but it does seem to me that by no process of creation could He have ever made such beings as we shall be when we are brought to Heaven. For if He had made us perfect, then we should have stood through our own holiness. Or if He had forgiven us without an atonement, then we should never have seen His justice, nor His amazing love. But in Heaven we shall be creatures who

feel that we have everything, but deserve nothing. Creatures that have been the objects of the most wonderful love, and therefore so mightily attached to our Lord that it would be impossible for a thousand Satans ever to lead us astray.

Again—we shall be such servants as even the angels cannot be, for we shall feel under deeper obligation to God than even they. They are but created happy. We shall be redeemed by the blood of God's dear Son, and I am sure, Brethren, day without night we shall circle God's Throne rejoicing, having more happiness than the angels, for they do not know what evil is, but we shall have known it to the full—and yet shall be perfectly free from it. They do not know what pain is, but we shall have known pain, and grief, and death—and yet shall be immortal! They do not know what it is to fall, but we shall look down to the depths of Hell, and remember that these were our portion.

Oh, how we will sing, how we will chant His praise and this, I say again, shall be the highest note, that we owe all to that Bright One, that Lamb in the midst of the Throne. We will tell it over, and over, and over again, and find it an inexhaustible theme for melodious joy and song—that He became Man, that He sweat great drops of blood, that He died, that He rose again. While the angels are singing, "Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah," we will bid them stop the song a moment, while we say, "He whom you thus adore was once covered with bloody sweat." As we cast our crowns at His feet, we will say, "And He was once despised and rejected of men."

Lifting up our eyes and saluting Him as God over all, blessed forever, we will remember the reed, the sponge, the vinegar, and the nails. And as we come to Him and have fellowship with Him, He shall lead us beside the living fountains of water. And we will remember the black brook of Kedron of which He drank, and the awful depths of the grave into which He descended. Amid all the splendors of Heaven we shall never forget the agony, and misery, and dishonor of earth. And even when they sing the loudest sonnets of God's love, and power, and Grace, we will sing this after all, and before all, and above all, that Jesus, the Son of God died for us, and this shall be our everlasting song—"He loved us and gave Himself for us, and we have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

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“ALL OF ONE”

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*“For both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Your name unto My brethren, in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto You. And again, I will put My trust in Him. And again, Behold I and the children whom God has given Me.”
Hebrews 2:11-13.*

AT the commencement of our discourse, it will be most fit and proper for us to enquire whether we have any interest in the Truths of God mentioned in the text. The Apostle here speaks of those who are sanctified and of the great Sanctifier. Come, my Hearer, do you belong to the sanctified? Have you any part or lot in this matter? What does it concern you that the Sanctifier and the sanctified are, “all of one,” if you are not one of them? The more glorious the privileges of the Gospel, the more doleful is your state if they are not yours! If you have no share in this wondrous union between Christ and His people, what we have to say will affect you but little. Indeed, it will not even interest you—and why should it?

What is meant by the expression, “being sanctified”? The essential part of sanctification means being set apart for holy uses. That which was meant to be used for God, alone, was sanctified, set apart, regarded as holy. The vessels of the sanctuary were sanctified when they were used only by the priests in the service of God. Of course there arose out of this fact, which is the essence of sanctification, the further quality of purity, for that which is dedicated to God must be pure, that which is reserved for His service must not be defiled, it must be clean. We cannot imagine the Holy God using unholy vessels in His sanctuary—so that sanctification comes to mean purification—the making of that to be holy which was, first of all, set apart for holy uses. Holiness of character follows upon holiness of design. First we are set apart for God’s use and then, afterwards, we are made pure that we may be fit for God’s use.

Well, then, dear Friends, are you sanctified? I have heard some make a jest of that word and jeer at certain persons as, “saints.” They might as well call them kings and princes, and then mock them, for there is nothing mean or despicable in the name, “saint.” It is one of the most glorious titles that a man can ever wear! “He was a sanctified sort of person,” says one, meaning, thereby, I suppose, sanctimonious, hypocritical and pretentious. Yes, but *that* is not the true meaning of the word and I fear lest the jest at the word, “sanctified,” only proves that there are many who, so

far from claiming to be sanctified, do not even wish to be! It is the last thing that they would desire, to be made holy, and set apart for Divine purposes.

But, Beloved, all those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ aspire to be dedicated and consecrated to God! “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.” You hear a voice which says to you, “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.” You understand that the Lord’s children are expected to be a peculiar people, zealous for good works—

**“Only reserved for Christ that died,
Surrendered to the Crucified.”**

Are you, then, a member of that blessed society? Do you desire to live to God? Are you anxious to be so pure in character that God can accept your service and use you for His work? Well, then, it is for *you* that the words of our text are written. May you drink the encouragement out of them and be, thereby, refreshed!

No man is truly sanctified unless he is sanctified by Christ. The Holy Spirit is made the Agent of our purification, but it is *in Christ* that we are, first of all, set apart unto God, and it is by His most precious blood, applied to us by the Spirit of God, that we are made clean and pure so as to be used in the Divine service. Believers are the sanctified and Jesus Christ is the Sanctifier. I am not going to say more about that glorious Truth at this time, but I am going to dwell upon the very important statement made here, “He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one.” This is a truly wonderful expression—they are “all of one.” Note, therefore, first, *the remarkable unity of Christ and His people*. And then notice *the Lord Jesus Christ’s expressions which prove this wonderful unity*.

I. First, then, consider THE REMARKABLE UNITY BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE. They are “all of one.”

They are, first, “all of one” *in the Divine design* in the great mind of God. It is not Christ, alone. and His people. alone, but Christ and His Church who are regarded as “all of one.” They are fitted, constituted, designed for each other. They are the complement of each other. In the Divine mind it was not the Christ, the Anointed, as the Head apart from the whole body adown which the holy anointing oil should flow—it was the Head with all the members of His mystical body that the great Father saw. When the Divine Mind—and we have to speak here after the manner of men, for God is not known to us so that we can speak of Him otherwise than after the fashion of our poor ideas—when the Divine Mind conceived the plan of man’s redemption, purification and setting apart for His service, God had this one thought. We make it two, but it was only one to Him—Christ, the First-Born, and the many brethren as succeeding Him in their heavenly birth—being brothers unto him and being made like He. The Eternal Father thought not of Christ without the Church, nor of the Church without Christ!

When we speak of Christ, now, we are not speaking of Him only as the second Person of the blessed Trinity, “very God of very God,” but we are thinking of Him in His complex Character as being both God and Man, the one Mediator between God and men. Now, the very idea of a Mediator implies that there shall be men for whom He shall mediate with God. The very thought of a Savior implies that there shall be persons whom He shall save. And the idea of men needing to be saved, also, somehow implies Christ, who alone could save them. To the Divine Mind it was so. God made man in His own image, after His likeness, and His thoughts were even, then, fixed upon the Christ. And when He new-makes men, it is with the intention that they shall again be conformed unto His image. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He; for we shall see Him as He is.” In the mind of God it was settled that there should be a race of beings who should serve Him, of whom His own Son should be one—very God, but yet, at the same time, truly Man—and He did not think of His Son in that complex relationship otherwise than as being the Head of a vast community—the perfect Image to which multitudes of others should be conformed!

I cannot fully bring out the thought that I see in the text, for here we are in the great deeps. But the more you shall turn this Truth over, the more you will discover that from of old God ordained Christ and His people as parts of one wondrous plan. It was not, as some have tried to represent it, that Jehovah made a mistake by creating men who fell into sin and that He *then* adopted an expedient by which He restored them. No, the whole scheme of redemption is all part of the great eternal system and plan matured in the Divine Mind that by redeeming love, manifested in the Person of His well-beloved Son, the Lord might create unto Himself a people who should forever be one, akin unto Himself, and like unto the Well-Beloved. It was to find fit comrades for that mysterious Person whom He of old ordained—and it was to find for those comrades a fit Leader and Head—that He constituted Christ the Man, and yet God, to be the Mediator between God and men. They are one, they are, as our text says, “all of one,” in the Divine Design. And the Divine Design cannot be accomplished without the glorification of Christ, nor yet without the glorification of His people! They are one in the Divine Purpose and if either the one or the other could fail, the purpose of God would break down—but that cannot be!

Then, next, they who are sanctified and the Sanctifier, Himself, are “all of one” *in the Eternal Covenant*. When the Lord Jesus Christ became the Surety of the Covenant, the Head and Representative of His people, He struck hands with His great Father in a solemn league and Covenant and He did that, not for Himself, alone, but for us, also. That Covenant was made for us *in Christ with Christ*, as He is one with us, and now, today, Beloved, the provisions of the Covenant are as much for me as for Christ, and as much for Christ as for the very least of His people! They are regarded in the wondrous Covenant as being indissolubly one. That first Covenant with Adam was not with Adam, alone, but with all the innu-

merable hosts of men that were to be descended from Him. And, therefore, in Adam, when he transgressed, all fell and died. And that second Covenant, made with the second Adam, is not made with Him, alone, but with all the countless hosts of God’s elect who were represented in Him and towards whom God entered into a league of solemn amity and of everlasting love with His only-begotten Son. Thus, they are “all of one” in the Divine Design and in the Covenant of Grace.

But there is something better than this, if there can be anything better, for they are “all of one” *as to nature*. Do not let us ever permit our hearts to lose the sweetness of the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is really and truly one with us as to nature! In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and yet, notwithstanding that, He is Man of the substance of His mother. “Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also, Himself, likewise took part of the same.” It is easy to say, but it is hard to realize that Jesus Christ is as truly Man as any of us can be. I mean, now that He sits exalted at the right hand of God, He is as truly Man as when He sat on the well and said to the Samaritan woman, “Give Me to drink.” Do not let us exalt Him into only a God-man, for if we do, we shall degrade Him into a man-God! He is neither the one nor the other. He is God—diminish not His splendor! He is Man—Man such as we are—forget not His tenderness! In this very chapter, when we read that God has set man over the works of His hands and has put all things in subjection under His feet, does not Paul say, “Now we see not yet all things put under Him”? And then He adds, “But we see Jesus,” that is to say, Jesus Christ is Lord—He is set on high, Head over all things. Well, then, says the Apostle, “This Jesus is Man, this is the Man that rules, this is the Man that is over all the works of God’s hands because Jesus Christ is Man, the Representative of the human race, even in His majesty as King of kings and Lord of lords, Man in that relationship as well as in every other.” Do not let us forget that Believers and their Lord are “all of one”—one indivisible race.

Yet further than that, I want you to notice that they who are sanctified and their Sanctifier are “all of one” because of *His representative Character*. Whatever Jesus did in the past, He did for us, for we are “all of one.” He was circumcised and we are circumcised in Him with the true circumcision not made by hands. When He kept the Law, we kept the Law in Him, for He stood as our Representative. If He died, we reckon that we died in Him and, therefore, we recognize that we live because He lives. Now that He has gone into the heavenlies, it is as our Forerunner, and He has raised us up together with Him and made us sit together with Him in the heavenlies! And in all the Glory that is yet to come we shall be partakers.

Hence follows this further oneness. So are we “all of one” that, from now on *we are united in our interests*. His concerns and our concerns are one. We have not to speak of what is Christ’s and what is His people’s, but all that is Christ’s belongs to His people, and all that belongs to His people belongs to Him! You are Christ’s, Beloved, and Christ is yours! I am sure you cheerfully would acknowledge that you belong to Him—just

as joyfully acknowledge that He belongs to you! We have fellowship with Christ, which fellowship means a community of interests. His cause is our cause, His honor is our honor. If He loses, we lose. If He gains, we gain. We triumph when He triumphs, we feel disgraced when His cause is dishonored. Is it not so? “Yes,” you say, “on our part we readily recognize that it is so.” But it is far more so on Christ’s part! He has so espoused you to Himself, O Believer, that you are His and all your interests are His! He who marries a wife takes her to himself and all her concerns are merged in his. But when Jesus Christ took His Church to be His bride, He took over all her debts and liabilities, all her burdens and all her necessities. She had not anything else to bring to her Husband, but He took all that there was—the mighty deficit of her lost estate—He took it over and more than compensated for it by the wondrous fullness of His own riches in Glory! And now there is no line of distinction between the two—“Both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one.”

I do not know how to speak adequately upon my glorious theme! I have talked about it as it strikes me, but how to bring out its fullness to you, I do not know. I wish that you could sit still and enjoy it. Turn it over and see the many shades of color there are in this piece of the Divine Handiwork! It is like a diamond with many facets which will flash with light whichever way you turn it. Christ and you, “all of one”—all of you who are in Christ made one with each other by being one with Him! Not so blended and united as to become two in union, but *one*—having one nature, one body, one spirit!

“But we cannot receive the Divine Nature,” says one. No, we cannot *be* Divine, but yet we can be partakers of the Divine Nature in all its moral and spiritual qualities. We are to become holy and we aspire to be perfect even as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect and, then, when we shall have reached that blessed point, we shall more fully have proved the Truth of God that we are “all of one.” But long before we attain that height, it is still true, and always will be true, amidst all our infirmities and imperfections, that we are still one with Christ in nature and one with Him in all our interests! What He has done, He has done for us, and it is reckoned as what we have done in Him—and it is ours to work out the life of Christ in our own souls and to feel how truly all that is in Him is also in His people, as all the griefs and woes of His people have been reproduced in Him. “All of one!” I love the very words! Even without any exposition they are music to the believing heart—“Both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one.”

II. Now, in the second place, I have to notice OUR SAVIOR’S EXPRESSIONS WHICH PROVE THIS WONDERFUL UNITY.

The Apostle says, “for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” He is glorious and they are often in shame and poverty, but He is not ashamed to call them brethren! There is an immeasurable disparity between the Lord Christ and His poor erring disciples, but there is no disparity which His love dwells upon, for He calls them brethren! Our hymn, just now, spoke of it as a wonder—

***“That worms of earth should ever be
One with Incarnate Deity!”***

And truly it is a wonder, yet such a wonder as Christ takes a delight in! “He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” They are poor, they are despised, they are persecuted. What is worse, they are imperfect and faulty, often sorrowful, cast down, condemning themselves, groaning at the Mercy Seat—yet, “He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” There is such a unity between the Believer, be he in what sorrow he may, and the Christ, be He in what Glory He may, that He is never ashamed to acknowledge the close relationship between them—“He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

Now, as this seemed to be a great thing to say, the Apostle felt obliged to quote three Old Testament Scriptures to show the brotherliness of Christ and His being “all of one” with us. The first passage that he quotes is in Psalm 22:22. Here you have it—“I will declare Your name unto My brethren, in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto You.” The words in these quotations in our English version may not seem to be exactly the same as in the passages referred to, but we must remember, of course, that we are dealing with *translations* and not with the original writings. This is a part of that marvelous Psalm which was unquestionably the soliloquy of Christ upon the Cross.

Observe, dear Friends, this text is quoted to show us how we are “all of one,” and it shows we are “all of one” because Jesus shares our worship. He says, “I will declare Your name unto My brethren.” When He was here on earth, He told His brethren much concerning the Father. It was His mission to reveal the Father so that He could say, “He that has seen Me has seen the Father.” And when they worshipped the Father in spirit and in truth, it was because He had taught them to do so. His sermons inspired them with that devotion! He spoke to them as a man speaking to men and so He revealed God to them. This passage also shows that Jesus was one with His disciples, for He revealed God not as to strangers, but as to “brethren.” He declared the will of God to them, not as to outsiders, but as to “brethren.” He had one way of preaching to the crowd and He had quite another way of privately talking to His disciples. He declared the name of God unto His brethren in familiar, loving, tender tones, always putting Himself side by side with them, sometimes speaking of, “My Father and your Father, My God and your God,” and always setting forth the great God as belonging as much to them as to Himself—and always speaking of that God, not as some renowned teacher might speak to beings far beneath Him, but as a Brother who has met with the Father, and tells of that Father to His brethren who, as yet, do not fully understand Him. “I will declare Your name unto My brethren.” I say, therefore, that the life of Christ in His teaching and in His joining with His disciples in their worship of God proved that He was one with them!

Especially is this evident when we come to the last part of the quotation—“In the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto You.” Did Jesus sing? Yes, literally. After supper they sang a hymn. It must have been most thrilling to hear Christ’s voice, quivering with emotion, singing the Psalms which constituted the Great Hallel. Those Psalms were usually

sung after the Paschal Supper was ended—and the Savior went through them, praising and magnifying Jehovah, joining the little band, I should think, Himself the leader of the Psalmody that it might be seen that He was “all of one” with them! I am the preacher to this congregation and when I speak to you of God, I am sure that I am “all of one” with you. If I speak aright, you might think that we were in a parlor rather than in the Tabernacle. I am not speaking as some great orator might, but as a Brother declaring the Father’s name as best I know it.

And when the time comes for singing, then we feel that we are all at one with those who sing with us from the heart, following the same tune, and uttering the same praiseful words. Behold, then, in your midst, O Church of God, in the days of His flesh there stood this glorious One whom angels worship, who is the brightness of His Father’s Glory in the very Heaven of heavens! Yet when He stood here, it was to join in the worship of His people, declaring the Father’s name unto His brethren, and with them singing praises unto the Most High. Does not this bring Him very near to you? Does it not seem as if He might come at any moment and sit in that pew with you? I feel as if He already stood on this platform side by side with me—why shouldn’t He? Oh, happy hour, if we could but see Him in very flesh and blood among us! Yet we know that He is here, even if we cannot see Him, for He has said, “Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world.”

The second passage which is quoted by the Apostle is not very easy to find. “And again, I will put My trust in Him.” I suppose the Apostle quoted from the Septuagint translation and there we get, in the 18th Psalm, at the second verse, these words, “I will hope in Him.” It is so rendered in that version, but Paul read it, “I will put My trust in Him.” We believe that is the passage he intended to quote. Now we are told by Inspiration in this place that this verse is the language of Christ and if so, it brings Him very near to us. The Psalm, itself, you will see, if you will read it through at home, looks as if it were David speaking, but we are here told that it was Christ. Well, it is no matter. Frequently in the Psalms you are unable to tell whether it is David or David’s greater Son who is speaking, which very ambiguity is the source of instruction, because it shows how they are, “all of one,” so that David, who is the sanctified one, speaks in such terms as might be used by the Sanctifier, Himself! The Book of Psalms is, indeed, throughout, one of the most wonderful proofs of how near the Believer is to Him in whom he believes, so that the very same words and phrases which were appropriate in the mouth of David, for himself, are equally appropriate if he speaks by way of prophecy concerning the Messiah.

Still, let me ask you to notice that the pith of the quotation is that *Jesus Christ put His trust in God*. That is to say, He was a partaker of *our faith*. It is by faith that we are justified. It is by faith that we overcome the world. It is by faith that we do everything. Had Jesus such a faith as that? Yes, He had—it was by His faith that He vanquished the adversary in that triple duel in the wilderness! It was by faith that He prevailed in prayer on the lone mountainside! It was by faith that He went up to the

Cross, alone, by Himself, for His people! I will go further and say that Jesus Christ is still to us the greatest Exemplar of faith. “What?” you exclaim, “in Heaven, is He still our greatest Exemplar of faith?” Yes—“from henceforth expecting till His enemies are made His footstool.” And what is expectation based upon but upon faith?

Moreover, our blessed Lord is always engaged in intercessory prayer. Remember this text—“Ask of Me and I shall give You the heathen for Your inheritance”? He is asking and He is asking in faith. And the life of Christ, now, concerning His coming, His Kingdom and the ultimate triumph of His righteous cause, is still an exhibition of faith—and this makes Him very near of kin to us. Do You believe, my Master? “Yes,” He says. Then, as I, also, believe, we are both Believers and we are “all of one.”

Now, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, does not this bring your Lord very near to you? Why, as if to show you that He came very near to you, there is one point that some Believers omit, but which Jesus did not omit. It is described in that familiar passage, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Surely, His was a case where Baptism might fitly have been omitted! But, no—He comes to Jordan and He asks John to baptize Him. And when the good man says, “I have need to be baptized of You, and come You to me?” yet the condescending Savior, that He might be “all of one” with us, said, “Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness.” Blessed are you who follow the Lamb wherever He goes! Happy are you who in all things desire to be like unto your Head, even as He, in all things, has been made like unto you. Are you tried in your faith? So was He! Are you tempted? So was He! Temptations of the worst kind assailed the purity of His Nature, as they assail you. But He stood and you shall stand! He overcame by the use of, “It is written,” and that same Sword of the Spirit is ready to your hand! Use it, by faith, and so overcome the Wicked One.

The last passage which the Apostle quotes is taken from Isaiah, the eighth chapter and the 18th verse—“Behold I and the children which God has given Me.” This is yet to be fulfilled. I have shown you Christ as He *was* one with us and Christ as He *is* one with us. Now you shall see Christ as He *is to be* one with us. There shall be a day when He shall be manifested. At this hour, He is the hidden Christ, and our life is hid with Him. But He is one day to appear. Then will He say, “Behold, here am I,” and all shall see Him—even they who crucified Him—shall behold Him when He comes in His Glory.

Observe that, in that day, *He is to appear with His children*—with those who have received life out of His life, those to whom He is the Adam, the true Father, the Everlasting Father. He shall not appear alone—He would not care to do so. He shall be manifested with His saints! When He shall appear, we shall appear with Him. “Behold,” He says, “I and the children.” You see, He glories in them! He uses a phrase such as you would use of *your* children, a comely group, perhaps, of little ones, or perhaps, of grown-up sons and daughters. It is some high anniversary—suppose it is your golden wedding, and the glory of the day is

not yourself alone, but the children. When you kneel together at the family altar, you say, “Lord, behold, here am I and the children You have given me.” You would not be half so happy if you could not mention their names, they are so dear to you! Well that is how Jesus puts it—“Behold I and the children.”

And then He uses such a sweet phrase about them. He says, “the children which God has given Me.” You know that, in the 17th of John, in that wonderful prayer of our Lord to His Father, He always calls His disciples, “those whom You have given Me.” He likes to dwell on that fact! They are precious to Him in themselves, but far more precious as the Father’s gift to Him! Some things are valued by you as keepsakes given by one you love and so are we dear to Christ because His Father gave us to Him! “The children which God has given Me.” Sweet, sweet words! But do they not show you what oneness there is between Christ and His people? The father and the mother are marvelously one with their own children when those children have not grieved them, but have made them happy, so that they can speak of them as the children that God has given them! Then you see how they are knit together as one. That is a wonderful expression that is used concerning David, where Abigail said that his soul should be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord his God. So is it truly with all the Lord’s redeemed—they are bound in the bundle of life with Christ and He says—“Behold I and the children which God has given Me.”

It seems to imply that He would feel Himself bereaved if they were not there. If He could not say, “I and the children which God has given Me,” He would be like Naomi when she came back from Moab and said, “Call me not, Naomi. Call me Mara,” for she had lost her children. Shall Jesus, the great Father of the age, lose any of His redeemed? Shall He fail to see of the travail of His soul? Shall the children born of His agony and passion, after all, expire, or be taken from Him? Never! Glorious Christ, at the last, You shall say, “Here am I and the children which God has given Me.”

Our Lord appears, by these words, to call the world’s attention to His people together with Himself. “Behold,” says He—not, “Behold Me,” but, “Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given Me are for signs and for wonders.” Jesus will be nothing except His people are there with Him, even in the Great Day of His appearing! Oh, I feel as if I could stop and ask you to sing those lines of which dear old Rowland Hill was so fond—

***“But this I do find, we two are so joined,
He’ll not live in Glory and leave me behind.”***

Jesus will not have Heaven without us! He will not have His Crown without us! He will not have His Throne without us! He will not have the Father’s House without us! He will not go unto His rest without us, for He has made us to be part of Himself—we are “all of one.” Just think of Christ without His people. A head without members of the body—what a ghastly sight! A shepherd without sheep—what an unhappy person! A father without children—what a desolated heart! No, no, it shall not be so! Christ is one with His people and “who shall separate us from the love of

Christ?" Well may I answer with the Apostle, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

O people of God, be as happy as ever you can! Rejoice in the Lord "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." If you should be so full of joy as not to be able to contain yourselves, you would not be more happy than you are warranted in being by the blessed Truth of God which I have set before you, that Christ and you are "all of one."

As for you who have no part nor lot in this matter, God have mercy upon you and bring you by faith to look to Christ, and to be joined forever to Him, for His dear sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM 22.

You will not need any comment on this Psalm if, while we read it, you see Christ on the Cross, and you think that you hear Him uttering these sacred words. This Psalm is dedicated "to the Chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, or, the hind of the morning," for Jesus brings the morning with Him whenever He comes.

Verse 1. *MY God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?* It was not morning with Jesus when He uttered these words—it was midnight—but His midnight is our morning.

1. *Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring?* The prayer had come to be almost inarticulate, like the dying moan of a wounded beast in the forest.

2. *O My God.* This is the third time He has cried out, "My God." Note that.

2. *I cry in the daytime, but You hear not; and in the night season, and am not silent.* The worst grief of a child of God is not to be heard in prayer. Think, then, what it must have been for the Well-Beloved to have to say to His Father, "O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You hear not; and in the night season, and am not silent."

3. *But You are holy.* He would bring no charge against God even though He forsook Him.

3-6. *O You that inhabits the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in You. They trusted, and You did deliver them. They cried unto You, and were delivered: they trusted in You, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man.* Think that you hear your Lord saying this and comparing Himself to a little red worm which, when crushed, seems to be nothing but a mass of blood.

6-8. *A reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him.* What scorn! How it must have entered like vitriol

into the veins of Christ—a strong corrosive of dreadful sarcasm without a drop of pity mixed with it!

9-11. *But You are He that took Me out of the womb: You did make Me hope when I was upon My mother’s breasts. I was cast upon You from the womb: You are My God from My mother’s belly. Be not far from Me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.* God had taken care of Christ in His infancy—that miraculous birth of His was under Divine control—will not the Lord care for Him, now that He is even more weak and nearer to the gates of death than in the first morning of His infant weakness?

12. *Many bulls have compassed Me.* There they stood, the strong legionaries of Rome, proud priests of Judea, and the princes of the people, all thirsting for His blood!

12-14. *Strong bulls of Bashan have beset Me round. They gaped upon Me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water.* Dissolved, separated like drops of water poured out of a vessel.

14. *And all My bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax.* “The very fountain of My strength is turned to weakness.”

14, 15. *It is melted in the midst of My bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and My tongue cleaves to My jaws; and You have brought Me into the dust of death.* Fever had worked upon Him. The hanging in the midday sun, the excruciating pains in His hands and feet, the dragging weight of His body, the tearing of the nails and the continually increasing agony of His wounds had brought Him into the very dust of death.

16. *For dogs have compassed Me.* The many, the vulgar multitude, like a pack of hounds, crowded around the Savior on the Cross.

16. *The assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me: they pierced My hands and My feet.* David could never say this of himself—no one else but our Lord Jesus Christ could talk after this wondrous fashion. Yet this Psalm was written hundreds of years before Christ came here among men—and the Jews treasured it up, little understanding that it described their Messiah and ours—and described Him literally, too.

17. *I may count all My bones.* Jesus could look down upon His own emaciated person as He hung there naked upon the Cross.

17. *They look and stare upon Me.* Their cruel inquisitive gazing galled His delicate sensitive Nature.

18-21. *They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture. But be not You far from Me, O LORD: O My Strength, hasten You to help Me. Deliver My soul from the sword; My precious life from the power of the dog. Save Me from the lion’s mouth: for You have heard Me from the horns of the wild oxen!* He had been heard in past years and He pleads for similar acceptance now. He encourages His faith by a retrospect of God’s preserving power in former dangers.

22. *I will declare Your name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise You.* A gleam of sunlight now comes over the Cross. the thick darkness is melting away and the Savior is triumphing even in His dying hour! He is passing away from the agonizing cry, “Why have

You forsaken Me?” to His last victorious utterance, “It is finished!” A wonderful change comes over the Savior’s expressions from this point.

23, 24. *You that fear the LORD, praise Him; all you the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and fear Him, all you the seed of Israel. For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither has He hid His face from Him; but when He cried unto Him, He heard.* Here is the testimony of One who suffered more than all of us put together will ever suffer! He endured the hiding of God’s face and yet He lives to declare the faithfulness of God! He says that when He cried unto His Father, He heard Him.

25. *My praise shall be of You in the great congregation.* It is so, here, this evening—Christ is praising God in this congregation! As we read these words of His dying testimony, we, too, are encouraged to believe that the God who heard Him will hear us and deliver us!

25, 26. *I will pay My vows before them that fear Him. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek Him: your heart shall live forever.* He is talking the matter over to Himself and comforting Himself with the prospect of the results of His suffering. He sees the vast numbers of people who will be saved through His atoning Sacrifice, He sees the meek ones coming to His feet and He is happy. Because of the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame.

27. *All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before You.* He talks of the LORD and He talks to the LORD—“Before You.” He talks about God’s Glory and about the salvation of the heathen, and about all nations worshipping the one true God.

28-30. *For the Kingdom is the LORD’S: and He rules over all the nations. All they that are prosperous upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him: and none can keep alive his own soul. A posterity shall serve Him.* He Himself was like a seed about to be put into the ground that He might bring forth fruit unto God—and He cheers His heart with the prospect.

30, 31. *It shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come.* How He rolls it like a sweet morsel under His tongue! “They shall come.” Those great sinners, those far-off ones, “they shall come”—

31. *And shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He has done this.* Or, “It is finished.” There the Psalm ends and that was the Master’s dying cry.

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NO. 166

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 6 , 1857,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“That through death He might destroy Him that had the
power of death, that is the devil.”
Hebrews 2:14.***

IN God's original empire everything was happiness and joy and peace. If there was any evil, any suffering and pain, that was not God's work. God may permit it, overrule it and out of it educe much good. But the evil comes not of God. He Himself stands pure and perfect, the clean fountain out of which gushes forth ever more sweet and pure waters. The devil's reign, on the contrary, contains nothing of good. "The devil sins from the beginning," and his dominion has been one uniform course of temptation to evil and infliction of misery. Death is a part of Satan's dominion, he brought sin into the world when he tempted our mother Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit and with sin he brought also death into the world, with all its train of woes.

There had been likely no death if there had been no devil. If Satan had not tempted, perhaps man had not revolted and if he had not revolted he would have lived forever without having to undergo the painful change which is caused by death. I think death is the devil's masterpiece. With the solitary exception of Hell, death is certainly the most Satanic mischief that sin has accomplished. Nothing ever delighted the heart of the devil so much as when he found that the threat would be fulfilled, "In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die," and never was his malicious heart so full of hellish joy as when he saw Abel stretched upon the earth, slain by the club of his brother.

"Aha," said Satan, "this is the first of all intelligent creatures that has died. Oh how I rejoice! This is the crowning hour of my dominion. It is true that I have marred the glory of this earth by my guileful temptation. It is true the whole creation groans and travails in pain by reason of the evil that I have brought into it. But this, this is my *masterpiece*. I have killed man. I have brought death into him and here lies the first—the first dead man."

Since that time Satan has ever gloated over the death of the human race and he has had some cause of glory, for that death has been universal. All have died. Though they had been wise as Solomon, their wisdom could not spare their head. Though they had been virtuous as Moses, yet their virtue could not avert the axe. All have died. And therefore the devil has boasted in his triumph. But twice has he been defeated. Only two

have entered Heaven without dying. The mass of mankind have had to feel the scythe of death. And he has rejoiced because this, his mightiest work, has had foundations broad as earth and a summit that reached as high as the virtues of mankind could climb.

There is something fearful in death. It is frightful even to him that has the most of faith. It is only the gildings of death, the afterwards, the Heaven, the harp, the glory, that makes death bearable even to the Christian. Death in itself must ever be an unutterably fearful thing to the sons of men. And oh, what ruin does it work! It darkens the windows of the eyes. It pulls down the polished pillars of the Divine architecture of the body. It turns the inhabitant, the soul, out of its door and bids it fly to worlds unknown. And it leaves in place of a living man a corpse whose appearance is so wretched that none can look upon it without emotions of horror.

Now, this is Satan's delight. He conceives death to be his masterpiece because of its terror and because of the ruin which it works. The greater the evil, the better does he delight in it. No doubt he gloats over our sicknesses. He rejoices himself in our sin. But death is to him a theme of as much delight as he can be capable of in his eternal misery. He, as far as he can, shouts for joy when he witnesses how, by one fell deed of his, one piece of treachery, he has swept the world with the besom of destruction and hurried all men to the tomb.

And death is very lovely to the devil for another reason—not only because it is his chief work on earth, but because it gives him the finest opportunity in the world for the display of his malice and his craft. The devil is a coward—the greatest of cowards—as most wicked beings are. A Christian in health he will seldom attack. A Christian who has been living near his Master and is strong in grace the devil will leave alone because he knows he will meet his match then. But if he can find a Christian either weak in faith, or weak in body, then he thinks it a fair opportunity for attack.

Now when death comes with all its terrors, it is usual for Satan to make a fierce inroad into the soul. Usually with many of the saints, if not in the last article of death, yet some little time before it, there is a ferocious onslaught made by the great enemy of souls. And then he loves death, because death weakens the mind. The approach of death destroys some of the mental power and takes away from us for a season some of those spirits by which we have been cheered in better days. It makes us lie there, languid and faint and weary. "Now is my opportunity," says the Evil One. And he steals in upon us. Hence I believe for this reason he is said to have the power of death, for I cannot conceive that the devil has the power of death in any other sense but this—that it was originated by him and that he at such time generally displays the most of his malice and of his power. For it is certain, my Brethren, the devil has not the power over death so as to *cause* death.

All the devils in Hell could not take away the life of the smallest infant in the world and though we lie gasping and sick so that the physician despairs of us, it is nothing but the fiat of the Almighty that can cause us to die, even in the extremity of our weakness. As far as the *cause* is concerned, the devil is not the cause of death. We rejoice to believe with Dr. Young that an angel's arm cannot hurl us to the grave, even though it is the arm of that fallen archangel Lucifer. And we rejoice to know that afterwards a myriad angels cannot confine us there. So that neither for the unlocking of the door, nor for the securing of it afterwards, has the devil any power whatever over the Christian in death.

Why, there are many persons here present who have such notion of religion that they conceive it to be a thing of happiness and pleasure and delight. And living near the Fountain of all bliss, that is their God, their path is filled with sunshine and their eye sparkles with perpetual happiness. They bear the trials of this life manfully as Christians should. They take afflictions from the hand of God with all resignation and patience. Now the devil says, "It is of no use my meddling with that man with doubting thoughts. He is too mighty for me. He is powerful on his knees and he is powerful with his God." "Hands off!" says the Christian to the devil. But when we begin to be *weak*, when our mind through the influence of the body begins to be sad, when we have either been starving ourselves by some wicked religious asceticism, or when the rod of God has bruised us—then in our evil plight the foe will beset us. And for this reason the devil loves death and has the power over it—because it is the time of nature's extremity and therefore is the time of the devil's opportunity.

The subject of our discourse this morning is this. *Jesus Christ through His death has destroyed what power the devil has over death.* Yes, and to add a second truth which shall be our second head, *He has not only by His death destroyed the power which the devil had over death but He has destroyed the devil's power entirely in every respect by the death which He died.*

I. Let us begin, then, at the beginning. BY THE DEATH OF CHRIST THE DEVIL'S POWER OVER DEATH IS TO THE CHRISTIAN UTTERLY DESTROYED. The devil's power over death lies in three places and we must look at it in three aspects. Sometimes the devil has power in death over the Christian, *by tempting him to doubt his resurrection* and leading him to look into the black future with the dread of annihilation. We will look at that first and we will endeavor to show you that by the death of Christ that peculiar form of the devil's power in death is entirely removed. When the poor spirit lies on the verge of eternity, if faith is weak and if the eyesight of hope is dim, the Christian will most likely look forward into what? Into a world unknown and the language of even the infidel sometimes rushes into the lips of the most faithful child of God—

***"My soul looks down on what?
A dread eternity. A dreary gulf."***

You may tell him of the Promises. You may try to cheer him by reminding him of the certain revelations of the future. But apart from the death of Christ—even the Christian himself would look forward to death as being a dreary goal, a dark cloudy end to a life of weariness and woe. Where am I speeding? An arrow shot from the bow of God's creation! Where am I speeding? And the answer comes back from blank nothingness—you came and you are speeding to the same. There is nothing to you. When you die you are lost. Or if reason has been well tutored it may perhaps reply to him, "Yes, there is another world, but reason can only tell him that it thinks so. It dreams of it. But what that other world shall be, what its tremendous mysteries, what its gorgeous splendors, or what its horrible terrors, reason cannot tell." And the sting of death would be to such a man, who had no view of immortality in Christ, the thought that he was to be annihilated—not to exist—or if to exist he knew not how, or where.

But, Beloved, by the death of Christ all this is taken away. If I lie dying and Satan comes to me and says, "You are to be annihilated, you are now sinking beneath the waves of time and you shall lie in the caverns of nothingness forever. Your living, leaping spirit is to cease forever and be not." I reply to him, "No, not so. I have no fear of that. O Satan, your power to tempt me here fails utterly and entirely. See there my Savior! He died—He died really and actually, for His heart was pierced. He was buried. He lay in His grave three days. But, O Devil, He was not annihilated, for He rose again from the tomb on the third day and in the glories of the resurrection He appeared unto many witnesses and gave infallible proofs that He was risen from the dead.

And now, O Satan, I tell you—you cannot put an end to my existence—for you could not put an end to the existence of my Lord. As the Lord the Savior rose, so all His followers must. 'I know that my Redeemer lives,' and therefore I know that though the 'worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.' You tell me, O Satan, that I am to be swallowed up and be a thing of nothing and sink into the bottomless pit of nonentity. I reply to you, you lie. My Savior was not swallowed up and yet He died. He died, but could not long be held a prisoner in the tomb. Come, Death, and bind me, but you cannot destroy me.

"Come on, O grave. Open your ghastly mouth and swallow me up. But I shall burst your bonds another day. When that all-glorious morning shall dawn, I, having a dew like the dew of herbs upon me, shall be raised up and shall live in His sight. Because He lives I shall also live." So, you see, Christ, by being a witness to the feat of the resurrection, has broken the power of the devil in death. In this respect He has prevented him from tempting us to fear annihilation, because, as Christians we believe that because Christ rose again from the dead, even so they that sleep in Jesus will the Lord bring with Him.

But now for a more common temptation—another phase of the devil's power in death. Full often the devil comes to us in our lifetime and He

tempts us by *telling us that our guilt will certainly prevail against us*. He tells us that the sins of our youth and our former transgressions are still in our bones and *that when we sleep in the grave our sins shall rise up against us*. “They have many of them,” says he, “gone before you unto judgment and others shall follow after.” When the Christian gets weak and his heart and his flesh fail him, were it not, I say, for the great doctrine of the death of Christ, the devil would be able to tempt him thus, “You are about to die. I dare not tell you that there is no future state, for if I do you reply to me, ‘*There is, for Christ rose from the dead and therefore I shall,*’ but I will tempt you another way.

“You have made a fine profession, but I charge upon you that you have been a hypocrite. You pretend that you are one of the Lord’s Beloved. Now look back upon your sins. Remember when your rebellious lusts arose and you were led if not quite to indulge in a transgression, yet to long after it? Recollect how often you have provoked Him in the wilderness, how frequently you have made His anger wax hot against you.”

The devil takes up our diary and he turns over the pages and with black finger points to our sins. And he reads scornfully, with a leer upon his countenance. “See here *saint*” He says. “*Saint?* Aha, a fine saint you were. There! Sabbath-breaking. There! Evil thoughts of unbelief. There! Departure from the living God.” And he turns over page after page and he stops over some very black page and says, “See here!” And he twits the Christian with the thing. “Ah,” says he, “David, remember Bathsheba? Lot, remember Sodom and the cave? Noah, remember the vineyard and the drunkenness?” Ah, and it makes even the saint quiver, when sin stares him in the face—when the ghosts of his old sins rise up and stare upon him. He is a man that has got faith indeed that can look sin in the face and still say, “The blood of Jesus Christ cleans me from sin.”

But were it not for that blood, were it not for the death of Christ, you can easily conceive what power the devil would have over us in the hour of death because he would fling all our sins in our teeth just when we came to die. But now see how through death Christ has taken away the devil’s power to do that. We reply to the temptation to sin, “In Truth O Satan you are right. I have rebelled, I will not belie my conscience and my memory. I own I have transgressed. O Satan, turn to the blackest page of my history, I confess all—

**‘Should He send my soul to Hell
His righteous Law approves it well.’**

“But O Fiend, let me tell you my sins were numbered on the Scape-goat’s head of old. Go you, O Satan, to Calvary’s Cross and see my Substitute bleeding there. Behold, my sins are not mine. They are laid on His eternal shoulders and He has cast them from His own shoulders into the depths of the sea. Avaunt, Hell-hound! Would you worry me? Go and satisfy yourself with a sight of that Man who entered the gloomy dungeons of death and slept awhile there and then rent the bars away and led captivity captive as a proof that He was justified of God the Father. And that I also

am justified in Him.” Oh, yes, this is the way that Christ’s death destroys the power of the devil. We can tell the devil that we care not for him—for all our sins are passed away—covered in the thick cloud and shall not be brought against us anymore forever.

“Ah,” said an aged saint once who had been much teased by Satan, “at last I got rid of my temptations, Sir and I enjoyed much peace,” “How did you do it?” said a Christian friend who visited him, “I showed him blood, Sir. I showed him the blood of Christ.” That is a thing the devil cannot endure. You may tell the devil, “Oh, but I prayed so many times.” He will sniff at your prayers. You may tell him, “Ah, but I was a preacher.” He will laugh in your face and tell you, you preached your own damnation. You may tell him you had some good works and he will lift them up and say, “these are your good works—filthy rags—no one would have them as a gift.” You may tell him, “Ah, but I have repented.” He will sneer at your repentance. You may tell him what you like, he will sneer at you, till at last you say—

**“Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to the Cross I cling.”**

And it is all over with the devil, then. There is nothing now that he can do, for the death of Christ has destroyed the power that the devil has over us to tempt us on account of our guilt. “The sting of death is sin.” Our Jesus took the sting away and now death is harmless to us—because it is not succeeded by damnation.

Once more—you may suppose a Christian who has firm confidence in a future state—the Evil One has another temptation for him. “It may be very true,” says he, “that you are to live forever and that your sins have been pardoned. But *you have up to now found it very hard work to persevere and now you are about to die you will be sure to fail.* When you have had troubles you know you have been half inclined to go back again to Egypt. Why, the little hornets that you have met have worried you and now this death is the prince of dragons. It will be all over with you now. You know that when you used to go through a cart rut you were crying for fear of being drowned—what will you do now that you have got into the swellings of Jordan?”

“Ah,” says the devil, “you were afraid of the lions when they were chained—what will you do with this unchained lion? How will you come off now? When you were a strong man and had marrow in your bones and your sinews were full of strength, even then you trembled at me. Now I shall have at you, when I get you when you are dying and your strength fails and if I once get the grip of you—

**‘That desperate tug your soul shall feel,
Through bars of brass and triple steel.’**

Ah, you will then be overcome.” And sometimes the poor feint-hearted Christian thinks that is true. I shall surely fall one day by the hand of the Enemy. Up gets the Arminian Divine and says, “that is a very proper sort of feeling, my Friend. God often does desert His children and cast them

away.” To which we reply “You lie, Arminian! Shut your mouth! God never did desert His children, neither can He, nor will He.”

And having answered the Arminian we turn to answer the devil and we say to him, “O Fiend, you tempt us to think that you will conquer us. Remember, Satan, that the strength that has preserved us against you has not been our own. The arm that has delivered us has not been this arm of flesh and blood, else we had long since been overcome. Look there, Fiend, at Him that is Omnipotent. His Almightyness is the power that preserves us to the end. And, therefore, be we ever so weak, when we are weak then we are strong and in our last hour of peril we shall yet overcome you.”

But please notice that this answer springs and arises from Christ’s death. Let us just picture a scene. When the Lord Jesus came down to earth, Satan knew His errand. He knew that the Lord Jesus was the Son of God and when he saw Him an infant in the manger he thought if he could kill Him and get Him in the bonds of death what a fine thing it would be! So He stirred up the spirit of Herod to slay Him. But Herod missed his mark. And many a time did Satan strive to put the personal existence of Christ in danger so that he might get Christ to die. Poor fool as he was, he did not know that when Christ died He would bruise the devil’s head. Once, you remember, when Christ was in the synagogue, the devil stirred up the people and made them angry. And he thought, “Oh, what a glorious thing it would be if I could kill this man. Then there would be an end of Him and I should reign supreme forever.”

So he got the people to take Him to the brow of the hill and he gloated over the thought that now surely He would be cast down headlong. But Christ escaped. He tried to starve Him, he tried to drown Him. He was in the desert without food and He was on the sea in a storm. But there was no starving or drowning Him and Satan no doubt panted for His blood and longed that He should die. At last the day arrived. It was telegraphed to the court of Hell that at last Christ would die. They rung their bells with hellish mirth and joy. “He will die now,” said Satan, “Judas has taken the thirty pieces of silver. Let those Scribes and Pharisees get Him, they will no more let Him go than the spider will a poor unfortunate fly. He is safe enough now.” And the devil laughed for very glee when he saw the Savior stand before Pilate’s bar. And when it was said, “Let Him be crucified,” his joy scarce knew bounds—except that bound which his own misery must ever set to it. As far as he could he reveled in what was to him a delightful thought—that the Lord of Glory was about to die. In death, as Christ was seen of angels, He was seen of devils, too. And that dreary march from Pilate’s palace to the Cross was one which devils saw with extraordinary interest.

And when they saw Him on the Cross, there stood the exulting Fiend, smiling to himself. “Ah, I have the King of Glory now in my dominions. I have the power of death and I have the power over the Lord Jesus.” He exerted that power, till the Lord Jesus had to cry out in bitter anguish, “My

God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” But ah, how short-lived was hellish victory! How brief was the Satanic triumph! He died and “It is finished!” shook the gates of Hell. Down from the Cross the Conqueror leaped, pursued the Fiend with thunderbolts of wrath. Swift to the shades of Hell the Fiend did fly and swift descending went the Conqueror after him. And we may conceive Him exclaiming—

**“Traitor! This bolt shall find and pierce you through,
Though under Hell’s profoundest wave you dive,
To find a sheltering grave.”**

And seize him He did—chained him to His chariot wheel—dragged him up the steps of glory. Angels shouting all the while, “He has led captivity captive and received gifts for men.” Now, devil, you said you would overcome me, when I came to die. Satan I defy you and laugh you to scorn! My Master overcame you and I shall overcome you. You say you will overcome the saint, do you? You could not overcome the saint’s Master and you will not overcome him. You once thought you had conquered Jesus—you were bitterly deceived. Ah, Satan, you may think you shall overcome the little faith and the faint heart. But you are wondrously mistaken—for we shall assuredly tread you under our feet shortly. And even in our last extremity, with fearful odds against us, we shall be “more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”

You see thus, my Brethren, Christ’s death has taken away from Satan the advantage which he has over the saint in the hour of death so that we may joyfully descend the shelving banks of Jordan, or may even, if God calls us to a sudden death, glide from its abrupt cliffs—for Christ is with us and to die is *gain*.

II. But now, I want just a moment or two, while I try to show you that not only has Christ by His death taken away the devil’s power in death, but HE HAS TAKEN AWAY THE DEVIL’S POWER EVERYWHERE ELSE OVER A CHRISTIAN. “He has destroyed,” or overcome, “him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

Death was the devil’s chief entrenchment. Christ bearded the lion in his den and fought him in his own territory. And when He took death from him and dismantled that once impregnable fortress, He took away from him not only that, but every other advantage that he had over the saint. And now Satan is a conquered foe—not only in the hour of death—but in every other hour and in every other place. He is an enemy, both cruel and mighty, but he is a foe who quakes and quails when a Christian gets into the lists with him. For he knows that though the fight may waver for a little while in the scale, the balance of victory must fall on the side of the saint, because Christ by His death destroyed the devil’s power.

My Brethren, Satan may tomorrow get much power over you by tempting you to indulge in the lusts of the flesh, or in the pride of life. He may come to you and say, “Do such-and-such a thing that would be dishonest and I will make you rich. Indulge in such-and-such a pleasure and I will make you happy, come,” says Satan, “yield to my blandishments. I will

give you wine to drink that shall be richer than ever came from the wine vats of Holy Scripture. I will give you bread to eat that you know not of. Eat you the tempting fruit. It is sweet. It will make you like a god.” “Ah,” says the Christian, “but Satan, my Master died when He had to do with you and therefore I will have nothing to do with you. If you did kill my Lord, you will kill me, too, if you can and therefore away with you! But inasmuch as you lay down silver for me and tell me I can have it if I do wrong, lo, Satan, I can cover your silver with gold and have ten times as much to spare afterwards.

“You say I shall get gain if I sin. No, the treasures of Christ are greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. Why, Satan, if you were to bring me a crown and say, ‘There! You shall have that if you will sin,’ I should say, ‘Poor crown! Why, Satan, I have got a better one than that laid up in Heaven. I could not sin for that—that is a bribe too paltry.’” In he brings his bags of gold and he says, “Now, Christian, sin for this.” The Christian says, “Why Fiend, that stuff is not worth my looking at. I have an inheritance in a city where the streets are paved with solid gold. And, therefore, what are these poor chinking bits to me? Take them back!” He brings in loveliness and he tempts us by it. But we say to him, “Why, Devil, what are you doing? What is that loveliness to me? My eyes have seen the King in His beauty and the land that is very far off. And by faith I know that I shall go where beauty’s self, even in her perfection, is excelled—where I shall see my Savior, who is ‘the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely.’ That is no temptation to me! Christ has died and I count all these things but dross that I may win Christ and be found in Him.” So that you see, even in temptation, the death of Christ has destroyed the devil’s power.

“You will not yield, will you?” says the devil. “You cannot be tempted! Ah, well,” says he, “if you cannot be drawn aside, I’ll *pull* you aside. What are you, that you should stand against *me*? A poor puny man! Why, I have made angels fall and I am not afraid of you. Come on!” And he puts his foot to our foot and with his dragon yell he frights the echoes till they dare not reply. He lifts his blazing sword and thinks to smite us to the ground. You know, my Brethren, what the shield is that must catch the blow. It is the shield of *faith* in Christ that died for us. Satan hurls his darts, but his darts hurt not, for lo, we catch them also on this all-powerful shield, Christ and His Cross. Let his insinuations be ever so direful, the death of Christ has destroyed the devil’s power either to tempt or to destroy. He may be allowed to attempt either the one or the other, but he can be successful in neither. The death of Christ has “destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

Some people say they don’t believe in a devil. Well, I have only to tell them I don’t believe in them because if they knew themselves much they would very soon find a devil. But it is quite possible that they have very little evidence of there being any devil. For you know the devil never

wastes his time. He comes up a street and he sees a man engaged in business, hoarding, covetous, grasping. He has got a widow's house in his throat, he has just swallowed the last acre of a poor orphan's lands. "Oh," says the devil, "drive by, I shall not stop there. He does not need *me*. He will go to Hell easily enough." He goes to the next house. There is a man there, a drunkard spending his time in riotousness. He marches by and says, "There's no need for me here—why should I trouble my own dear friends? Why should I meddle with those whom I am sure to have at last? There's no need to tease them."

He finds a poor saint upon his knees, exercising but very little power in prayer. "Oh," says the devil, "I shall have this creature at last. I'll howl at him now." There is a poor sinner just returning from his evil ways and crying, "I have sinned and done evil in Your sight. Lord, have mercy upon me." "Losing a subject," says Satan—"I'll have him—I'm not going to lose my subjects like this." So he worries him. The reason why you don't believe there is a devil, very likely, is that the devil very seldom comes to you because you are so safe that he does not take any trouble to look after you. And you have not seen him, because you are too bad for him to care about and he says, "Oh no, there's no need for me to waste time to tempt that man, it would be carrying coals to Newcastle to tempt him, for he is as bad as he can be and therefore let him alone." But when a man lives near God, or when a man's conscience begins to be aroused—then Satan cries, "To arms! To arms! To arms!" For two good reasons—first, because he wants to worry him and secondly, because he wants to destroy him. Well, we bless God that though the devil may direct his utmost scorn and craft and malice against the Christian, the Christian is safe behind the Rock Christ Jesus and may rest secure.

And now, in conclusion, suffer a word or two of comfort to the people of God and a warning to those that know Him not. O children of God! Death has lost its sting because the devil's power over it is destroyed. Then cease to fear dying. You know what Death is—look him in the face and tell him you are not afraid of him. Ask grace from God that by an intimate knowledge and a firm belief of your Master's death you may be strengthened for that dread hour. And mark me, if you so live, you may be able to think of death with pleasure and to welcome it when it comes with intense delight. It is sweet to die—to lie upon the breast of Christ and have one's soul kissed out of one's body by the lips of Divine affection. And you that have lost friends, or that may be bereaved—sorrow not as those that are without hope. For remember the power of the devil is taken away. What a sweet thought the death of Christ brings us concerning those who are departed! They are gone, my Brethren. But do you know how far they have gone? The distance between the glorified spirits in Heaven and the militant saints on earth seems great. But it is not so. We are not far from home—

***"One gentle sigh the spirit breaks,
We scarce can say 'tis gone,***

***Before the ransomed spirit takes
Its station near the Throne.***

We measure distance by time. We are apt to say that a certain place is so many hours from us. If it is a hundred miles off and there is no railroad we think it a long way. If there is a railway, we think we can be there in no time. But how near must we say Heaven is? For it is just one sigh and we get there. Why, my Brethren, our departed friends are only in the upper room, as it were, of the same house. They have not gone far off. They are up stairs and we are down below. Yes, more as the poet says—

***“Ten thousands to their endless home,
This solemn moment fly,
And we are to the margin come,
And soon expect to die.”***

And then he describes them—

“Part of the host have crossed the flood.”

There they are, on the other side the banks. Here is another part deep in the stream. Here are we on the margin, just about to step down. They are all one army. There is not one gap right down from Abel to the one that is now departing. And they never shall be but one, till the pearly gates are shut forever and they are all secure—

***“Even now by faith we clasp our hands
With those that went before,
And greet the blood-besprinkled bands
Upon the eternal shore.”***

And now I close by saying this word to the sinner. O you that know not God, you that believe not in Christ—death is to you a horrible thing! I need not tell you that. For your own conscience tells it to you. Why, Man, you may laugh sometimes at religion. But in your own solitary moments it is no laughing thing. The greatest braggart in the world are always the greatest cowards. If I hear a man saying, “Oh, I am not afraid of dying, I don’t care about your religion,” He does not deceive *me*. I know all about that. He says that to cover up his fears. When he is alone at night you should see how white his cheek is if a leaf falls against the window. When there is lightning in the air you should see him. “Oh that flash!” he says. Or if he is a strong man perhaps he does not say a word, but he feels in such horror all the time the storm is on. Not like the Christian man. Not like the man who has courage. Why, I love the lightening. God’s thunder is my delight. I never feel so well as when there is a tremendous thunder and lightning storm. Then I feel as if I could mount up and my whole heart sings. I love then to sing—

***“This awful God is mine
My Father and my love,
He shall send down His heavenly powers
To carry me above.”***

Yes, you are afraid of dying, I know. And what I shall say to you is this—You have good need to be afraid of dying and you have good need to be afraid of dying now. Because you have escaped many times you think

you shall never die. Suppose we should take a man and tie him to that pillar and a good marksman should take bow and arrows and shoot at him. Well, one arrow might glance and strike someone that sits at the right and another might glance and strike someone that is to the left. One might go above his head and another beneath his feet, but you cannot suppose that man would laugh and mock when the arrows were flying about his ears! And if he were quite certain that it only wanted the marksman to take an aim at him and he would be shot—then, my Friends—you cannot conceive how he would tell you what terror he would experience.

But certainly there would be no laughter. He would not say, “Oh, I shall not die! Look, the man has been shooting all these others.” No, the risk of dying would be enough to steady him and the thought that that marksman had an eye so true and a hand so steady that he had but to pull the string and the arrow would certainly reach his heart would be enough at least to sober him and keep him always watchful—for in a moment, when he thought not—that arrow might fly. Now, that is you today. God puts the arrow to the string—your neighbor is dead on the right and another on the left. The arrow will come to *you* soon, it might have come before, if God willed it.

Oh, mock not at death and despise not eternity, but begin to think whether you are prepared for Death, lest Death should come and find you wanting. And remember, Death will make no delays for you. You have postponed the time of thought—Death will not be postponed to suit you. When you die there will be no hour allowed for you in which then to turn to God. Death comes with its first blow—damnation comes afterwards—without the hope of reprieve. “He that believes and is immersed shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned.” Thus do we preach the Gospel of God unto you as God would have us. “Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” “Go you and teach all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Behold, I tell you, faith in Jesus is the soul’s only escape. Profession of that in *immersion* is God’s own way of professing faith before men. The Lord help you to obey Him in the two great Gospel commandments, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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THE FEAR OF DEATH

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**A SERMON PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 1912,
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***“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”
Hebrews 2:14, 15.***

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon verse 14 is #166, Volume 4—THE DESTROYER DESTROYED—read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org> .]

BEFORE speaking upon the main subject of the text, I cannot help drawing your attention to those two words, “the children.” Hear that sweet expression again, for it is one of the choicest descriptions of the saints, “the children.” “You are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” What a wonderful influence the children have in the house! How many of the arrangements are made especially with a view to them! How much of the wear and tear of life to their parents is for their sakes! And we may truly say, concerning our Father in Heaven, that His plans, His arrangements, His actions, His gifts are very emphatically for the children! He uses all things in this great house of His for the education of the children—and when their education shall be finished—He will clear all these things away just as the builder takes down the scaffolding around the house when it is complete.

This name of “the children” is such a blessed one, it seems to indicate a simple, sweet and gracious character. “Be not children in understanding,” but in all else be—

***“Humble, teachable and mild,
Like unto a little child.”***

I. But this is only by the by—the main theme on which I am going to speak is the *fear of death*. And, first, I observe that THE FEAR OF DEATH IS NATURAL TO MAN AS A SINNER. So long as there was no sin in the world, there was no death and no fear of death, but as soon as sin entered, God said to Adam, “Dust you are and unto dust shall you return.” The echo of these words still rings throughout the world and Adam’s children, as sinners, fear death, but this is rather a blessing to them than otherwise. To most unconverted men, the fear of death has often been made to subserve the highest purpose of Divine Mercy. Many a man would, at least outwardly, have been more guilty than he is if the

fear of death had not, to some extent, held him in check. The knell from the old church tower has often spoken to those who other preachers could not reach—and an open grave has had an eloquent voice which has been more alarming than the polished sentences of the golden-mouthed orator.

It is well that there should be such a thing as the fear of death in the world! But for it, sinners would be more outrageously wicked than they already are. This earth would soon become like Sodom and Gomorrah if men were not restrained by the fear that they must soon depart this life. No doubt, too, the fear of death answers very wise and important purposes in the economy of humanity. If men were in peril, they would probably give themselves up without making any strenuous exertions for their preservation if there were not an indefinable dread of death which creeps over them and makes them put forth what strength they have in order, if possible, to prolong their lives. Being afraid to die, they tug, toil, labor and strive so as to put off the dreaded day as long as they can! Even Satan spoke the truth when he said, “All that a man has will he give for his life.” Our streets might be crowded with idlers who would starve rather than work if the fear of death did not drive them unwillingly to their labors!

Certainly the fear of death has often been the means of preventing the crime of suicide. You know how Shakespeare represents Hamlet as talking of a man making his quietus with a bare bodkin—

***“But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of.”***

No doubt it has often been the case that this “dread of something after death” has prevented men from rushing into the presence of their Maker red-handed with their own blood! The fear of death, though itself part of the punishment of sin, is a wise and beneficent arrangement in the commonwealth of humanity.

II. But, secondly, while the fear of death is natural to the sinner, IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO THE SAINT. For all the purposes of which I have spoken, the fear of death is not necessary to a Christian. He does not need it to restrain him from sin, for he hates sin with a perfect hatred. Other checks, of far greater importance here, in the hand of Infinite Love, restrain the Christian from going into sin. Nor does he need the fear or death to keep him from suicide—why should he have any desire to commit that terrible crime? Christians have, even here, joy and peace through believing and though their best portion is in the world to come, yet even now it may be said of them, “Happy are you, O Israel: who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord?” The clanking fetters of the fear of death are not intended for God’s freemen to wear! Let the slave of sin and Satan wear them if they will restrain them from suicide and other evils,

but the true born child of God needs no such check as this. He lives the life of faith upon the Son of God and the love of Christ so graciously constrains him that it both holds him back from sin and urges him on to duty.

But though the fear of death is not necessary to Christians and the Grace of God has been manifested in giving Christ to deliver them from it, yet it is true that some of them are still subject to bondage through this wholly unnecessary fear! They not only fear death, but they fear it to such an extent that it brings them into bondage. It is not merely a dark cloud that passes over them and is soon gone, but it abides with them—they are, “All their lifetime subject to bondage” through the fear of death! They shall not perish, neither shall any pluck them out of Christ’s hands, but they have not that restful assurance of safety which Christ’s sheep ought to enjoy. I am sorry to say that I know some who profess to have been Christians for years, but who still, at times at any rate, are in bondage through fear of death. I do not speak of this as a phenomenon, or an experience that is uncommon—I wish it were, but I am obliged to say that there are very many whom one must judge to be the children of God—who are frequently, if not always, in a state of despondency, doubt and dread through this fear of death which seems to rest upon them like a pall.

Many of these persons have been so long in this sad state that they have almost come to believe that it is impossible for them to escape from it. There is such a thing as sitting so long on the cold stone of despair that you and the stone almost seem to be one. There is such a thing as wearing the yoke of despondency until that yoke and your shoulders become so closely united that you cannot take it off. Just as valor fights till its sword grows to its hand, so despair burdens you till it grows into your spirit. I would not roughly tear it out, but if I might kindly perform an act of spiritual surgery, I would be glad to be made the instrument through which the Master would perform His blessed work of delivering those who are in bondage through fear of death!

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, there is no need that you should be afraid to die! It is even possible for you to look upon death as your best friend! You may yet come to be familiar with the shroud, the mattock, the grave—and find the cemetery to be no place of gloom and may even rejoice in the prospect of death and—

***“Long for evening to undress
That you may rest with God.”***

According to our text, it appears that *in order to remove this fear of death from His people, our Lord Jesus Christ became Man*—“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same.” And as flesh and blood have about them the element of mortality, the flesh and blood of Christ partook of the same character. It is true that in Him was no sin, but in all other respects His flesh was like ours and, therefore, was liable to death even as ours is.

Now, the very fact that Jesus Christ became Man should remove from us the fear of anything which is incidental to humanity because it was incidental to Christ as well as to ourselves—

***“He takes us through no darker rooms
Than He went through before.”***

“Fear not,” said Caesar, to the trembling boatman, “you carry Caesar and all his fortunes.” And, in like manner, standing in the vessel of our mortality, Christ says to us, “Fear not, you carry Christ and all His fortunes; you are partakers of flesh and blood and He Himself likewise shared in the same.” If one had to be a soldier on the field of battle, it might be a very great assistance to one’s courage to stand side by side with the hero of a thousand fights who had always been victorious! If tonight you had to journey along some dark and lonely road and an angel came from Heaven to walk beside you—and you were quite sure that it was an angel—I should think you would be altogether free from fear! With such a companion you might even wish that the way were still more dangerous so that you might have the delightful experience of passing through it unharmed under the care of such a glorious protector!

But you have a better Protector than any angel could be, even the Lord of the angels, your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, so what cause have you for fear? He will be with you all through life. He will be with you when you are called to die and the pledge of that is that He is a partaker of that very flesh and blood which will bring you down to death. But we not only know that Jesus partook of flesh and blood—we have this further comfort—*Jesus did actually die*. The Cross of Calvary was a witness to no phantom grief, no sham expiring. The Roman soldier with his spear pierced Christ’s side and so proved the fact of His death. He went through the valley; He ascended the mountain on the other side and He, in due time, went up into Heaven—and all this He did as the Representative of His people! Whatever Christ did, He did for His whole Church and for each one who, believing in Him, is a member of that Church! So, if you are a Believer, you died in Christ and you rise in Christ. Christ died, you, too, must die. As Christ rose, you, too, must rise. What Christ has done, He has done for you in such a way that you, also, do it—

***“As Christ the Savior rose,
So shall His followers must.”***

There is further cause for comfort in the fact that, *through death, Christ destroyed the devil*. The persons who always interpret the word, “destroy,” as meaning, “annihilate,” would do me a very great favor if they could really prove to me that Jesus Christ annihilated the devil! I have very mournful proof in my own experience that he is *not* annihilated and many of you, also, know that “your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour.” Alas, the devil is still alive, but his power in this world has received its death blow! Jesus Christ has trodden on the old serpent’s head and, to the Christian, in the matter of death, the devil is completely destroyed, for he that believes in Christ

shall never die! Death seemed to be all black and evil, like Satan, himself, seething into which he had put his most venomous sting! But now, to Believers in Jesus, death is an angel from our Father in Heaven calling us home to Him—not a black angel, striking terror in our heart—but one who is exceedingly bright and fair, coming to bid us fly away to realms of light and love!

Remember, Christian, “the sting of death is sin,” but that has been destroyed for you. And remember, too, “the strength of sin is the Law,” but that has been fulfilled for you! Rejoice, therefore, that both are gone so far as you are concerned—and that your greatest causes for fear are entirely removed!

III. Now let us spend a few minutes in thinking of THOSE THINGS CONNECTED WITH DEATH WHICH USUALLY CAUSE DREAD.

I borrow the list of them from a popular commentator. There are some things connected with death which even the best of men naturally fear and the first is *the death-pang*. It is generally supposed that there is exquisite pain associated with the act of death, but I am persuaded that this is mistaken and that there is no pain whatever in dying—the pain is in *living*. The man who has a long sickness previous to his departure must not lay the pain he has to endure at the door of death, for the pain afflicts the living, *not the dying*. If life would but give way, death would inflict no pain. The departure out of life is, one would judge, the *cessation* of pain, the ending of the strife. But if we take the popular view for granted—that death involves some extraordinary pain—then Jesus Christ partook flesh and blood, died and destroyed the devil, so far as we who believe in Him are concerned, in order that we might not have any fear of this pain.

He says to each one of us, “My child, whatever pain there may be about your death, I have endured it with an emphasis. I died, not as you probably will, on your bed, but upon a Cross. Instead of sympathizing friends around Me, I had mocking foes. Instead of soft pillows, I had cruel thorns—and tearing nails instead of cooling draughts and sustaining cordials. Men gave Me vinegar to drink mingled with gall. I died under far more trying circumstances than can possibly surround your deathbed, so now, My child, are you now willing to do at your Fathers’ bidding what I have done? The cup passed not from Me, I drained it to the dregs—why, then, should it pass from you—why should you wish it to pass from you?”

I have sometimes seen a mother, when her child has had medicine to take which it could not bear, sip of the cup and then say, “Drink it, my child, it is for your good and it is not so bad as you think. Mother has tasted it herself.” And then the little one, not always with cheerfulness, but still with submission, drinks it up. “So Jesus brings us the cup and says to each one, “Drink, My child. I drank of this cup, so why should you fear to drink of it? There can be nothing deadly in it, for it has not destroyed Me. It has been to Me a gain and it shall be a gain, also, to

you, for it shall take you from your humiliation to your Glory even as it took Me.”

But to some others this may not be their particular phase of death that they dread. *They fear the darkness and gloom which sometimes attend departed out of this life.* There are different ways of taking down the earthly atonement. There are certain forms of disease which seem rather to increase the sufferer's joy than to diminish it, while there are others which so affect the brain and the whole nervous system that depression is a melancholy symptom of the disease. Some are constitutionally so nervous that they are afraid that when they come face to face with death they will be easily vanquished. But many of us must have noticed that the very people who are most depressed in anticipation of trouble are frequently those who bear it best when it does come! So it may be with you, my poor nervous Friend. My observation warrants me in remarking that the most of Christians, when they die, are either in a deep calm or else triumphant in an ecstasy of delight.

But if it should not be so with you, if gloom surrounds your spirit, yet remember that Jesus Christ became a partaker of flesh and blood in order to deliver you from the dread of death. It is flesh and blood that fear the gloom. It is flesh and blood that shrink from the despondency—and Jesus Christ passed through that experience when He said, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death”—and later, when He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” You cannot possibly have such gloom surrounding you as He had to pass through! He went down deeper than you will ever have to go and you will always have His almighty arm to sustain you! Besides, the remembrance that Christ suffered for you, that He has destroyed Satan's power over you and that He has opened the gates of Resurrection and of Glory for you should take away from you all the gloom that you dread! You are making the mistake of looking at that part of death which belongs to this *world*. I pray that the Holy Spirit may anoint your eyes with Heavenly eye salve so that you may see that death is but the gate of Life, the porch to Paradise and may no longer fear to enter the portals through which you shall pass into the Presence of your Lord who went that way before you!

I know other Believers who do not so much dread the pain as they do *the mystery associated with death*. The handwriting upon the wall troubled Belshazzar, not only because of the appearance of the fingers that wrote the message, but also because no one could interpret the writing until Daniel came. It was the *mystery* that terrified the impious monarch! When traveling among the Alps in a dense mist, we have seemed to see vast lakes without a shore, crags that appeared like the battlement of Heaven and awful depths that thrilled us with horror! Yet much of that mystery was only caused by the mist, for, when we journeyed the same way on a bright morning, the great lake proved to be only a little pond! The mighty battlement was a crag that a child could climb and the vast

depths that had made us shudder with terror were gentle slopes which we could have descended with ease.

It is the mysteriousness of death that alarms you. That the soul should be divorced from the body to which it has been so long united is something that startles you. Yes, but as the light dissipates the terrors of the mountains, so the fact that Jesus Christ has brought life and immortality to light will scatter all your gloom! There is no “undiscovered country” to you, Christian, for your Master has returned from the land of Death-Shade and He has told you all you need to know concerning it! He has come back to tell you that, for you, there is no such thing as death! Everything that constitutes death has been abrogated so far as you are concerned and your portion is to be everlasting life! If you would only believe all that is revealed in the Word concerning believers in Jesus, the mystery associated with death would no longer alarm and terrify you.

There are some Christians who are *afraid of the grave*. I must say that I like the thought of sleeping in the cemetery, with green grass and flowers and shrubs growing all around—and winding walks upon the rising ground far away from the busy city! I say I like the thought of all that, yet, when I stand by an open grave, as I so often do, and see the cold clods of clay and think of the chill and silence of the night, the cemetery appears in another light! But, after all, what does it matter where the poor body is laid? If it could lie in state, surrounded with light and music, you know that very soon even the chief mourner would have to say, “Bury my dead out of my sight!” When we think of those who are sleeping in Jesus—I speak, of course, only of their *bodies*—it does seem appropriate that they should be wrapped in their white robes, as men are when they go to their beds, and lovingly committed to the care of mother earth from which they sprang. I do not think there is any need to be troubled about all this—much of it is mere sentimentalism and certainly, as far as Christians are concerned—when we remember that the blessed body of Jesus was laid in the tomb, we are quite content in that matter to be even as He was.

I am afraid that I have not hit the center of the target even yet, for *some of “the children” are afraid of the Judgment Seat of God*. Does this remark surprise you? It ought to do so, for it ought to be *impossible* for a child of God to tremble at the thought of meeting his Father anywhere! Why is it that some of us are thus afraid? It is, Beloved, because they have a dark suspicion that they are not *really* in Christ, not *really* saved—and this indicates a greater evil than the dread of death—while it also point out the remedy for that evil. If I have the Divine Assurance that I am washed from every sin and that, clothed in the righteousness of Christ, I am without spot, or wrinkle, or any such things, how can I give way to fear? It is the dreadful doubt, the doubt whether it is so, that causes the dread of death and of judgment! It is *unbelief* that is at the bottom of it!

If we would take such Scriptures as these—“He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” “By Him all that believe are justified from all things.” “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”—and if we really trusted in the Savior of whom they speak, we would have no fear of either death or judgment, but would cry with the Apostle, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” No doubt there are some professing Christians who *ought* to be afraid of death—there are some members of Christian Churches who *ought* to dread the Judgment Seat! There are deacons and elders and ministers who *ought* to tremble at the thought of the world to come because their profession of Christianity is a mere profession without any real work of the Spirit of God at the back of it!

When you have doubts about your eternal state, do not say that they come from the devil! It may be that the Spirit of God is striving with you to bring you to see the hollowness of all the religion in which you have put your confidence! Never be afraid of self-examination, but obey the Apostolic injunction, “Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith; prove yourselves.” Better still, pray David’s prayer, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Those who have only a name to live, but who are spiritually dead. Those who talk about believing, but who have not believed. Those who talk about regeneration, but who have not been born again have good cause to be afraid of death! If that is your condition, Friend, I pray that you may become still more afraid of death and that God’s gracious Spirit may make you so afraid of it that you may turn from it and fly to Him who, by carrying away your sin, shall also take away from you the fear of death.

But as for you, dearly Beloved, who are really in Christ Jesus, you ought not to have any fear of death. There is no condemnation for you, for Christ has borne, on your behalf, all the punishment that was due to your sins! The sword of Justice has no terrors for you, for it was plunged in the heart of Jesus on purpose that He might die in your place. You need not fear the possibility of being cast away from Christ, for you are members of His body, of His death and of His blood! And unless He were to dismember Himself, He could not cast away any who are thus vitally united to Him. Let the thought that He became a partaker of flesh and blood, died to put away your sin and to destroy your great adversary, the devil, be a quietus to all your fears of death!

It may not be long before some of us will have our faith tested in our dying hour. The preacher may be called away or you may receive the summons first. It would be well if we were all so familiar with death that we could say as one old saint did, “Dying? Why, I have died daily for the last 20 years, so I am not afraid to die, now!” Or, as another said, “I dip my foot in Jordan’s stream every morning before I take my breakfast, so I

shall not be afraid to go down into the stream whenever my Lord bids me enter it." May that be your experience and mine, Beloved, and then we shall have no fear of death!

I have told you before of that godly woman who fell asleep in Jesus one night and on her table were found these lines—

***Since Jesus is mine, I'll not fear undressing,
But gladly put off this garment of clay!
To die in the Lord is a Covenant blessing,
Since Jesus to Glory through death led the way."***

May we all have like precious faith, for Jesus sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-32.

Verses 1, 2. *Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received and wherein you stand. By which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain.* By which the Apostle means, unless they had a false faith, a merely notional faith or, he may also mean, "Unless what I have preached unto you should have been a fable and, therefore, you will have exercised your faith upon nothing real, and so it would have been in vain."

3. *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I, also, received,* The preacher of Christ must not make new doctrines! He is not to be his own teacher. He is first to receive the Truth of God and then to deliver it. The Christian minister takes the lamp out of the hands of God and then passes it on to the hands of his people. Think not that any originality is needed in the pulpit! All that is required is that the herald should faithfully deliver his Master's message just as his Master gives it to him. "I delivered unto you first of all that which I, also, received."

3, 4. *How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.* There are many passages in the Old Testament which describe the Messiah as dying for sinners, especially the chapter of Isaiah's prophecy. There are others that speak of Him as being buried, yet not corrupting in the tomb. These were facts which the Apostle had received upon the testimony of others; now comes the great fact of the Resurrection.

5-8. *And that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James; then of all the Apostle and last of all He was seen of me, also, as of one born out of due time.* [See sermon #2663, Volume 43—A LEAP YEAR SERMON—read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org> .] The Apostle does not attempt to defend the doctrine of the Resurrection by an argument fetched from reason, but he proves it by undoubted *evidence*. If I had to prove that there existed such a tree as the cedar, I should not

use logical arguments further than this—I produce a certain number of men who have seen a cedar and the thing is proved by their testimony. If the evidence of honest men is not accepted, then there is an end, not only to Christianity, but to all the sciences—and you and I must wander forever in a maze of doubts. Now, of all the facts recorded in history, there is not one which is better attested than the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The men who testified that they had seen the risen Christ evidently had no selfish reason for doing so. What is the result of their testimony? They were cast into prison! They were stoned! They were sawn asunder, simply for believing the evidence of their own senses, and testifying what they knew to be true! It is clear that they would have had no interest in publishing this fact if it had not been true—their interest would have lain quite the other way. Besides, it was not as if only a *few* had seen Him, but over 500 brethren at once beheld Him. For 40 days He was gazed upon by different persons and the feat is proved beyond all doubt.

9. *For I am the least of the Apostles and am not meet to be called an Apostle because I persecuted the Church of God.* “God has forgiven me,” said a good man once, “but I shall never forgive myself.” So was it with the Apostle Paul. He knew that God had forgiven him and honored him by making him an Apostle, but he could not forgive himself and, no doubt, the tears gushed from his eyes when he wrote these words, “I am not meet to be called an Apostle because I persecuted the Church of God.”

10. *But by the Grace of God I am what I am: and His Grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.* [See #2833, Volume 49—LESSONS ON DIVINE GLORY—read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>] In what humble tones Paul speaks! He will not deny what Divine Grace has done in him and by him, but he will ascribe it all to God. Brothers and Sisters, you are not to shut your eyes to the gracious change which God’s Holy Spirit has worked in you! You may speak of it and speak of it often, but always guard against taking any of the honor to yourselves—and be especially careful to put the crown upon the right head.

11, 12. *Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so you believed. Now if Christ is preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?* For Christ was the pattern Man to all His people. He is their Representative. Whatever He did, He did for them and whatever was worked in Him shall be surely worked in them. So if Christ rose from the dead, then all who are members of His mystical body must rise, too, for when the Head comes out of the grave, you cannot retain the members in it! Prove that Christ rose and you prove that His people rise, for they are one with Him.

13. *But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen.* [See Sermon #2287, Volume 38—IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION—read/download the entire sermon

free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Yet it is proved by hundreds of credible witnesses that Christ is risen, therefore there is a resurrection.

14. *And if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.* This Truth of God is the keystone of the arch—put this away and the whole tumbles down! It is upon this that the whole Christian system rests. If the Resurrection of Christ is a mere myth and not a positive matter of fact, preaching and faith are equally vain.

15. *Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if it is so that the dead rise not.* The Apostle puts the matter strongly, yet not too strongly. He seems to say, “You know me to be an honest and truthful man, having no selfish motive in what I declare unto you. But if Christ did not rise from the dead, I have testified to you a gross falsehood and led you to put your trust in an imposture.” So he stakes his own personal character upon the fact of Christ’s Resurrection.

16, 17. *For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ is not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.* Yet they knew that they were *not* in their sins, for they had the witness within them that their sins had been pardoned. They knew that sin had no more dominion over them, for they had been made to walk in holiness before the Lord. “Therefore,” says Paul, “Christ must have risen, for if He had not risen, you would have remained sinners as you once were.”

18. *Then they, also, which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.* A supposition against which both Nature and Grace revolt!

19, 20. *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that depart.* As they always brought into the Jewish tabernacle and temple, a portion of the harvest which indicated that the harvest was begun, so Christ’s going up to Heaven was the taking of the first sheaf into God’s great garner—and all the rest must follow.

21, 22. *For since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam, all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* Not that all shall be saved, but all will be raised from the dead! Or else the passage means that as all who were in the first Adam died as the result of Adam’s sin, so all who are in the Second Adam, that is, Christ, shall live as the result of His righteousness. The question is, Are we in the Second Adam? Faith is that which unites us to Christ. If we are trusting in Him by a living faith, then His rising from the dead ensures our rising from the dead. And if not, it is true that we shall rise, but it will be to shame and everlasting contempt.

23-28. *But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He has put all things under His feet. But when He*

says all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is accepted, who did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son Himself also be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. This is a very difficult passage, but I suppose the meaning is this—Jesus Christ, in order to remedy the great mischief of sin, was appointed to a *mediatorial* kingdom over all worlds and that kingdom will continue until all His enemies shall be destroyed and sin shall be trod under His feet. Then Christ—as *Mediator*, mark you, not as Lord—shall deliver up His mediatorial kingdom to His Father and there shall be heard that great shout, “Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigns!” Christ as God, as one of the Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity, will still be as glorious as ever, but His *mediatorial* reign will then be over, seeing that He has accomplished all its purposes.

29. *Otherwise what shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?* This is another most difficult passage and many meanings have been given to it, but I think the most likely to be correct is this—As soon as a member of the early Christian Church was given up to the lion or to be burned, another convert would step forward and say, Let me take his name and place.” Though it was almost certain that they, also, would soon be put to death, there were always found persons bold enough to come forward to be baptized—to take the place of the dead. “Now,” says the Apostle, “what advantage is there in this if the dead rise not?”

30. *And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? Why were the Apostles always subjecting themselves to cruel persecution?*

31. *I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I did daily.* [See Sermon #828, Volume 14—DYING DAILY—read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] He was so hunted about everywhere that there was not a day in which he felt secure of his life, so he asks, “Why should I endure this if there is no world to come?”

32. *If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me, if the dead rise not?* It is quite possible that Paul was thrown to the lions in the theater at Ephesus and that he fought with them and came off a conqueror. “But why,” he asks, “did I try to save my life for future labor and for future suffering if the dead rise not?”

32. *Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.* This is the best philosophy in the world if there is no life to come. So Paul has proved his point right well by every argument that he has used.

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

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

FEAR OF DEATH

NO. 3125

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***“And deliver them who through fear of death were
all their lifetime subject to bondage.”
Hebrews 2:15.***

IT is a very natural thing that man should fear to die, for man was not originally created to die. When Adam and Eve were first placed in the Garden of Eden, they were in such a condition that they might have remained there for a myriad years if they had kept their integrity. There was no reason why unfallen man should die—but now that we have sinned, the seeds of corruption are in this flesh of ours—and it is appointed unto men once to die. Yet, as if the body knew that it was not according to the first decree of Heaven that it should go to the earth and to the worms, it has a natural reluctance to return to its last bed. And this fear of death, so far as it is natural, is not wrong.

In fact, it subserves a very high purpose in the economy of mankind, for there is many a man who might be tempted to end this mortal life were it not for the fear of death. And to end his life by his own hand would be a dreadful deed—it would prove that he was not the child of God, for “you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.” I mean, of course, if such a deed were done by anyone in possession of his senses—I am not giving any judgment on those who are not in the possession of reason and who are not accountable for what they do. If any man in his sober senses were to commit suicide, we could entertain no hope of eternal life for him. Yet many would do so were it not that there is impressed upon them the fear of what would result from thus ending their being.

So far, you see, the fear of death answers a good purpose and is, in itself, right. But it can very readily go beyond the point where it is right into the region wherein it becomes evil and I do not doubt that many godly persons have a fear of death about them which is very evil and which produces very evil effects. Some, no doubt, have been hindered from confessing Christ and following Him fully through fear of death, but not, perhaps, so much now, as in the days of the martyrs. Then there were heroic spirits that went *willingly* to the stake, or to some other painful form of death which the tyrant of the hour decreed. They cheerfully, with

shouts of victory, laid down their lives which they did not count dear unto them for the sake of Jesus Christ!

But there *were* timid spirits that shrank from such an ordeal—they loved life and they feared death, especially in the terrible forms in which it was thrust upon them. This shrinking would be wrong in any one of us. If the fear of death made us dishonor Christ, we would be guilty of deadly sin. If any man resolves to follow Christ, he must not love his own life in comparison with his love to Jesus Christ, but he must be willing to lay it down for the sake of Him who gave up His life upon the Cross for us.

Fear of death also causes some Christian people to have to endure many needless sorrows. They are ill and likely to die and, instead of being in a calm and serene state of mind, as they ought to be, they are greatly perturbed and distressed. Even while they are well, if something happens that causes them to think upon their last hours, they are burdened and depressed. Now this sorrow is a sorrow of the *flesh* which ought to be avoided. We ought to seek for Divine Grace to conquer it so that we may not have the sorrow of the world which works death. This fear of death is very dishonoring to God. It looks as if you could trust Him in fair weather, but not in storms—could believe in Him while you are well and strong—but could not trust in Him when health and strength are failing you. Never forget what David said, “He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.”

We greatly glorify God when we can say with Job, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him,” but if we are afraid to die, it looks as if we had not a whole-hearted trust in God, or that perfect love to Him which casts out fear. And this fear of death also tends very much to dishonor our holy religion in the eyes of those who are not believers in Jesus. The calmness with which the Christian expects his end, or even the holy joy with which he anticipates it, is one of the things which ungodly men cannot comprehend—and even if they will not confess it, they are a good deal impressed by it and often feel their hearts longing to know that blessed secret which can make Christians look forward to their last days on earth in such a cheery spirit.

The Christian who contemplates death with joy is a living sermon! He is a better defense of the Gospel than all the works that Butler and Paley and the other writers of Christian evidences have ever been able to compile. Therefore, dear Friends, the Church of Christ loses this defense and the world loses this evidence when we are troubled by the fear of death. This fear ought not to be found in Christians, but if it ever is, they ought to strive against it until they overcome it—

***“Why should we start, or fear to die?
What timorous worms we mortals are!
Death is the gate of endless joy,
And yet we dread to enter there?
The pains, the groans, the dying strife*”**

***Frighten our approaching souls away—
Still we shrink back again to a life,
Fond of our prison and our clay.”***

“How are we to get rid of this fear?” asks one. Well, let us never try to get rid of it, as some do, by forgetting all about death! That would be to live as the brutes that perish! They live their little day here without any thought beyond the present. The ox and the sheep go to the slaughterhouse without the power to look beyond the present life. I would not like to obtain peace of mind by descending to the level of those “dumb, driven cattle.” Yet there are many men whose only peace arises from thoughtlessness and that is a sorry peace which cannot endure contemplation and consideration. Why, we know men who are bold enough in company and who can even blaspheme God—but set them down in a room by themselves, compel them to think in solitude even for a single hour—and you could not condemn them to a greater misery! They cannot bear the idea of parting with their present joys. Venturing into another world seems, to them, such a hazardous enterprise that they forget all about it and shut their eyes to all thoughts beyond this life!

It is not in that way that Christians seek to overcome their fear of death. They are thoughtful and they wish to always ponder, to consider and to judge concerning the future as well as the present. They desire to look beyond this mortal state. They ask for brighter vision and clearer eyesight and do not need to shut their eyes to the future, whatever it may have in store for them!

I am going to try to answer three questions concerning this fear of death. First, *where shall we look to be delivered from it?* Secondly, *what shall we further think of to help us conquer it?* And, thirdly, *what shall we do to overcome it?*

I. First, then, WHERE SHALL WE LOOK TO BE DELIVERED FROM THE FEAR OF DEATH?

The answer is, Beloved, that you must look for that where you are bound to look for *everything*, namely, TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, for there is no true deliverance from the fear of death except by looking unto Him whose death is the death of death! The verse before our text suggests this when it tells us that Jesus Christ became Man, “that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

How does Christ take away from us the fear of death? He does it, first, *by taking away from us the sin which is the sting of death.* To die forgiven, “accepted in the Beloved,” is not really to die, but to depart out of this world unto the Father! Unforgiven sin is that which makes it hard to lay the head upon the dying pillow. But when sin is forgiven and we know that it is and we have perfect peace with God, we can even *long* for that last evening of life to come that we may undress and sleep in Jesus! Be sure, Beloved, that you are forgiven—“make your calling and election sure.” Know for a certainty that Jesus Christ’s words apply to you, “Veri-

ly, verily, I say unto you, he that believes on Me has everlasting life.” Rest completely upon that Sacrifice which He once offered upon the Cross when He made a full atonement for all who believe an Him! Understand that He has washed you from your sins in His blood and made you kings and priests unto God—and then I do not see how the fear of death can live in you any longer!—

***“If sin is pardoned, I’m secure!
Death has no sting beside.
The Law gives sin its damning power,
But Christ, my Ransom, died.”***

Next, Christ has delivered you from the fear of death *by changing the very character of death, itself*. You know what He said to Martha, “Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.” And Believers never do die in the sense in which others die. They die in order to endure the penalty of sin, but for us, that penalty was borne by Christ! All our iniquities were laid upon Him and all the penalty of them was borne by Him. Death to the Believer is no penalty—it is a development from this time state to another and a higher one—a breaking of the shell that now confines us! It is a snapping of the cable that holds the vessel to the shore; a severing of the chain that holds the eagle to the rock. Death releases us so that we may soar away to that land of light and love where Jesus is, as John Newton sings—

***“In vain my fancy strives to paint
The moment after death,
The glories that surround the saint
When yielding up his breath.
One gentle sigh the fetter breaks!
We scarce can say, ‘They’re gone!’
Before the willing spirit takes
Her mansion near the Throne.”***

Death to the Believer is not an execution—it is his deliverance, his freedom from slavery and admission into the Glory of God!

Christ has taken away the fear of death from those who truly know Him *by assuring us that our soul shall not die or become extinct*. There is a vital principle within us, as He has said, “Because I live, you shall live also.” One of His last solemn declarations was, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory.” We sorrow not as without hope concerning those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, for we know that they are forever with the Lord! “To be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord,” is the Divine Revelation concerning all who are in Christ Jesus by a living faith! Because our souls shall never die, we are not afraid to venture into the world of spirits.

Then there is that master doctrine of the Christian faith which was not revealed to men in all its fullness until Jesus came. I mean, *the doctrine of the resurrection of the body*. It is for this body that we have any fear—corruption, earth and worms are its heritage—and it seems a hard thing that these eyes, which have seen the light, should be blinded in the

mold; that these hands which have been active in God's service, should lie still in the grave—and that these limbs, which have trodden the pilgrim path, should be able to move no longer. But courage, Believer! Your body shall rise again! Laid in the earth it may be, but *kept* in the earth it *cannot* be! The voice of Nature bids you die, but the voice of the Omnipotent bids you live, again, for the trumpet shall sound and then the bodies of the saints shall rise—

***“From beds of dust and silent clay,
To realms of everlasting day.”***

This is our consolation, that, as Jesus Christ died and rose again from the dead, “even so they, also, who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” As we have this double comfort for soul and body, what more do we need?

Thus I have shown you that to overcome the fear of death, we must look to Jesus Christ on the Cross atoning for us, in the Resurrection rising for us, in the Glory taking possession of our home for us and at the right hand of God preparing our place for us, possessing all power and using it so that He may bring us unto His eternal Kingdom—and soon to come again, in all the glory of the latter days, to raise the bodies of His people from the dead unless they are still alive at His coming. This is He who conquers for us the fear of death! It is to Him we are to look—“looking unto Jesus.” Let your eyes be always looking to Him—then the fear of death will not make you subject to bondage.

II. Now, secondly, WHAT SHALL WE THINK OF THAT MAY FURTHER HELP US TO OVERCOME THIS FEAR OF DEATH?

First, let us remember that if we are called to die, *we are called to do no more than Jesus Christ has done before us.* When my body goes down to the grave, it will not be the first tenant of the sepulcher! Myriads of the saints have been there before and, best of all, the saints' Master and Lord has slept in the tomb! You remember that Jesus left the napkin folded by itself that mourners might use it in drying their tears—but the linen clothes, in which He had been wrapped—remained together so that our last bed might be well-sheeted, that our last sleeping room might not be unfurnished. More than that—

***“There the dear flesh of Jesus lay,
And left a long perfume.”***

Should not the servant be as the Master? Does he ask for more? If the King, Himself, has passed this way, shall His bodyguard, His soldiers, His companions be afraid to pursue the same downward path? No, Beloved, as you follow the track of the Crucified to the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, you may, yourself, walk safely there! If the footprints of the flock have often encouraged us, how much more should the footprints of the Shepherd! So, Believers, be not afraid to die, for Jesus died.

Remember, also, that *death will not separate us from the love of Christ, nor from Christ Himself.* He is with us *now* and He will be with us *then.* And after death we shall be with Him forever! He loves us today and He will love us tomorrow. He will love us all our lives. He will love us in

death and He will love us throughout eternity! It was this Truth of God that Paul proclaimed when he wrote, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." In one of his inventories of the Christian's possessions, he writes, "Life or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours so death is yours if you are in Christ Jesus." If the pangs of death could separate the members of Christ's mystical body from their Head, it would be death, indeed. If that grievous sorrow could divide the heart of Jesus from the heart of His elect, then might we dread to die—but it is not so! If death makes any difference to us, the bonds that unite us to Christ shall become still firmer and the Revelation of Christ shall become yet brighter—and Jesus shall be nearer and dearer to us in our departure from earth than He ever was before! "Therefore comfort one another with these words."

Next, let us remember that *death will not even separate us from all our friends*. It will take the wife from the husband and the child from the mother—and we must leave behind us many who have been our comrades in the battle of life. But, especially to you who are growing old, it ought to be a very comforting thought that probably most of your best friends have already crossed the river! If you were to count up those who have been dear to you from your youth up, you would find that the majority have gone on before you as you have advanced in years. And there are some above who, a long way behind our Lord, of course, will be among the dearest friends that we hope to see up yonder! The mother will find her babies who were lent to her for a brief season and then caught away to Heaven, safe on the other shore. And grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters and many a fellow Church member with whom we went to the House of the Lord in company—are all there ready to welcome us when we shall be newcomers in the Celestial City! Do not, therefore, have a fear of death because of the separation from friends below, but rather cheer yourself with the prospect of a blessed *reunion* with friends above! You may, perhaps, regret that you have to leave some behind, but think of the friends ahead and let your spirit rejoice to remember that you are going "to the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in Heaven." Again, I say to you, "Comfort one another with these words."

I think the fear of death ought to vanish from us when we remember that *it will be an answer to a great many of our prayers*. I am not sure we always do right to sing such words as these—

***"Father, I long, I faint to see
The place of Your abode."***

I remember a minister, an old friend of mine, who went into the pulpit one Lord's-Day morning, stood up and read that verse—

***"Father, I long, I faint to see
The place of Your abode"***

***I'd leave Your earthly courts and flee
Up to Your seat, my God!***

As he uttered those words, he sat down in the seat, fell back—he had gone to be with his God! We should not venture to say or sing such words as these unless we are fully prepared for such a sudden change as came to my aged friend. But how often you and I have prayed to be rid of troubles! Well, we shall be rid of them, *then!* How often have we prayed to be rid of sin! We shall be rid of it, *then!* We have prayed to be delivered from temptation—and we shall be—*then.* We have asked to be like Jesus and we shall be, *then!* We have prayed for a clearer vision of Him and we shall have it, *then.* Why, our prayers, except when we pray, “Let the whole earth be filled with Your Glory,” can scarcely go further than when we say, “Let us be with You where You are.” By our death, the Lord will answer our prayers. One kiss on our lips from His dear mouth will kiss away our soul and we shall be where we shall see His blessed face in all the splendor of His Glory! So then, if death is the answer to your prayers, why need you dread it?

Remember, too, that *death is attended by very special comforts.* I remember a sermon by my grandfather which stuck in my youthful memory and is still fresh in my memory. I forget the text, but I think it was, “Grace to help in time of need.” And at the end of the first head the old gentleman said, “But there is one kind of Grace that you do not want.” Then he went on to a second head and mentioned another kind of Grace and, again, he said, “But there is one kind of Grace that you do not want.” He had five or six heads to his discourse, but at the end of every one of them he said, “But there is one kind of Grace that you do not want.” We were all wondering what he could mean and then he finished up with this remark, “You do not want *dying* Grace till dying moments come!” There was truth in that observation!

I may say to myself, “Do I feel, now, that I could die calmly or even triumphantly?” I may put the question if I like, but it is hardly a fair one, for I am not yet called to die! Yet my experience and observation of others lead me to believe that very remarkable Grace is often given to Believers in their last hours. I have seen the timid become more strong than the brave! I have seen the retiring become more bold than the courageous! And I have known some who seemed to be almost dumb, before, speak with matchless utterance! And some, whose faces have been lit up with supernatural joy—who, before, appeared to be amongst the doubting and the trembling ones of Christ’s family. There are choice revelations, special manifestations, nearer approaches to Christ, wider outlets of love from Him and greater inlets into the soul of the brightness of His Presence in those times, than ever before!

When the body is strong, it often seems like a thick wall that shuts out the light. But when disease comes and shakes the tenement, it makes great rifts in wall and roof—and through those rifts the Light of God comes streaming in as it had never come in before! I never can doubt the

truth of our holy faith, or the reality of religion after what I have witnessed at the deathbeds of the Lord's people. I could tell you of one, who died this week, and who had long been a member of this Church. She was unconscious in her last hours, but up to the time when unconsciousness came on, it would have been a joy to any of you to see her! She almost incessantly requested her friends TO sing such songs as—

“Safe in the arms of Jesus.”

As long as she could do so, she took her part, joining better than any of them in the real joy of the song, for they were sorrowful at the thought of losing one whom they loved—but she was joyful in the prospect of soon beholding the face of Him whom her soul loved so intensely! I believe there is no joy in life that equals the joy of departing Believers!

You may visit the haunts of folly, if you will, and search for joy, there, but you shall not find any joy worth the having. You may go to the palaces of kings; you may go to bridal chambers; you may go where health, strength, fame and honor contribute to worldly mirth—but you shall not find such deep, intense joy anywhere else as you shall find in that room where the death-sweat is on the Believer's brow—and the Glory of Heaven is shining upon his face! I have heard some say that it was worth while to live for the sake of the joy they have had when they were dying! So there is no cause for a Christian to fear death if such an experience as this awaits him.

But it is not so much the joy of dying that can console us as *the life that is beyond death*. I never like to hear people quote the first part of that text and omit the latter portion, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” Christians know that there is a joy unspeakable and eternal which will be their portion as soon as they shall depart from this world to be with the Father. Well did we sing just now—

***“Let doubt, then, and danger my progress oppose,
They only make Heaven more sweet at the close!
Come joy or come sorrow, whate'er may befall
An hour with my God will make up for them all.”***

What will be the sensations of the first hour in heaven? I will not try to picture them—I will leave you to imagine them. But what will be your sensations when you realize that you are not merely to be there for an hour, or a day, or even for 70 years, but forever and ever? Of him that overcomes, Christ says, “He shall go no more out.” He shall be blessed forever and ever in the Presence of his Lord! The righteous are to go “into life eternal.” Take away that word, “eternal,” and you have taken away our all! But while that remains, the Heaven of Heaven is the fact that it will last forever and ever! I cannot stay to speak at length upon all this, but I do entreat every child of God to think much upon these comforting themes and then, surely, he will be helped to overcome the fear of death.

III. Now, thirdly, WHAT SHALL WE DO, as well as what shall we think of, IN ORDER THAT WE MAY OVERCOME THE FEAR OF DEATH?

I would say, first, *let us die every day*. “I die daily,” said the Apostle Paul. The man who practices dying every day, the man who has, as it were, a daily rehearsal of it, will not be afraid of the reality when it comes! We are wise to talk of our last hours, to be familiar with the thought of our departure from this world. Every night, when we go to our bed, we ought to have a rehearsal of death. We lay aside our clothes for the night just as we shall have to lay aside our bodies in death. I like that idea best on Saturday night, for then we take off our work-day clothes and they are put away—and we fall asleep. And then, in the morning, there are our Sabbath-Day garments laid ready for us and oh, what wonderful Sabbath-Day clothes we shall have when we awake in the morning in Heaven and are “arrayed in fine linen: clean and white,” which is “the righteousness of saints.”

So, die daily, Brothers and Sisters, in this fashion! Get into the habit of so doing. I remember an old Christian woman who used to say that she had dipped her feet in the river of death every morning before she left her bedroom, so she did not mind when she was called to go through it, she was so accustomed to “die daily.”

The next piece of advice I have to give you is this—*hold very loosely everything on earth*. Have you a great many possessions and friends? Mind that you do not cling too closely to them, for there is danger about them all. As one once observed to a rich man who took him over his parks and gardens, “Ah, Sir, these are the things that make it hard to die!” The poor have little enough to leave and when they go, they have not the regrets which the covetous and avaricious rich man oftentimes has, or the man who has added field to field and farm to farm, till he owns all the land in the region where he lives. “Must I leave you? Must I leave you?” has often been the miser’s cry, as he has tried to clutch his money-bags with his dying fingers! O Beloved, hold everything loosely! You are in a dying world and everything about you is like yourself—shadowy and fleeting. Do not build your nest here as if you were to abide here forever.

We ought to live in this world like lodgers at an inn. There was a good bishop who used to say that he should like to die at an inn because he felt as if he should then be in a similar position, both literally and spiritually. And truly, that is the spirit in which Christians should always live. A man on a journey goes to an inn to spend a night—he does not trouble himself because the room is not quite to his taste, for he will be off in the morning. You, Believer, are only at an inn, so do not fret about the little inconveniences here, for you are to be off in the morning and, you may depend upon it that your Father’s carriage will be at the door at the right time—so have everything packed up ready for your departure! Do not go buying a lot of lumber here, for you cannot carry it with you!

Have very little and have it all ready. And a very good thing is to send as much as you can on before you!

Somebody said, the other day, that the best way to travel was to send all your goods on by the luggage train in advance and then go, yourself, by the first-class express passenger train. He explained that he meant that you were to give away as much as you could to the poor and to the Church of God—and so send it on by the luggage train. “What I spent, I *had*,” said a man. “What I kept, I *lost*. What I gave away, I *have*.” And truly it is so when Believers die. Still is that theirs which they have given to God and to His poor, “but whose is that which they have left behind?” Perhaps some ungrateful heir will sinfully squander it. I have often admired the difference between a rich man’s funeral and a poor man’s. It grieves me, sometimes, to think of the rich man’s funeral. What do the sons and daughters of the miser think about it? They are most concerned to get home to hear the reading of the will! But when the poor man dies, it is quite another matter. There is his daughter, Jane, who is employed as a servant—she contributes a little towards the cost of the funeral. Then there is a son, John, who has a wife and four or five children—but he pinches himself so as to contribute a little. All the children do something to help and those are honest tears that they shed for the poor old man, for they have nothing to gain by his departure and the grief at his funeral will be real and true. But whether you are rich or poor in this world’s goods, make sure that you are among “the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.”

But the main way to overcome the fear of death is *to believe firmly in your Lord*. You will generally find that in proportion as your faith gets stronger, your fear of death will vanish—and as your faith gets weak, fear will come in to take its place. Realize that Christ is your Savior, that He loves you and has given Himself for you—and saved you with an everlasting salvation! Realize that He has inscribed your name upon the palms of His hands. No, more—that He has engraved it upon His heart! Remember that although a woman may forget her sucking child, your Lord *never* can forget you and that He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you”—and then will you be able to say, “Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”

The next thing I exhort you to do is to *walk much with God*. Pray for Grace to never get out of fellowship with Him. You cannot have the fear of death while you walk with Him! There was a man, you remember, who never died—and the reason was because he walked with God! If any man would escape all dread of death, he must pursue Enoch’s path. It is the only way to rise superior to the natural fear that comes upon us all at times.

Next, to get rid of the fear of death, I urge you to *serve God every day with all your might*. Live each day as if it were to be your last day. If any Christian man knew that he had only one more day to live, what a great

deal of work he would crowd into that day! Then do that *every* day since any night, when you fall asleep, you may do so for the last time on earth! Press as much service as you can into each day—live at a quick rate, serve the Lord with all your heart, mind, soul and strength—and try to get a full day's work done in every day.

I met, the other day, with a piece of poetry which struck me very forcibly. I wonder whether it will strike you in the same way as I read it—

***“My work is done, I lay me down to die.
Wearied and travel-worn, I long for rest.
Speak but the word, dear Master, and I fly,
A dove let loose to nestle on Your breast.’
‘Not yet, My child; a little longer wait,
I need your prayerful watch at Glory’s gate.’
‘But, Lord, I have no strength to watch and pray,
My spirit is benumbed and dim my sight.
And I shall grieve Your wakeful love, as they
Who in the garden slept, that paschal night.’
‘My child, I need your weakness, hour by hour,
To prove, in Me, your weakness is power.’
‘Not for myself, I urge the suit,
But loved ones lose, for me, life’s priceless bloom
And tender, patient, uncomplaining, mute,
Wear out their joy in my darkened room.’
‘Enough, My child! I need their love to you;
Around your couch they minister to Me.’
‘It is enough, dear Master, yes, Amen!
I will not breathe one murmur or reply.
Only fulfill Your work in me and then
Call me, and bid me answer, ‘Here am I.’
‘My child, the sign I waited for is given.
Your work is done. I need you now in Heaven.’”***

I admire that utterance of Mr. Whitefield, which I have quoted to you before, “I try to keep all my affairs so arranged that if I were to die at any time, they would be no trouble to those who come after me.” He was so particular in his habits that he would not fall asleep if he had a pair of gloves out of place! And I like to feel that as far as it can be, all is right with my own affairs.

I do not wonder that some Christian people would be afraid to die, now, for they remember that they have not made their *wills*. Simple as that remark may seem to be to you, it is a very important matter, for it is a terrible thing for a man to be taken suddenly ill and, instead of having to think about departing to his God, he has to send for a lawyer! And when his own wits are scarcely ready for it, he has to be planning about what is to be done for his wife and children and others whom he wishes to benefit. Get that matter settled as soon as you can and see to everything else that needs attention—so that you may be able to say—“Here am I, standing like a passenger at a railway station. My luggage is all ready and I am only waiting to step into the carriage and be gone.” Happy man who is in that prepared state, for he need have no fear of death!

And, Brothers and Sisters, if you would get rid of the fear of death, my last word of advice is, *use the telescope very frequently*. Look away up to the eternal hills where your heavenly inheritance lies, for all the Glory which Christ has with the Father is yours! You shall sit upon His Throne, even as He sits upon His Father's Throne. You shall be crowned, even as He is crowned. Look away from this mist and fog, this frost and snow—to the land where the sun goes down no more and the days of your mourning shall be forever ended! Let your spirit rejoice that as you are one with Jesus, you have already, by faith, taken possession of the land where you shall be no more subject to any pain, or trial, or sorrow, or sin, or death! Happy are the people who have such a blessed place to go to when they die!

But I am afraid there are some here who have not any such prospect before them. To them I will repeat a simple story which I have told to some of you before. I have heard of a certain king who had a jester or, "fool," to make fun for him, as kings used to have. But this "fool" was no fool! He had much sense and he had thought wisely about eternal matters. One day when he had greatly pleased the king, His Majesty gave him a stick and said to him, "Tom, here is a stick which you are to keep till you see a bigger fool than yourself—and then you may give it to him." One day His Majesty was taken ill and it was thought that he would die. Many went to see him and Tom also went and said, "What is the matter, Your Majesty?" "I am going, Tom, I am going." "Where are you going?" asked Tom. "I fear it is a very long way," said the king. "And are you coming back, Your Majesty?" "No, Tom." "You are going to stay a long while, then?" "Forever," said the king.

"I suppose Your Majesty has a palace ready over there." "No." "But I suppose you have provided everything that you will need there if you are going such a long way and never coming back? I suppose you have sent a good deal on and got everything provided for on ahead?" "No, Tom," said the king, "I have done nothing of the kind." "Here, then, Your Majesty, take my stick, for you are a bigger fool than I am."

And if there is a man here who has made no provision for eternity and who has no mansion, no abiding place, no treasure, no Friend, no Advocate, no Helper there, he is a gigantic fool, be he who he may! The Lord give that fool a little sense and lead him to confess his folly and look to Jesus, who is Savior, Friend and Heaven all in one! God bless you, for Christ's sake! Amen.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
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MEN CHOSEN—FALLEN ANGELS REJECTED NO. 90

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, JUNE 29, 1856,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“Verily He took not on Him the nature of angels;
but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.”
Hebrews 2:16.***

THE Almighty God, who dwelt alone, was pleased to manifest Himself by created works which should display His wisdom and His power. When He set about the mighty work of Creation, He determined in His own mind that He would fashion a variety of works and that all His creatures should not be of one form, nature, grandeur, or dignity. Hence He made some, grains of dust, and others, mountains of stupendous magnitude. He created some drops and some oceans, some mighty hills and some valleys. Even in His inanimate works, He preserved a wonderful variety. He gave not to all stars the same glory, neither to all worlds the same ponderous mass. He gave not to all rocks the same texture, nor unto all seas the same shape or fashion. He was pleased, in the work of His hands, to observe an infinite variety. When He came to create living creatures, there, too, are distinctions that we must note. From the worm up to the eagle, from the eagle to the man, from the man to the angel, such are the steps of creating goodness in the fashion of things that are animate. He has not made all creatures eagles, neither has He fashioned all beings worms—but having a right to do what He will with His own—He has exercised that right in making one creature the majestic lion, king of the forest and another, the harmless lamb, which shall be devoured, without power to resist its enemy, or defend itself. He has made His creatures just as it seemed fit to Him. He has given to one swiftness of foot, to another, speed of wing. To one, clearness of eye, to another, force of sinew. He has not followed any fixed rule in His Creation. But He has done exactly as it pleased Him in the arrangement of the forms which He has animated. So, also, we must observe a great difference in the rational beings which He has created. He has not made all men alike. They differ mightily—from the man of the smallest intellect to the man of majestic mind, there are no few steps! And then there is the higher order of rational creatures, more superior to unrenewed man than man can ever be to his fellows, namely the order of angels. And in the fashioning of angels and men, God again has exercised His own right to create as He pleases. To do just as He wills with his own. Thence, all angels may not be alike

in dignity and all men are not alike in intellect. He has made them to differ.

But now we wish to draw your attention to two instances of God's doing as He pleases in the fashioning of the works of His hands—in the case of angels and in the case of men. Angels were the elder born. God created them and it pleased Him to give unto them a free will to do as they pleased. They were allowed to choose the good or to prefer the evil. But even as He did to man—He gave them this stipulation—that if they would prefer the good, then their station in Heaven would be forever fixed and firm. But if they sinned, they would be punished for their guilt and cast out from the Presence of His Glory, into flames of fire. In an evil hour, Satan, one of the chiefs of the angels, rebelled. He tempted others and he led astray a part of the stars of Heaven. God, in His Divine Vengeance, smote those rebel angels, drove them from their heavenly seats, banished them from their abodes of happiness and glory and sent them down to dwell forever in the abyss of Hell. The rest he confirmed, calling them the elect angels. He made their thrones eternally secure and gave them an inheritance of those crowns which, sustained by His Grace, they had preserved by the rectitude of their holy conduct. After that it pleased Him to make another race of beings called man. He did not make them all at once. He made but two of them, Adam and Eve, and He committed to their keeping the safety of their entire progeny throughout all generations. He said to Adam, as He had said to the angels, "I give unto you free will, you may obey or disobey, as you please." There is My Law, you are not to touch yon tree. The command is by no means irksome. To keep that command will not be difficult to you, for I have given you free will to choose the good." However, it so happened, much to the misery of man, that Adam broke the Covenant of Works. He touched the accursed fruit and in that day he fell.

Ah, what a Fall was there! Then you and I, and all of us, fell down! While cursed sin did triumph over us, there were no men that stood. There were some angels that stood, but no men, for the Fall of Adam was the fall of our entire race! After one portion of the angels had fallen, it pleased God to stamp their doom and make it fast and firm. But when man had fallen, it did not so please God. He had threatened to punish him, but in His Infinite mercy, He selected the major portion of the human race whom he made the objects of His special affection. For these He provided a precious remedy. To these He covenanted salvation and secured it by the blood of His Everlasting Son. These are the persons whom we call the elect. And those whom He has left to perish, perish on account of their own sins, most justly, to the praise of His glorious justice. Now, here you notice Divine Sovereignty—that God chose to put both men and angels on the footing of their free will. Sovereignty, in that He chose to punish all the fallen angels with utter destruction. Sove-

reignty, in that He chose to relieve the whole human race and to grant an eternal pardon to a number, whom no man can number, selected out of men, who shall Infallibly be found before His right hand above. My text mentions this great fact, for when properly translated it reads thus—“He took not up angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.” As this text has two translations, I shall give you the two meanings as briefly as I can.

I. In the first place, the translation of our authorized version runs thus—“*He took not on Him the nature of angels.*” Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, when He came from Heaven to die, did not take upon Himself the nature of angels. It would have been a stoop, more immense than if a seraph could have changed himself into an ant, for the Almighty Son of God to have been clothed in the garb of even the archangel Gabriel! But His condescension dictated to Him that if He did stoop, He would descend to the very lowest degree. That if He did become a creature, He would become not the noblest creature, but one of the most ignoble of rational beings, that is to say—man. Therefore, *He did not stoop to the intermediate step of angels, but He stooped right down and became a Man.* “He took not on Him the nature of angels—but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.” Let us notice the wisdom and the love of this and I think there will be something to cause us to glorify God for so doing!

1. In the first place, if Christ had taken upon Himself the nature of angels, *He could never have made an Atonement for man.* Setting aside the thought that if He came to save man it would have seemed improper if He had come in the garb of angels, you must acknowledge that if He had done so, He could not have seen death. How could angels die? We can suppose that their spirit may become extinct, if God should will it. We can suppose the entire annihilation of that to which God alone supplies immortality. But since angels have no bodies, we cannot suppose them capable of death, for death is the separation of the body and the soul. Therefore, it behooved Christ that He should take upon Himself the form of a Man—that He might become obedient to death, even the death of the Cross. Had angels been standing by, they would have said, “Oh, mighty Master, take our radiant robes! Oh, take not the poor everyday garb of humanity—take our glittering garments all benighted with pearls.” And Gabriel would have said, “Come, take my wings, You mighty Maker, and I shall count myself too honored to have lost them for Your sake! There, take this crown and this mantle of azure, wherewith to clothe Yourself, Son of God—put my silver sandals on Your feet. Become not man, but an angel, if You will stoop.” “But, no,” He would have said, “Gabriel, if I were in your garments, I could not fight with death, I could not sleep in the tomb, I could not feel the pangs and agony of dissolution. Therefore, I must, I will, become a Man.” “He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.”

2. Had our Savior become an angel, we must note, in the next place that *He would never have been a fitting example for us*. I cannot imitate an angelic example in all points. It may be very good, as far as I can imitate, but it cannot, in all points, be my pattern. If you would give me something to imitate, give me a man like myself! Then I may attempt to follow him. An angel could not have set us the same holy and pious example that our Savior did. Had He descended from on high in the garb of one of those bright spirits, He might have been a fine example for those brilliant cherubs who surround His Throne. But we, poor mortal men, condemned to drag the chain of mortality along this earthly existence, would have turned aside and said, “Ah, such a thing is too high for us, we cannot attain unto it.” And we, therefore, would have stopped short. If I am to carve marble, give me a marble statue which I am to copy! And if this mortal clay is to be cut out into the very model of perfection, as it is to be by God’s Spirit, then give me man for my example, for a man I am and as a man, I am to be made perfect. Not only could Christ not have been a Redeemer, but He could not have been our Exemplar if He had taken upon Himself the nature of angels!

3. Sweetly, also, let us remember that if Christ had been an angel, *He could not have sympathized with us*. In order to sympathize with our fellow creatures, we must be something like they are. Suppose a man made of iron, or of brass—could he sympathize with our wearied lungs, or with our aching bones? Let such a man be told of sickness or of illness—could he understand it? I would not have him for a nurse! I would not care to have such a being for my physician. He could not feel for me. He could not sympathize with me! No, even our own fellow creatures cannot sympathize with us unless they have suffered as we have done. I have heard of a lady who never knew poverty in all her life and, consequently, she could not sympathize with the poor. She heard the complaint that bread was extremely dear when it was running up to fourteen-pence a loaf. “Oh,” she said, “I have no patience with the poor people, grumbling about the dearness of bread. If bread is so dear, let them live on penny buns—they are always cheap enough.” She had not been in the position of the poor and, therefore, she could not sympathize with them. No man can sympathize with another, to any great extent, unless he has been, in some measure, in the same position and endured the same trouble. “It behooved Him, therefore, that He should be made in all points like unto His brethren that He might be a faithful High Priest. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, for He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.” But if He had been an angel, what sympathy could He have had for me? Suppose I should tell an angel that I could scarcely resist my corruptions—the angel would look at me and wonder what I meant! If I should tell him that I find this world a base, howling wilderness—how could he believe me, for

he has never heard howling—his ears have only been saluted by golden harps and sweet choral symphonies of praise. If I should tell him that I found it hard work to hold on my way and keep close to my Savior, the angel could only say, “I cannot sympathize with you, for I am not tempted as you are. I have no clogging nature to abate my ardent zeal, but day without night, with unflagging wing, I circle His Throne rejoicing. Nor have I a wish nor will to depart from my great Maker.” There you see the Savior’s wisdom—He would become a Man and not an angel.

4. Once more—Christ became a Man and not an angel *because He desired to be one with His dear Church*. Christ was betrothed to His Church before time began and when He came into the world, He virtually said, “I will go with you, My Bride and I will delight Myself in your company. Angels’ garments were not a fitting wedding dress for Me to wear, if I am to be bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh. I am allied to you by a union firm and strong. I have called you Hephzibah, My delight is in you. And I have said your land shall be called Beulah, that is, married. Well, if I am married to you, I will live in the same condition with you. It were not fit that the husband should live in a palace and that the wife should live in a cottage. It were not meet that the husband should be arrayed in gorgeous robes and the wife in meaner garments. No,” He said to His church “if you dwell upon earth, I will. If you dwell in a tabernacle of clay, I will do the same—

***Yes,” said the Lord, “with her I’ll go,
Through all the depths of care and woe,
And on the Cross will even dare
The bitter pangs of death to bear.”***

Christ cannot bear to be different from His Church. You know He would not be in Heaven without her. Therefore did He make that long, long journey, to redeem her and visit her—and when He came on this good errand, He would not that she should be made of clay and He should not be made of clay, too! He was the Head and it would have been out of order that the Head should have been of gold and the body of clay. It would have been like Nebuchadnezzar’s image that must be broken. “Since the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He must also take part in the same,” for He became “perfect through suffering,” since He was “the Captain of our salvation.” Thus, again, you see His love and His wisdom, that He “took not on Him the nature of angels, but took upon Him the seed of Abraham.”

5. Again, if Christ had not taken upon Him the nature of Man, *then manhood would not have been so honorable or so comfortable as it is*. I consider that to be a Christian man is to be the greatest thing that God has made. Little as I am, I can say of myself, if I am a child of God, I am next to my Maker! There is an infinite, an awful, an immeasurable distance—but, save Jesus Christ, Himself—there is no being between man and God! As for an angel, he is less than redeemed man. “Are they not

ministering spirits, sent forth to be ministers unto us who are heirs of salvation?” Without controversy, the less is minister unto the greater and the greater shall not attend the less. Therefore the angels are less than men, for they minister to us. Manhood is a noble thing, for God once wore Manhood. Manhood is a glorious thing, for it was the robe of the Eternal. “God was made flesh and dwelt among us,” therefore, flesh is dignified and glorified. As I said, it would not be so comfortable to be a man if Christ had not been a Man. For I know that I must die—but my comfort is that I shall rise again—but I would not have had that comfort if Christ had not been a Man and if He had not died and risen again!

Oh, Death, I have often seen your dungeon and I have thought how can it be that any should escape it? The walls are thick and against the door is a ponderous stone—it is sealed fast—and watchers guard it. Oh, Death, where is the man that can rend your sepulcher, or open your door? Your iron bars, O Death, cannot be filed by mortals and your chains are too heavy to be snapped by the finite. But I take comfort, for there was a Man who broke the bonds of Death! There was One who snapped the fetters, cut the bars of brass, unlocked the gates and made His way triumphant through the sky! In that Man I see an instance of what I, too, shall do when the loud trumpet of the archangel shall startle my sleeping atoms. I, too, shall find it easy to rise, for as the Lord, my Savior rose, so all His followers must. And therefore, Death, I look upon your dungeon as one that must be opened again, for it has been opened once! I look upon your worm as but a little thing that must yield up its prey and give back the flesh whereon it fed. I look upon the stone of your sepulcher as but some pebble of oceans’ beach which I shall cast away with eager hands when I shall burst the cerements of the grave and mount to immortality! It is a comfortable thing to be a man because Christ died and rose again! But had He been an angel, the resurrection would not have had that great and glorious proof, nor should we have been so content to be human—seeing there would be death—but no immortality and life!

II. Thus I have tried to explain the first part of the subject. Now for the second. The literal translation, according to the marginal reading, is “*He took not up angels, but He took up the Seed of Abraham,*” by which is meant that Christ did not die to save angels, though many of them needed salvation. He died to save fallen man. Now I like, every now and then, to give the opponents of the great Doctrine of Grace, something hard to put between their teeth. I have often been told that Election is a most dreadful Doctrine and to teach that God saves some and lets others perish, is to make God unjust. Sometimes I have asked how that was and the usual answer I have got is this—Suppose a father should have a certain number of children and he were to put some of his children into a terrible dungeon and make the rest of them happy, would you think that

father was just? Well, I reply, you have supposed a case and I will answer you. Of course I would not—the child has a claim upon his father and the father is bound to give him his claim. But I want to know what you mean by asking that question! How does that apply to the case of God? I did not know that all men were God's children. I knew that they were God's rebellious subjects, but I did not know that they were His children! I thought they did not become His children till they were born-again and that when they were His children, He did treat them all alike and did carry them all to Heaven and give them all a mansion. And I never heard that He sent any of His children to Hell. True, I have heard *you* say so. I have heard *you* say that some of His children fall from Grace and He, therefore, sends them to Hell. And so I leave you to solve the problem how that is just, but, Sir, I do not believe that all God's creatures are His children! Now I have got a small question for you. How do you explain this—that the devil and fallen angels are all lost and yet, according to your own showing, fallen men all have a chance of being saved? How do you make that out? "Oh," you say, "that is a different matter. I was not calculating about the fallen angels." But if you were to ask the devil about it, he would not tell you it was a different matter! He would say, "Sir, if all men are God's children, all devils are quite as much so. I am sure they ought to stand on the same footing as men and a fallen angel has as much right to call himself one of God's children as a fallen man." And I should like you to answer the devil on that subject on your own hypothesis. Let Satan, for once, ask you a question, "You say it is unfair of God to send one of his children to Hell and take another to Heaven. Now, you have said all creatures are His children. Well, I am a creature and, therefore, I am His child. I want to know, my Friend," says Satan, "how you make it just that my Father should send me to Hell and let you go to Heaven?" Now, you must settle that question with the devil. I will not answer for you. I never supposed such a case—my views never bring me into such a dilemma—but you are in for the trouble and you may get out of it the best way you can.

On my principle, the deed is just enough—men and devils have both sinned and have both deserved to be damned for their sins. God, if He shall so resolve, can justly destroy them all, or He may save them all if He can do it with justice. Or, He may save one of them, if He pleases, and let the others perish. And if as He has done, He chooses to save a remnant and that remnant shall be men—and if He allows all the fallen angels to sink to Hell—all that we can answer is that God is Just and He has a right to do as He pleases with His creatures. You know, you give to the queen the right to pardon a rebel when she sees fit and will you not give that right to God? "No," you say, "not unless He pardons all." Well, Sir, then there were no right at all in that. The queen would not thank you if you gave her liberty to pardon all. She would say, "No, there are

instances where it is to my honor and to the honor of my laws not to pardon, and, therefore, I will not do it. There are other instances where it is to the honor of my clemency and not hurtful to my laws and, therefore, these I pardon and I uphold my right to do it.” Now what you will give to a king or an emperor you will deny to God? But I stand here to claim this right for Him! Deny it if you please—you will have to deny it in the teeth of the Scriptures, for they do authoritatively declare, that God is a Sovereign—that He “has mercy on whom He will have mercy and whom He will, He hardens.”

Now, come, if our friend will let us, we will, for a moment, consider this case—how it is that devils are lost and some men are saved.

1. In the first place, *I do not think it is because of any difference in the sin.* When two criminals are brought before a judge, if one of them is to be saved and the other punished, very likely the judge will say, “Which is the greater offender? Let the greater offender die and let the less offender be saved.” Now, I do not know that Satan was a greater offender than man. I am not sure that the fallen angels sinned more than man did. “Why, Sir,” you say, “man’s sin was a very little one! He only stole some of his Master’s fruit.” Yes, but if it were such a little thing to do, what a little thing it would have been not to do it! If it were so little a thing, how easily he might have avoided it! And, therefore, because he did it, it became all the greater sin. “Oh,” you say, “but Satan was proud and the fallen angels were proud.” And are not *you* pretty tolerably in the same direction, my Friend? At any rate, Adam was. “But,” you say, “Satan was rebellious.” Well if you were not a rebel, you would not talk so. If you had not rebelled against God, you would not set yourself up to deny His Sovereignty. “But,” you say, “the devil was a liar from the beginning.” I wonder how long it is since you have spoken the truth, Sir. You know how to lie as well as he, and though you may not have developed your sin as much as the fallen angels have done, if God were to let you alone and take the curb off, I wonder what would be the difference between you and the devil? I believe that if men were allowed to do just as they liked and there were no government over them, they would almost go beyond Satan! Look at Robespierre, in France. Look at the doings of the Reign of Terror. Turn to heathen countries, I dare not tell you what abominable vices, what lascivious sins are committed there in public! I point you to Sodom and Gomorrah and I ask you what man may become. And I say that I do not know but that a man might become as vile as a devil, if God’s restraining mercy were taken from him. At any rate, I do not say but that Adam’s sin was as great as Satan’s. “Ah,” you say, “but Adam was tempted to do it.” Yes, that was some excuse. But so were the greater part of the devils. It is true Satan was not tempted, he did it of his own free will. But he tempted the other spirits and, therefore, the excuse which will do for man will do for the great mass of fallen spirits. And why

did not God, therefore, select a portion of the fallen spirits to be saved? I answer that you can never find any reason except this, “Shall I not do what I will with My own?” And we must fall down and breathlessly admire the Infinite Sovereignty that passed by angels and saved man!

2. But suppose there is not much difference in their sin? The next question is, *which of those two beings is most worth saving?* Which is the most valuable creature? Which would serve his Maker most, if his Maker should spare him! And I defy any of you to hold that a sinful man is a more valuable creature than an angel. Why, if God had looked at profit, speaking after the manner of men, it would be more profitable to Him to save the angel! Could not the restored angel serve Him better than restored man? If I serve God, day after day, yet at night I must rest. But the angels serve day without night in His temple! If my zeal is ever so intense, yet my body must flag. But angels know not weariness. And if saved, I shall make but a poor courtier to stand around His Throne. But yon bright fallen seraph would, if he had been delivered, have made a very peer to grace the halls of the Almighty! If I shall ever be carried to Heaven, I have no bright angelic honors—and my nature, when ennobled—will not surpass what an angel might have been if God had so decreed. But if Satan had been saved, oh, how loudly would he have sung and with what glory would he have marched through Heaven to the praise and glory of the Grace which rescued him from Hell! Therefore, if God had thought of His own profit, He would sooner have saved angels than have saved men!

3. Another thought. Sometimes the government will say, “Well, here are two persons to be executed, we desire to save one—*which of the two would be the more dangerous character to allow to continue an enemy?*” Now, which could hurt God the more, speaking as man would speak—a fallen angel, or a man? I answer, that fallen man can do but little injury to Divine Government, compared to a fallen angel. A fallen angel is so subtle, so powerful, so swift, so able to fly on the lightning’s wings, that he can do ten times more injury to his Maker, if, indeed, his Maker can be injured, than ever man could do! So that if there had been any consideration of this kind in the Divine Mind, God would have selected the devils to save them, since they could, if saved, do Him the more glory and if not saved, do Him the more injury!

4. And yet one more consideration here, to show you still further how Sovereign is the Divine Will in this matter. Perhaps it would be said, if one is to be saved, let that one be saved who would take the least trouble to save. Now, which could be saved with the greatest ease—a fallen angel, or a fallen man? For my part, I can see no difference. But if there are any, it strikes me that a restoration does not put things one-half as much out of order as a revolution. And to have restored the angels to the place from which they had fallen, speaking as a man must speak, would

not have been so hard as to have taken fallen man out of the place from which he had fallen and placed him where fallen angels had once stood!

If Satan had entered Heaven, it would have been like a restoration—an old king come back to his ancient throne. But when man goes there, it is like a king going to a new dynasty—a new kingdom. It is man entering into the angel's place. And for that, you know there must be sanctifying Grace and purchasing Love. That might have been needed for fallen angels, but certainly not more for them than for fallen man. Here, then, we are brought back to the one only answer—that God saves men and not angels—just because He chooses to do it! And He says to angels who have perished, “No, but O Satan, who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why have you made me thus?”

5. But, you may say, *God saved man because He pitied him.* But then why did not He pity the devils? I know two men living on three or four shillings a week. I pity one of them very much, indeed. But the other, who is no better off, I pity him the most for he once knew better times. Man, it is true, fell out of Eden. But Satan fell out of Heaven—and is the more to be pitied on account of the greatness of his fall! And therefore, if pity had ruled the day, God would have decided for the fallen angels and not for fallen men.

But I think I hear someone whispering again, “Yes, but I do not see that first part—you said that you did not know but the sin of man was as great as the sin of Satan.” Well, I beg to repeat it and I say another thing—mighty wise as you may be, you do not know any difference, either! For do you think, if the sins were different, the punishment would be the same? Certainly not, you say, the same punishment for the same sin! Well, now, devils and men are to be in the same Hell. The Lake of Fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels, is the place into which men are cast and, therefore, I defy you to prove that their sin is not the same. I believe, if it is not the same in degree, it is the same in quality and the same in nature. And, therefore, a fallen angel and a fallen man stand on a par so that if God makes a difference, He makes it only because He will make it and gives no account of His dealings. This is a knife which cuts up root and branch everything like merit! It takes away from free will any chance of charging God with injustice, for how can he prove God unjust in saving one man and not another, when he dares not hint that he is unjust in saving some men and letting devils perish?

And now I have closed this subject, but I must just make a practical reflection or so, and then I shall have done. Some may rail at this Doctrinal preaching and they will go out and call me an Antinomian. I will not be at all particular about that, so long as I can make them angry! For if a man hates the Truth, I shall never be backward in stirring up his wrath. And if any man offends my God, then let him be offended. Far bet-

ter for him to show his opposition—for then, perhaps, he may know that it is in him and repent of it before God! But I will show you that this is a practical subject. It is practical in this way—that if any man does not submit to God’s right to do with him as He pleases, he has very grave reason to doubt his own piety! Now I do not mean to say anything harsh or bigoted but I do mean to say that again. I do not assert that if you Doctrinally deny it, but if you in your hearts *hate the Doctrine* that God has a right to save or to destroy you, you give me very grave cause to suspect whether you ever knew your own position in the sight of God, for I am quite sure that no humble sinner will doubt God’s right to destroy him! And I believe that no man who has any love to his fellow creatures, believing that God has a right to destroy him, will ever quarrel with God if He chooses to save another who is only as bad as himself. I tell you, it is your unhumiliated pride that kicks against this Doctrine of Election. It is your infernal self-conceit, born of Hell, that makes you hate this Truth of God. Men have always kicked at it and they always will. When Christ preached it, once, they would have dragged Him out to the brow of the hill and cast Him down headlong! And I always expect to meet with opposition if I speak out broadly and plainly. But let me tell you solemnly, if you do not believe God’s right over you, I am afraid your heart has never been right before God!

But another practical conclusion. If you feel this to be true—that God has a right to send your soul to Hell—and that if He saves another and not you, He will be just. If you believe that if He saves you, it will be an act of free distinguishing love—you show a spirit which is very near to the Kingdom of Heaven! I do not think a man will admit this Truth unless he has a change of heart—he may admit it in his mind, but he will not feel it to be true unless he has got a new heart and a right spirit! I will not go so far as to say that a man who believes Divine Sovereignty must be a Christian. That were to stretch the truth. But I do say that if a man is humble enough, meek enough, contrite enough to lay himself down at the Savior’s feet with this—

“Nothing in my hands I bring—

“I have no righteousness, no claims. If You should damn me, You would be just. If You save me I will thank You forever”—such a man must have had a work of Grace in his heart to bring him to such a conclusion! If you can say that, then, poor Sinner, come to Jesus, come to Jesus! For He will never cast you out!

Let me tell you a story about the prodigal and then I have done. The prodigal set out one morning and he had a long, long journey to go. He had a high hill to climb, called the Hill of his Own Sins and Follies. He had scarcely got to the top of it and was getting near the tower, called the Tower of True Repentance, when his father, who was sitting on the top of the house, saw him. And when he saw him, he ran out immediately and

before his son had got to the door, he had fallen on his neck and kissed him! He took his son into his house and a feast was prepared. And they sat down to it. But after the son had sat down, the father turned his eyes to him and he was not eating, but the tears were rolling down his cheeks. “My son,” said the father, “why don’t you eat? Why do you weep, my son? The feast is all prepared for you.” Bursting into tears, the son said, “Father, do you forgive me all?” “Yes,” said the father, “I do. Eat, my son. Do not weep.” The prodigal went on. The father turned his eyes to the other guests and, by-and-by, looking on his son, he saw that he was weeping again and not eating. Said the father, “Son, why don’t you eat? The feast is all for you. Why do you weep, my son?” “Father,” he said, with the tears rolling down his cheeks again, “will you let me stay here?” “Oh, yes, my son,” said the father, “eat—do not weep—you shall stay here. You are my beloved son.” Well, the prodigal went on and the father looked at the other guests. But, by-and-by, he turned his eye, again, and there was his son weeping once more! “My dear son,” he asked, “why do you weep?” “Oh, Father,” he said, “will you keep me here? For if you do not, I know I shall run away. Father, will you make me stay here?” “Yes, my son,” said he “that I will”—

***“My Grace shall like a fetter bind
That wandering heart to me.”***

The son wiped his eyes, went on with his meal and never wept again. There, poor Prodigal, there is something for you. If you will come to Christ, you shall always stay there! And over and above that, He will keep you there! Therefore rejoice! For though He has a right to destroy you, remember, He will not. For His heart is full of love and pity towards you. Only come to Him and you shall be saved!

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

THE SUFFERING SAVIOR'S SYMPATHY

NO. 1974

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

***“For in that He Himself has suffered being tempted,
He is able to succor them that are tempted.”
Hebrews 2:18.***

WE are told by the Apostle in the fifth chapter that one special requisite in a High Priest was that he have compassion upon men. “For every High Priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.” You see, God did not choose angels to be made High Priests because, however benevolent they might be in their wishes, they could not be *sympathetic*. They could not understand the peculiar needs and trials of the men with whom they had to deal. Ministers who of God are made to be a flame of fire could scarcely commune familiarly with those who confess themselves to be as dust and ashes! But the High Priest was one of themselves. However dignified his office, he was still a man. He was one of whom we read that he could lose his wife, that he could lose his sons. He had to eat and to drink, to be sick and to suffer just as the rest of the people did. And all this was necessary that he might be able to enter into their feelings and represent those feelings before God and that he might, when speaking to them for God, not speak as a superior, looking down upon them, but as one who sat by their side, “a brother born for adversity,” bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh.

Now this is peculiarly so in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is sympathetic above all. There is none so tender as He. He has learnt it by His sufferings, but He proves it by His continual condescension towards His suffering people. My Brothers, we that preach the Gospel, you that teach it in the Sunday school—you will always find your greatest power to lie in love. There is more eloquence in love than in all the words that the most clever rhetorician can ever put together. We win upon men not so much by poetry and by artistic wording of sentences, as by the pouring out of a heart's love that makes them feel that we would save them, that we would bless them, that we would, because we belong to them, regard them as brethren and play a brother's part and lay ourselves out to benefit them. Now, as it should be in the under-shepherds, so is it in that Great Shepherd of the sheep. He abounds in tenderness and though He has every other quality to make up a *perfect* High Priest—though He is

complete and in nothing lacking—yet if I must mention one thing in which He far outshines us all, but in which we should all try to imitate Him, it would be in His tender sympathy to those who are ignorant and out of the way and to all those who are suffering and sorely distressed.

It is in the spirit of brotherly sympathy that I would endeavor to preach on this occasion as the Good Spirit shall help me. May I ask my Brothers and Sisters whose hearts are full of joy at this hour to be praying for others who have not that joy and to be helping me in my endeavor to speak words of consolation to them? May the Holy Spirit, in answer to your prayers, make every sentence to be as wine and oil to the wounds of those who are left half dead in the King's highway! We have not to look far for "them who are tempted," for they are all around us, and deserve the thoughtful regard of each one of us. Do not overlook them, my more happy Brothers and Sisters, "considering yourself, lest you, also, be tempted."

In my text I think I see two things very clearly. *Jesus suffering*—"He Himself has suffered being tempted." *Jesus succoring*—"He is able to succor them that are tempted." And then I think I see a third thing most certainly there, namely, *Jesus sought after* because in the word which is translated, "succor," there is a latent meaning of crying. He is able to hear the cry of them that are tempted. It is a word that signifies a mother's quickness to answer her child's cry and Jesus is able to answer our cry, therefore we ought to lift up that cry when our soul is in distress. It shall be the best thing seen in this Tabernacle tonight if the third thing be seen, namely, Jesus sought after by every weary, heavy-laden spirit. Why should it not be? Come, Holy Spirit, and create in each mourner the spirit of prayer and the Grace of supplication!

I. First, then, and to begin, here is JESUS SUFFERING.

I call your attention, first, to *the feeling* that is here expressed—"in that He Himself has suffered being tempted." Many persons are tempted, but do not *suffer* in being tempted. When ungodly men are tempted, the bait is to their taste and they swallow it greedily. Temptation is a pleasure to them. Indeed, they sometimes tempt the devil to tempt them! They are drawn aside of their own lusts and enticed so that temptation, instead of being suffering to them, becomes a horrible source of pleasure. But good men suffer when they are tempted and the better they are, the more they suffer. I know some children of God to whom temptation is their constant misery day and night. If it took the form of external affliction, they would bravely bear it, but it takes the shape of evil suggestions and profane insinuations which leap into their minds without their will and though they hate them with their whole heart. These suggestions continue to annoy some dear saints whom I know, not only daily, but nightly, and month after month. These thoughts beset them as a man may be surrounded by swarms of gnats or flies from which they cannot get away. Such Brothers and Sisters are tempted and they suffer being tempted. Our Lord Jesus Christ enters into this trying experience very fully because His suffering through being tempted must have been much greater than any suffering

that the purest-hearted Believer can know, seeing that He is more pure than any one of us.

It was a trying thing to the Blessed Christ even to dwell here among men. He behaved Himself with most condescending familiarity, but He must have been greatly sickened and saddened by what He saw in this world of sinners. They were no fit company for Him, for their views of things and His were as different as possible—they had no points of agreement in character with Him. They were as much company for Him as a patient may be to a surgeon. No, not as much as an imbecile may be to his teacher, or as a madman to his keeper—they could not come much closer until His Grace changed and renewed them. Our Lord and Master had such a delicate sensitiveness of soul with regard to holiness that the sight of sin must have torn Him as a naked man would be torn by thorns, thistles and briars. There was no callousness about His Nature. He had not made Himself familiar with sin by the practice of it, as many have done—neither had He so associated with those who indulge in evil as to become, Himself, lenient towards it.

We inherit the customs of our ancestors and do not raise questions about that which has been commonly done. We begin at an evil point and start from a wrong point in morals, but it was not so with our Lord. He had no original, or inherited, or birth sin—neither did He learn evil in His upbringing. We also commit sin through a comparative ignorance of its evil, but He knew the horror of it. He felt within His soul the shame, the wrong, the inherent baseness of sin against a holy Law and a loving God. His infinite knowledge helped Him to understand and measure the heinousness and Hell-desert of it and, therefore, to be in contact with it must have been a perpetual sorrow to Him. He suffered in being placed where He could be tempted.

When sin actually assailed Him, and He was tempted to prove His Sonship by working a miracle to feed Himself, thus anticipating His Father's Providence by a hasty act of self-seeking, how He must have loathed the suggestion! When Satan bade Him presumptuously cast Himself down from the Temple's pinnacle, how He must have smarted at the horrible proposal! When the tempter hissed into His ear that abominable offer, "All these things will I give You, if You will fall down and worship me"—it must have grieved the holy heart of Jesus most intensely! He could not yield to temptation, but He did *suffer* from it. He did not suffer from it *morally*, He was too pure for that, but He did suffer from it *mentally* because of His purity. His mind was grieved, vexed and troubled by the temptation that He had to bear. We specially see this when we find Him in the Garden. There He showed His grief when He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground. In many other ways He endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, such multiplied temptations, that it is said and *truly said* by the Holy Spirit in this verse, that He "suffered" being tempted.

Now, then, you poor creatures who can scarcely lift up your heads because of shame as you tremble at the memory of your own thoughts, come

here and meet with One who suffered being tempted! He knows how you are hunted by Hell-dogs, go where you may. He knows that you cannot escape the presence of the tempter and from His own experience He enters into your feelings to the fullest. He gives you a flood of sympathy in these deep distresses of your spirit, as you fight against Apollyon and agonize against temptation, for He suffered being tempted—

***“Exposed to wounds most deep and sore
The great Redeemer stood
While Satan’s fiery darts He bore
And did resist to blood.”***

Let us meditate for a while upon *the fact* that our Lord was tempted, tempted up to the suffering point. I must not omit to mention the particular use here made by the Spirit of that word, “Himself.” It is not only in that He suffered being tempted, but you see that He *Himself* has suffered being tempted. That word is sometimes used to make passages emphatic. “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” We read again and again of Jesus Christ *Himself*, as if to show that the matters referred to were really, truly, personally, actually His. He *Himself* has suffered. All that there was in Him, that made up Himself, suffered being tempted. Survey this fact carefully. Our Lord was tempted by His circumstances, just as you are. Yes, more than many of you are, for He felt the woes of poverty and poverty, at times, carried to the extreme. “Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head.”

You are sometimes tempted with the thought that you will be out of house and home before long. Where will you find a nightly shelter? Jesus can sympathize with you. He also was weary with incessant labors. “Being wearied, He sat thus on the well.” Weariness has its temptations. He that is weary is hardly in the condition to judge rightly of things. When we are weary, we are apt to be impatient, complaining, hasty. If you are weary and can scarcely keep your eyelids from dropping down, remember before you quite yield to fatigue that your Lord was weary, too. Once, “they took Him even as He was, into the ship”—and I think it must mean that He was too weary to go into the ship, Himself, so that they took Him in His absolute exhaustion and gently laid Him down, in the back part of the ship, placing His head upon a pillow. Do not blame yourself for feeling tired in the House of Prayer, if, after long watching or hard working you feel more fit for sleep than for a sermon!

I shall not blame you, certainly, for I remember how little my Lord blamed the disciples when they fell asleep in the Garden during His agony. He said, “The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak.” And He never would have thought of so tender an excuse for their untender slumbers if His own flesh had not, also, been weak when He, too, was weary. So you see that the Lord knows from His own circumstances what are the temptations of poverty and of weariness. He Himself was hungry. He Himself said, “I thirst.” Everything round about Him contributed to fulfill the tale of His trials. He Himself was, above us all, “a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.”

And then He Himself suffered from temptations arising from men. He endured sadly much from good men. It would seem that even His beloved mother tried Him. His mother was with His brothers and sisters when we read that they were outside, desiring to speak with Him. Was it not at that time that they desired to take Him, for they said, "He is beside Himself"? The men of His own kindred thought that surely He was a distraught man who ought to be put under restraint! "Neither did His brethren believe in Him."

His disciples, though He loved them so intensely, yet each one tried Him. Even John, the dearest of them all, must ask for places at the right and the left hand of His Throne for himself and his brother, James! Even Peter, "took Him and rebuked Him." All the disciples were much of Peter's mind when He described Himself as about to be crucified and slain. Their spirit was often so worldly, so selfish, so foolish as to greatly grieve their Lord and Leader. While He was the Servant of all, they were seeking who should have the pre-eminence! While He was seeking the lost, they were for calling fire from Heaven upon rebels! They spoke unadvisedly with their lips and committed their Master by their words. And you know how, worst of all, He had to complain in utmost bitterness of spirit, "He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me." So that from the circle of His own favored ones He gathered more thorns than roses! He received wounds in the house of His friends, even as you may have done. Herein you see His power to exhibit sympathy with us. He suffered just as we do. He "suffered being tempted" even by the failures of those whom He loved—

***"If wounded love my bosom swells
Deceived by those I prized so well,
He shall His pitying aid bestow
Who felt on earth severer woe;
At once betrayed, denied, or fled
By those who shared His daily bread."***

As for His enemies, need I speak about them? Did they not all tempt Him? Herodians and Sadducees—the openly skeptical! Pharisees and Scribes—the professedly religious, were equally His fierce foes! Those to whom He was a benefactor took up stones to stone Him and Jerusalem, over which He had wept, cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," and would not rest till He was slain! Ah, Lord! We have, none of us, such foes as You had! However cruel our adversaries, they are not so numerous or so fierce as Yours. Besides, they have some *cause* to hate *us*, but of Your enemies it is true that they hated You without a cause. They could bring no true charge against Him and, therefore, they forged the cruelest of falsehoods until their reproaches broke His heart! So you see how He was tempted and how He suffered.

Moreover, it is a very amazing fact—one could scarcely have imagined it—but the record is most clear. He was tempted of the devil—*Jesus* was tempted of the devil! He in whom all evil is personified dared to stand foot to foot in single duel with Him in whom all goodness is concentrated! The infernal fiend dared to face the Incarnate God! God in our mortal flesh en-

countered the devil in the wilderness of temptation. How could the fiend have ventured to assail our Lord? Truly Lucifer was lifted up to the extreme of pride when He dared thus to confront his Lord. But Christ was tempted of the devil early in His public career and again, near its close, He exclaimed, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." He seemed to hear the dragon's wings as they beat the midnight air and He cried, "The prince of this world comes." Calmly He added, "And has nothing in Me." Yet His heart grew chill in the hideous presence of the great adversary.

It was nothing less than an agony in Gethsemane—a painful wrestling between Jesus and the powers of darkness. You that are tempted of the devil. You that are troubled by mysterious whispers in your ear. You that, when you sing or pray, have a blasphemy suggested to you. You that even in your dreams start with horror at the thoughts that cross your minds, be comforted, for your Lord knows all about temptation! Some of you do not understand this and I hope you never may. But I am speaking with a purpose to others to whom this is a life's gloom. To you, I say, you can enter into fellowship with your Lord in His being tempted of the devil—that which is incomprehensible to others is plain enough to you. Be of good cheer, for in this respect your Lord Himself has suffered being tempted—

***"If anything should tempt my soul to stray
From heavenly wisdom's narrow way.
To fly the good I would pursue,
Or do the sin I would not do.
Still He, who felt temptation's power,
Shall guard me in that dangerous hour."***

Once again—our Lord knew those temptations which arise out of being deserted by God. There come times to certain of us when our soul is cast down within us, when faith becomes feeble and joy languishes because the light of the Divine Countenance is withdrawn. We cannot find our God. We enter into the language of Job, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him! That I might come even to His seat." We cry with David, "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is your God?" Nothing chills the marrow like an eclipse of the great Sun whose Presence makes our day! If the Lord withdraws from us, then the strong helpers faint—

***"He frowns and darkness veils the moon!
The fainting sun grows dim at noon!
The pillars of Heaven's starry roof
Tremble and start at His reproof."***

In this great temptation our Lord has suffered His full share. He cried, "Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani." There was condensed into that dying cry an infinity of anguish such as we cannot conceive! Some of us know what the surface of this Black Sea is like, but we have never descended into its utmost depths as He did. And, if we have done so, this is our comfort—that HE has been there! He has been to the very bottom of it! He has suffered being tempted even by that heaviest of all the trials which ever fall upon the sons of God. There is the fact.

I desire to go a step farther, to comfort you upon *the fruit* of all this, for though our Lord thus suffered being tempted, He suffered not in vain, for He was made perfect through His sufferings and fitted for His solemn office of High Priest to His people. From that fact I want you to gather fruit, because our heavenly Father means to also bless you. We cannot comfort others if we have never been comforted ourselves. I have heard—and I am sure that it is so—that there is no comforter for a widow like one who has lost her husband. Those who have had no children and have never lost a child, may talk very kindly, but they cannot enter into a mother's broken heart as she bows over yonder little coffin. If you have never known what temptations mean, you make poor work when attempting to succor the tempted! Our Lord obtained a blessing from suffering temptation and you may do the same.

Brother, the Lord means to make of you a man that shall be used like Barnabas to be a "son of consolation." He means to make a mother in Israel of you, my dear Sister, that when you meet with others who are sorely cast down, you may know how to drop in a sweet word by which they shall be comforted. I think you will one day say, "It was worth while to go through that sorrow to be enabled to administer relief to that wounded heart." Will you not comfort others when you are delivered? I am sure you will! You will be ready and expert in the sacred surgery of consolation. Therefore, be content to suffer being tempted and look for the comfortable fruit which all this shall produce in you.

So you have seen the feeling, the fact and the fruit. Now, what are the inferences to be drawn from this part of the subject? I must be short with them.

I want you that are tempted to draw the following inferences from the suffering and temptation of the Lord Jesus—

First, that *temptation to sin is no sin*. It is no sin to be tempted, for in Him was no sin and yet He was tempted. "He suffered being tempted," but there was no *sin* in that because there was no sin in Himself. You may be horribly tempted and yet no blame whatever may attach to you, for it is no fault of yours that you are tempted. You need not repent of that which has no sin in it. If you *yield* to the temptation, therein is sin—but the mere fact that you are tempted, however horrible the temptation, is no sin of yours.

And, in the next place, *temptation does not show any displeasure on God's part*. He permitted His only-begotten Son to be tempted—He was always the Son of His love and yet He was tried. "This is My beloved Son," said He at His baptism and yet the next hour that Son was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil! It does not even show displeasure on God's part that *He permits* you to be tempted. On the contrary, it may be consistent with the clearest manifestations of Divine favor.

And again, *temptation really implies no doubt of your being a son of God* for *the* Son of God was tempted, even the unquestioned Son of the Highest! The prime model and paragon of sonship, Christ, Himself, was

tempted. Then why not you? Temptation is a mark of sonship rather than any reflection thereupon.

Note, next, that *temptation need not lead to any evil consequences in any case*. It did not, in your Lord's case, lead up to sin. The Lord Jesus was as innocent in temptation and after temptation as before it—and so may we be through His Grace. It is written by the beloved John concerning the man that is born of God, that "He keeps himself and that wicked one touches him not."

Moreover, *do not make it any cause of complaint that you are tempted*. If your Lord was tempted, shall the disciple be above his Master, or the servant above his Lord? If the Perfect One must endure temptation, why not you? Accept it, therefore, at the Lord's hands and do not think it to be a disgrace or a dishonor. It did not disgrace or dishonor your Lord and temptation will not disgrace or dishonor you. The Lord, who sends it, sends also with it a way of escape—and it will be to your honor and profit to escape by that way.

Far from your hearts be the idea that any temptation should lead you to despair. Jesus did not despair. Jesus triumphed and so shall you! And, therefore, He cries, "In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." You are a member of His body and when the Head wins the victory, the whole body shares the triumph! "Because I live," He said, "you shall live, also," and so you shall—even in the poisonous atmosphere of temptation you shall be in health. They of old overcame through the blood of the Lamb and you shall do the same. Therefore comfort one another with these words, "He Himself has suffered being tempted," for you who have His life in you shall first *suffer* with Him and then reign with *Him*.

That is the first part of our discourse and it is rich with comfort, if the Spirit of God shall but apply it to the tempted heart. I feel such a poor bungler—I have ointment and soft linen wherewith to bind on the healing ointment—but perhaps I have put it on too tightly, or too loosely, and if so, I may fail. O Divine Comforter, undertake the work! It needs the pierced hands to fitly apply the sacred liniment.

II. But now I come, secondly and briefly, to notice JESUS SUCCORING. Jesus suffering is preparatory to Jesus succoring. Observe, then, "He is able to succor them that are tempted." In this we note *His pity*, that He should give Himself up to this business of succoring them that are tempted. Have you a tempted friend living in your house? If so, you have a daily cross to carry, for when we try to comfort mourners we often become cast down, ourselves, and the temptation is for us to get rid of them, or stay out of their way. Has it ever occurred to any friend here to say, "That good Brother, who sits in the pew near me, is rather a burden to me. I have spoken to him several times, but he is so unhappy that he drags me down. I go out of another door now to get out of his way"? So might your Lord have done to the unhappy and to *you* if He had not been your Lord, but He is full of pity that He *seeks* out those that are cast down! He heals the broken in heart and binds up their wounds. He lays Himself out to

succor them that are tempted and, therefore, He does not hide Himself from them, nor pass them by on the other side.

What an example is this for us! He devotes Himself to this Divine business of comforting all such as mourn. He is Lord of All, yet makes Himself the servant of the weakest! Whatever He may do with the strongest, He succors "them that are tempted." He does not throw up the business in disgust. He does not grow cross or angry with them because they are so foolish as to give way to idle fears. He does not tell them that it is all their nerves and that they are stupid and silly and ought to shake themselves out of such nonsense. I have often heard people talk in that fashion and I have half wished that they had felt a little twinge of depression, themselves, just to put them into a more tender humor. The Lord Jesus never overdrives a lame sheep, but He sets the bone and carries the sheep on His shoulders, so tenderly compassionate is He. Here is His pity.

The text, however, treats also of *His fitness*. He is just the very Person to succor them that are tempted. I have already been showing you this. He has *the right*, acquired by *His* suffering, to enter in among sufferers and deal with them. He is free of the company of mourners—

***"When our heads are bowed with woe,
When our bitter tears overflow,
When we mourn the lost, the dear—
Then the Son of Man is near.
You our throbbing flesh have worn.
You our mortal griefs have borne.
You have shed the human tear,
Son of Man, to mourners dear."***

He has the right to succor them that are tempted, for they are His own, since He has bought them with His blood. The feeble, the weak, the trembling, the desponding are His care, committed to Him by God. He said, "Fear not, little flock," which shows that His flock is little and timid. He says, "Fear not, little flock," because they have great tendency to fear and because He does not like to see them thus troubled. He has bought them and so He has the right to succor them and preserve them to the end.

But He also has *the disposition* to succor them. He obtained that tender temper through suffering, by being Himself tempted. The man that has seen affliction, when he is blessed of God, has the disposition to cheer those that are afflicted. I have heard speak of a lady who was out in the snow one night and was so very cold that she cried out, "Oh, those poor people that have such a little money, how little fuel they have and how pinched they must be! I will send a hundredweight of coals to 20 families, at least." But I have heard say that when she reached her own parlor, there was a fine fire burning and she sat there with her feet on the fender and enjoyed an excellent tea. She *then* said to herself, "Well, it is not very cold, after all. I do not think that I shall send those coals. At any rate, not for the present." The sufferer thinks of the sufferer, even as the poor help the poor. The Divine wonder is that this Lord of ours, "though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor," now takes a delight in succoring the

poor! Having been tempted, He helps the tempted! His own trials make Him desire to bless those who are tried.

And then He has the special *ability*. "He is able to succor them that are tempted." I know certain good Brothers and Sisters whom I am very pleased to see and I am very happy in their company when I am perfectly well. But I do not enjoy their presence when I am ill. Thank you, no! I would rather not have their visits multiplied when I am not well. They walk heavily across the room. They have a way of leaving doors open, or banging them. And when they talk, they talk so loudly and roughly that the poor head aches and the sick man is worried. The things they say, though they are meant to be kind, are the sort of remarks that pour vinegar into your wounds! They do not understand the condition of a sufferer and so they say all their words the wrong way upwards. If Christians are to be comforters, they must learn the art of comforting by being themselves tried! They cannot learn it otherwise.

Our Blessed Master, having lived a life of suffering, understands the condition of a sufferer so well that He knows how to make a bed for him. "What a strange thing to say!" cries one of my audience. Not at all. David says, "You will make all his bed in his sickness." He would not have said that if the Lord did not know how to make a bed! There is a dainty way of beating up a pillow and a peculiar art in shaking up a bed when the sick man is lifted out of it. Yes, and there is a way of putting on every piece of covering so as to make it a comfort. By this figure we are taught that the Lord Jesus Christ knows how to deal with us in the weakness and pain of our affliction. He has become so good a Nurse, so Divine a Physician, so tender a Sympathizer because He has passed through our sorrows. "In all our affliction He was afflicted." "He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses."—

***"He knows what sore temptations mean
For He has felt the same."***

He has a fitness for dealing with tempted ones.

Let me spend a minute or two in telling you *His methods* of succoring them that are tempted. He does it in many ways and perhaps there may be many here who know more about those ways than I do.

Usually He succors the tempted by giving them a sense of His sympathy. They say, "Yes, my Lord is here. He feels for me." That is, in itself, a succor of no mean order. Sometimes He succors them by suggesting to them precious Truths of God which are the sweet antidote for the poison of sorrow. There is in the Bible a remedy exactly fitted for your grief if you could only find it.

Sometimes you lose the key of a drawer and you must have it opened and, therefore, you send for the locksmith and he comes in with a great bunch of keys. Somewhere among them he has a key that will open your drawer. The Bible contains keys that will open the iron gates of your trouble and give you freedom from your sorrow. The point is to find out the right promise—and the Spirit of God often helps us in that matter by bringing the Words of the Lord Jesus to our remembrance. We had never known the richness of the Word of God if it had not been that in our var-

ied distresses the Lord has shown us how He foresaw all and provided for all in the Covenant of promise.

Sometimes the Lord succors His people by inwardly strengthening them. "Oh," one has said, "I am under a heavy trouble, but I do not know how it is I can bear it much better than I thought I could." Yes, through Divine Grace, a secret Divine energy is poured into the soul. We are treated, as Mr. Bunyan puts it, by secret supplies of Grace imparted in a hidden manner. We are like yonder fire. One is throwing water on it and yet it burns on. Behind the wall another is secretly pouring oil on the fire so that it will keep burning.

I have known the Lord bless His people by making them very weak. The next best thing to being strong in the Lord is to be extremely weak in *yourself*. They go together, but sometimes they are divided in experience. It is grand to feel, "I will not struggle any more. I will give up and lie passive in the Lord's hands." Oh, it is the sweetest feeling, I think, outside Heaven! You may think it strange for me to say so, but I believe that as in the center of a cyclone there is a little spot where there is perfect calm—and as it is said that in the center of the greatest fire that ever burned there is a spot where no fire is raging—so there is in a deep sense of yielding up to God in the very center of your pain, grief, misery and your depression—a place of perfect repose when you have once yielded yourself fully up to God. I know this to be true, even though I may not be understood.

In these ways He that was tempted, Himself, succors those who are tempted.

III. I will close by thinking of JESUS SOUGHT AFTER. Let us seek Him! Come, you weary, heavy-laden ones, come to Him who is able to succor you! Do not stay away until you are a little comforted, but come in your despair. Do not wait until you have a little more faith, but come just as you are and say to Him, "Dear Lord, You have felt all this and I lie down at Your dear feet! Do help me, I beseech You!" Let these few thoughts help to bring you now, in prayer and trust and hope, to the feet of this Great High Priest.

First, *where else can you go?* Who can help a soul like you? Come to Him, then! Men are nothing—miserable comforters are they all. The cisterns are all broken—come to the Fountain. Come to my Lord! Every other door is shut, but yet you may not despair, for He says, "Behold I set before you an open door."

Where better can you go? Do you need to find a friend able to help you? Do you really need a comrade that can be a brother to you? To whom should you go but unto your own Lord, the sympathizing Son of Man? To whom better can you go? Do you say that you are downcast? Do you tell me you are afraid you are no child of God? Never mind about that! Come as a *sinner* if you cannot come as a saint! Do you mourn that you have no good thoughts? Come and confess your bad ones! Do you lament that you are not broken-hearted over sin as you ought to be? Come, then, to be broken-hearted! Do you mourn that you are unspeakably bad? Then come

at your worst! It is never a good thing if you need a surgeon, to say, "My bone is broken, but I shall not have it set until it begins to mend." Poor foolish thing! Go while it is broken! O perishing sinner! Cry to the Savior. Ask Him to save you *now*. Are you, of all men, the worst? Then go to Him who is the best! Remember He never casts anyone out. Never yet! Not one! I have declared this everywhere and I have said, "If Jesus Christ casts any one of you out when you come to Him, pray let me know, for I do not want to go up and down the country telling lies." Again I give the challenge! If my Lord does cast out one poor soul that comes to Him, let me know it and I will give up preaching! I would not have the face to come forward and preach Christ after that, for He, Himself, has said it, "Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out," and He would be a false Christ if He acted contrary to His Word! He cannot cast you out! Why should He? "Oh, but then I am so bad." So much the less likely is He to refuse you, for there is the more room for His Grace.

"I am lost," said Mr. Whitefield's brother to the Countess of Huntingdon. "I am delighted to hear it," said the Countess. "Oh," he cried, "what a dreadful thing to say!" "No," she said, "'for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.' Therefore I know He is come to save you." O Sinner, it would be *unreasonable* to despair! The more broken you are, the more ruined you are, the more vile you are in your own esteem, so much the more room is there for the display of infinite mercy and power!

Come, then, just as you are, saint or sinner, whoever you may be! Have done with yourself, your good self and your bad self, too, and say, "If I perish I will trust in Jesus." Trust in Jesus and you cannot perish. If you perish believing in Jesus, I must perish with you. I am in the same boat with you. You may be a very seasick passenger and I may be an able-bodied seaman, but if you are drowned, I shall be, for I cannot swim any more than you can. I depend upon the seaworthiness of this vessel of Free Grace in which we are embarked—and we must either reach the Fair Havens together, or sink together. You and I, poor broken-down one, oh, will we not sing when we get safely to land? Will we not sing? If we once get to Heaven, will we not sing aloud and clash the high-sounding cymbals with all our might? I will contend with you as to which shall praise God the most! You say that you will. I say that I shall! Will we not vie with each other and with *all* the blood-redeemed ones, sing hallelujah to God and the Lamb? If ever such sinners as you and I get inside the gates of Heaven, we will give forth such outcries of holy joy and gladness as never came from angels' throats, but can only come from the lips of sinners bought with blood

The Lord, who succors the tempted, Himself, bless and comfort you! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Hebrews 2.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—327, 330, 328.**

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***“For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted,
He is able to aid those who are tempted.”
Hebrews 2:18.***

THAT which is the most simple lesson the Gospel has to teach is often the most difficult lesson for the Christian to learn. That simple lesson is that we must not look to *ourselves* for anything good, but that we must look to the Lord, alone, for all our righteousness. The lesson is short, as well as simple. It is easy to repeat but, as often as our faith is severely tried, we find how apt we are to forget that which is the very Alpha of the Gospel—that man, in himself, is wholly lost and that all his hope of help and salvation must rest on Christ, that apart from God there is nothing upon which faith can fasten itself—and that without the atoning Sacrifice and justifying Righteousness of Christ, the quickening and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and the everlasting love of the Father, there is neither joy, nor peace, nor comfort, nor hope to be found anywhere. This seems to be a very easy lesson, yet even aged Believers, when their hair is getting gray and they are about to enter the land of perfect peace and rest, still find the temptation to unbelief too much for them and they begin to look for something good in the creature—and to seek for happiness in themselves—instead of seeking all good in God.

I want to try to teach you this lesson again. And to also learn it myself, for I need to learn it as much as you do—the lesson of looking away from our temptations and from our own weakness and inability to repel those temptations—to Him who, having Himself suffered in being tempted, “is able to aid those who are tempted.” Let us fix our eyes upon our great High Priest and leave Satan and all his insinuations, his blasphemies and his temptations out of the question. Or, rather, let us bring them to Christ and see them all finished in Him! I am going to address three separate characters that are represented here—first, *the confirmed Believer*. Secondly, *the young beginner*. And, thirdly, *the backslider*. And then, summoning the attention of *the whole company here assembled*, I shall try to commend the comfort and instruction of the text to you all.

I. First, let me speak TO ADVANCED CHRISTIANS.

You all have your trials and those trials are of an advanced character. The troubles with which the plants of God's right-hand planting are assailed when they are saplings are quite inconsiderable compared with those which come upon them when they are like cedars firmly rooted. As surely as our strength increases, so will our sufferings, our trials, our labors, or our temptations. God's power is never given to a man to be stored up unused. The heavenly food that is sent to strengthen us, like the manna given to the Israelites in the wilderness, is intended for immediate use. If the Lord sends you much, you shall have nothing beyond what you can use for Him though, blessed be His holy name, if you have but little, you shall have no need! When the Lord puts upon our feet the shoes of iron and brass which He has promised us in His ancient Covenant, He intends that we should wear them and walk in them—not that we should put them into our museum and gaze upon them as curiosities. If He gives us a strong hand, it is because we have a strong foe to fight. If He gives us a great meal—like that which He gave to Elijah—it is in order that, in the strength of that meal, we may go for 40 days or even longer.

Perhaps, my Brother or Sister, you are, just now, in great trouble. You have grown in Grace and your troubles have also grown. You feel that you need someone to whom you can tell your trouble—your trouble very likely arises from the absence of your Lord. Let me remind you that in this respect you are very like the Israelites in the wilderness, when Moses had been absent from them for 40 days. They said, "What shall we do? Our leader is gone. He who was king in Jeshurun has departed from us and we are left like sheep without a shepherd." So they went—I dare not say that they went for counsel, but they went—to the high priest. And you remember what they said and what he did. Alas, he gave them no good counsel, for he was as unwise as they were—and as untried. He had always had Moses by his side ever since the day that the Lord had said, "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother?...He shall be to you instead of a mouth and you shall be to him instead of God." Aaron had never been left without his great leader and so, in his absence, he failed miserably and led the people in the making and worshipping of the golden calf!

How different it will be with you who mourn the loss of the Light of your Lord's Countenance, if you go to our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ! He knows the meaning of your present trial, for He had once to cry, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" You tell Him that your "soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death," and He tells you that it was so with Him, also, on that night in which He was betrayed, when, "being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground." No untried Priest is He! He can sympathize and He can aid you.

Take another case—that of Hannah, the "woman of a sorrowful spirit." She was in a peculiarly trying position. Her husband's other wife had children, but she had none. Though she was greatly beloved of her husband, her adversary vexed her sorely to make her fret. Day by day this was thrown in her teeth, that, because of some sin, God had not granted

her the desire of her heart. A trial in one's own house is one of the saddest places where it can come—the saddest, perhaps, with the exception of a thorn in the flesh which comes still closer home. So poor Hannah, having that trial at home, thought she would go up to the sanctuary in Shiloh. There, she “prayed unto the Lord, and wept sorely, and she vowed a vow.” But “she spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard.” So Eli, the high priest, thought that she was drunk and, instead of comforting and consoling her, he spoke harshly to her, depressed and broken as her spirit was. You, my Brothers, and you, my Sisters, too, may have some trouble which you dare not tell to another, though it is sorely vexing you and threatens even to break your heart. But when you go to the Great High Priest, He will understand all about it! He will not need you to explain your sorrow to Him, for He knows exactly what it is. And He will apply the healing balm to your sorrowful spirit and send you on your way full of peace and comfort!

I offer, then, to you who are advanced Believers, this very comforting reflection—in *Christ's sufferings you are quite certain to find something akin to your own* and, in Christ's heart, you are quite sure to find a deep well of Divine Sympathy! So whatever your trial may be, you need not hesitate to go to Him, or doubt that His loving heart will overflow with sympathy towards you!

But, more than that, while I would console you by reminding you that Christ has suffered even as you have, I would also comfort you with the reflection that *this very day He still suffers with you*. Suppose, now, that a man could be so high in stature that his head could be in Heaven while his feet were on earth, yet, whenever his feet suffered, his head would suffer, too. In the Canticles, the spouse says of her Heavenly Bridegroom, “His head is as the most fine gold...His legs are as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold.” As John saw Him, “in the isle that is called Patmos,” “His eyes were as a flame of fire and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.” This suggests to me a parable—the feet of Christ, which form His Church on earth, still glow “as if they burned in a furnace.” The glorious Head of the Church, up in Heaven, “is as the most fine gold,” but there is not the least glow of heat, in the feet on earth, which is not felt by the Head in Heaven. There is not a pang that rends your heart which Jesus does not feel. There is not a sorrow that cuts deeply into your soul which does not also cut into His! So you can still sing—

**“He feels in His heart all our sighs and our groans
For we are most near Him, His flesh and His bones.
In all our distresses our Head feels the pain,
They all are most necessary, not one is in vain.”**

Does it not comfort you to know that Christ *can* sympathize with you and that He *must* sympathize with you—*can*, because He has suffered—*must*, because He still suffers?

I may also add, for your comfort, that *all this*—Christ's suffering as you do and His suffering with you, *must tend to shield you in your trials*.

A country minister, preaching upon the text, "Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?" made the remark that Christ is a good Physician. "Ah," he said, "Christ is not like those doctors who come and say they are sorry for you, whereas, in their hearts, they are glad you are ill, for, if you and others were not ill, there would be no work for them. Or else," said the preacher, "they look down upon you and pity you, but not half as much as if they, themselves, had your complaint and felt all the pains that you are feeling. But suppose," he added, "that the doctor had all your pains, himself—suppose you had the headache and that he looked down on you and had your headache? Suppose when you had palpitation of the heart, he had palpitation of the heart, too—why, he would be very quick to cure you! Certainly he would not let you lie there a moment longer than was necessary because he, himself, would be suffering with you." Now there is just one objection that may be made to the countryman's argument—that is, that the physician might be willing to raise the patient up at once because he was suffering with him—yet he might say, "Here are two of us in the same plight, but my skill fails me here. If I could deliver you, you can well imagine that I would gladly do so, for, in so doing, I would deliver myself as well. But, alas, it is beyond my power! I cannot lighten your burden, nor my own—we can only sit down together and mingle our tears—but we cannot assist one another."

But it is not so with the Good Physician, for He has both the will and the power to heal us! One motion of that eternal arm and every cloud that is wrapped about the sky shall be folded up like a worn-out vesture, and cast away! Jesus speaks and the boisterous billows cease their raging and the wild winds are hushed to sleep. "Let there be light," He says, and over the thick darkness of our affliction and adversity comes the bright gleam of joy and prosperity! He did but lift up His voice and "kings of armies did flee apace." O Jesus, our Lord, when You come forth for the deliverance of Your people, who can stand before You? As the wax melts before the fire and as the fat of rams is consumed upon Your altar, so do our trials and troubles melt and vanish away when You come forth for the deliverance of Your people! Remember, Believers, that you not only have the love of Christ's heart, but you also have the strength of Christ's arm at your disposal! He rules over all things in Heaven, earth and Hell—so rest in Him, for He still bears the scars of His wounds to show that He has suffered even as you do. Still does He prove Himself to be Man, seeing that He suffers with you, yet is He also "very God of very God," into whose hands all power in Heaven and earth is committed! He can, He must, He will deliver His people and bring them out of all their trials into His eternal Kingdom and Glory!

II. Secondly, I am going to speak TO ANXIOUS ENQUIRERS AND YOUNG BEGINNERS.

I hear a plaintive voice, over yonder, saying to me, "I know, Sir, that the precious blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin. And I know that the moment I believe in Him, I have nothing to fear concerning the past, for that sin is blotted out once and for all. But my fear

is that if I commence a Christian life, it will not last long. I am afraid I shall be like Pliable and turn back at the Slough of Despond. Or if my neighbors jeer at me, I fear that I shall be ashamed to go forward in spite of their opposition. Even if I get over that, I feel that I cannot trust my own evil heart which is so apt to deceive me. If old temptations should be overcome, new ones will be sure to arise and I cannot help fearing as to what will become of me. I have seen some who made a fair show in the flesh, turn back and go straight to perdition—and I tremble lest it should also be so with me. How can I hope to withstand the imperious lusts which were too strong for me when first they allured my simple heart? How much more shall they be too mighty for me, now that sin has gathered the force of habit and practice and, like an iron net, has enfolded me in its cruel grip? When I was a youth, I could not stand against this great enemy of my soul—how, then, shall I be a match for him now that I have grown old and feeble? The old Adam will be too strong for the young Melancthon!”

Well, dear Friends, I have seen some persons who have been truly converted to God who have been greatly troubled with this fear. Indeed, in some instances I have even known of poor men kneeling down and praying that God would let them die, then and there, sooner than that they should live to prove that their feelings were only a delusion and that their supposed repentance was merely a passing excitement. Some of us can fully sympathize with those who pray such a prayer as that, for we have often felt that the most terrible death would be preferable to the disgrace of bringing dishonor upon the name of Jesus by turning back to the City of Destruction after we had once started for the Celestial City. But, my dear Friend, if the Lord has begun a good work in your soul and led you to trust in Jesus as your Savior, my text will just meet that fear of yours, for the Apostle here says that Christ “is able to aid those who are tempted.” You will be tempted—I will not delude you with the notion that you will not—and you cannot, by yourself, stand up against that temptation! But Christ, “in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, is able to aid those who are tempted.” This Truth of God we set before you as a shield against all these dark, mysterious thoughts—Christ can and He will, if you trust in Him, protect you from the sin and the temptation which you rightly dread!

“But how is this to be done?” someone asks. Well, first of all, *Christ can do it by the force of His own example*. He can show you as He has done in His Word. But He can also show you by His Spirit opening up that Word, how He was once subject to the same temptation that now assails you. Are you poor, and are you tempted to use wrong means to get rich? Christ can tell you how, in the wilderness, “when He had fasted forty days, and forty nights, He was afterwards hungry,” and Satan came to Him and said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.” Are you a man in a high position and are you tempted to do some daring and reckless deed? Christ can remind you how, when He was on a pinnacle of the Temple, Satan said to Him, “If You are the Son

of God, cast Yourself down.” Or do you seem, just now, to have great power within your reach if you will but stain your hand to grasp it? Christ can tell you how Satan showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and said to Him, “All these things will I give You if You will fall down and worship me.” Then He will remind you how He passed through all these ordeals without sin, for the prince of this world could find nothing in Him to respond to his temptations. He was tried and tested again and again, but no trace of alloy could be discovered even by the devil himself! Though He was often shot at by His great adversary, He was never wounded by the fiery shafts! So, inspired by His glorious example, you may say—

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

You not only have Christ’s example to keep you from sin, but you also have *His Presence*. Do you know what this means? Let me give you an example of it. There was a certain merchant who had been, again and again, tempted to an act of sin. It was the usual custom in his trade—everybody else did it. But he knew that it was wrong and his soul revolted against it. As he sat in his counting house, he saw, pictured before his mind’s eye, his wife homeless and his children crying for bread. And the demon whispered to him, “Do it. Do it.” Then another picture flitted before his eyes—he and his wife and children were rich—their home was filled with good things and again the adversary said, “Do it. Do it.” He saw the advantages that were to be gained by doing it, but he went home and pondered the whole matter. His soul was heavy and a stern struggle was proceeding within him. Then he went to his chamber and shut himself in and, falling upon his knees, told all his difficulty and temptations to his Father in Heaven. Then, suddenly, not before his eyes, but to Faith’s inner eyes, there appeared a vision of the Crucified Christ who showed him His pierced hands, and feet, and side, and then said to him, “He that takes not his cross and follows after Me is not worthy of Me. You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”

The merchant, fixing his tearful eyes upon his Savior, remembered Paul’s words, “Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds.” He came down from his bedroom, his soul was glad, for his mind was made up and he said to himself, “I will not do it. I can be poor, but I cannot sin.” Others marked the man and wondered at the change in his appearance. He walked erect, no longer like one bowed down beneath a heavy burden. Many men marvelled at him and asked what had happened to him, but none could tell. The secret was that the Crucified Christ had appeared to him and had given him the support of His Divine Presence. That was sufficient to aid him in the time of temptation, for Christ, having Himself suffered, being tempted, was able to aid His faithful follower when he, also, was tempted.

I know that I am addressing someone who says—I will use, as far as possible, his own words—“Look here, Sir, I have always been in the habit

of being a jolly fellow, meeting with a number of companions to drink, chat, sing and so on. I do not know that we did very much amiss, but still, I could not do it again if I became a Christian. Suppose, now, that I should be invited to join the same company tomorrow—I am not sure what I might do—I might refuse their invitation, but if I were asked again and again, and they jeered at me for refusing, I might give in. Suppose that I did not yield? There is another difficulty. I have been a man of such-and-such a character and have formed such-and-such habits—now, how in the world am I to overcome those habits? How am I to become a Christian and to continue so to the end?”

These are very proper questions and I answer—You are utterly helpless apart from Him who is able to aid those who are tempted. But if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, He will give you a new nature. That new nature, it is true, will not at once cast out the old nature—your old nature will still be there, but the new nature will struggle against it and, ultimately, through the effectual working of the Holy Spirit, the new nature will prevail over the old nature and you will be “a new creature in Christ Jesus.” Old things will have passed away and all things will have become new. You will say, as a young convert did when he came to join the Church, “I don’t know which it is, but either everything else is changed, or else I am.” It was in himself, of course, that the great change had been worked, but that changed the aspect of everything else!

Let me give you a little parable to illustrate this point. A lion and a tiger used, frequently, to roam the forests together in search of prey that might satisfy their bloodthirsty appetites. But one day an angel came, touched the lion and changed him into a lamb. The next day the tiger came and wanted the lion to go with him to his feast of blood. Do you think it was difficult for him to refuse the invitation? Oh, no! “I have no inclination to go,” he said. The tiger laughed scornfully and said, “Aha, you have become pious, have you? Now you will go to the sheepfolds and sneak behind the shepherds’ heels—you that were once so brave!” And the tiger despised him and said, “You are miserable to be thus tied up like a dog and not to dare to come and do as we have always done.” “No,” said the lion, “it is not that I dare not go with you, but I have no wish to go. I am not miserable because I cannot go with you on such an errand—I would be miserable if I did go. The fact is, I cannot now do what I once did, for I am not what I once was. My new nature has brought me new loves, new hatreds, new preferences, new pursuits—so I cannot go with you on your bloodthirsty expedition.”

If God has worked a similar change in you—and transformed the lion into a lamb and the raven into a dove—it will not be difficult for you to be kept from sin, for you will hate sin with perfect hatred and have no fellowship with it! And besides that, as your nature will be renewed, day by day, by the Holy Spirit, with a constant infusion of everything that is good, gracious and Godlike, do you not see that sin shall no longer be like a strong spear to pierce you, but as a fragile reed which shall snap against the armor of proof which your soul shall wear?

Let me remind you who are thinking of going upon pilgrimage, but are afraid of the lions and the dragons in the way, that He, under whose banner you hope to enlist, never allowed one soldier who was in His service to perish. If you become a sheep under the care of the Good Shepherd, remember that—

***“His honor is engaged to save
The meanest of His sheep.”***

If you are a mariner, bound for the Fair Havens of eternal felicity, recollect that the Lord High Admiral of the seas of Providence and Grace has safely convoyed into port every vessel that has yet been committed to His charge! Not one has ever been wrecked or lost in any way. Trust yourself to His protection and guidance and He will bring you, also, safely in. What if your temper is, naturally, furious? What if your evil propensities have been indulged until they have become as giants holding you in cruel captivity? What if your passions boil, burn and blaze like Vesuvius in eruption? What if your temptations should come upon you as the Philistines came upon Samson? He to whom you commit the keeping of your soul shall make you master over all—and you shall yet be, with the great multitude whom no man can number, more than conqueror through Him who has loved you! Oh, that the Holy Spirit would constrain many of you, straightway, to leave your old master and to enter the service of the Savior! You will never find a better master than the Lord Jesus Christ!

“Ah,” said a sailor, 70 years of age, who had heard a sermon that had deeply affected him and, I trust, had been the means of renewing his nature, “I am going to haul down my old flag today. I have sailed under the colors of the Black Prince all these years, but they are coming down today—and I am going to run up the blood-red Cross in their place—and I hope to sail under that flag until I die.” So may it be with many of you! Say, “O Satan, we have served you far too long! Miserable is your service, despicable are your ways, degrading is our position and awful must be our end if we remain in your power.” Then turn to the Lord and appeal to Him. Say, “O God, help us! We cry to You. Bring us, we pray You, from under the tyrant’s sway. Help us to yield ourselves up to You this very hour. Take our hearts, black as they are, and wash them in the precious blood of Jesus Christ, Your well-beloved Son. Change the hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. Make us to be Your servants while we live and to enter into Your rest and Your Glory when we die.”

I have thus, I hope, spoken somewhat to the comfort of young beginners and anxious enquirers.

III. Now, in the third place, I am going to speak briefly TO BACKSLIDERS.

Where are you, Backslider? I cannot pick you out, but there is an eye that sees you, and that weeps over you. Ten years ago you used to sit down at the Communion Table. Twenty years ago you were a reputable member of the church, but you fell, and, oh, what a fall was yours! Since that time you have not wholly forsaken the House of God, though you have wandered here and there—but you have never dared to call yourself

a Christian again. You lost the Light of God's Countenance long ago and you find the service of Satan very hard, yet you think you must go downward to despair. You feel that you are in the iron cage of which Bunyan wrote—and you fear that you will never get out of it. Poor Backslider, I cannot mention your name without a tear and if I, a fellow creature, thus weep over you, much more does that compassionate Savior who suffered, being tempted, and who is able to aid those who are tempted!

Hark! If you will but incline your ear, you may hear a note that will cheer your heart and yet break it, too! 'Tis God who speaks and He is having a controversy with Himself over you. Justice says, "Destroy him!" But Mercy says, "Spare him!" The very Gospel which you have despised witnesses against you, but, at the same time, pleads for you. The Lord still says to backsliders, as He did to His ancient people when they wandered from Him, "Turn, O backsliding children, says the Lord, for I am married unto you." "Married unto you!" This marriage bond cannot be broken! You have played the harlot and gone after many lovers, but your first Husband hates putting away and even now invites you to return to Him. So—

***"To your Father's bosom pressed,
Once again a child confessed
From His house no more to roam,
Come, O poor Backslider, come!"***

I may even be addressing some who once drank from the cup of Communion, but who have turned aside to drink the cup of devils. I may be speaking to some to whom, for years, the Sabbath has been a day for business instead of a day for worship. Yet you could never get the sound of the Sabbath bell out of your ears and, even now, you cannot forget the profession you once made, nor the joys you once knew—and you cannot be easy in your sins. There is a spark of heavenly fire that still lingers within you and it will not die out, even though you seek to quench it that it may not hinder you from going after your lusts. That is God's grip still upon you! Oh that I might be His ambassador of peace to fling wide the doors of His mercy to you! Poor Prodigal, you are clad in rags! The sty is your only sleeping place and the swine your only companions—you would gladly fill your belly with the husks that they eat, but you must not, for you are a God-made man, and swine's food can never satisfy you. As you stand here, perhaps there is a tear trickling down your cheek because of the many years that you have spent in sin and you are saying, "I would arise and go to my Father, but I fear that He has forgotten me." Oh, say not that! But do as the prodigal did—arise and come to your Father, for He will give you such a reception as the prodigal received! You shall have the kiss of forgiveness upon your brow, the best robe of your Savior's perfect Righteousness shall be cast all around you, the ring of everlasting love shall be placed upon your finger, the shoes of peace shall be fitted to your feet, you shall eat the fat things of the promises of God, there shall be music in your ears, music in your house, music on earth

and music in Heaven, itself, because he that was dead is alive again, he that was lost is found!

This should be your consolation—"In that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted." Did I hear you say, "But I cannot see how Christ was ever in the same position that I am in, for He was never a backslider"? That is quite true, but what are your trials? First, you are tried by the burden of sin that is resting upon you—and Christ had the sins of all His people resting upon Him, so He knows what that burden means. Next, you are tried by the loss of the Light of God's Countenance—so was He, for He cried, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Then you say that you have lost all your friends—so had He, for in His time of trial, "they all forsook Him and fled." You say, also, that you are despised, that you are the subject of the song of the drunk and the mirth of the mocker—so was He, for He could truly say, "Reproach has broken My heart." So Christ can sympathize—not with your sin, for He never had any of His own—but with your sorrow, which is the consequence of sin, for He had to bear all that before you did!

IV. Now I have to close by speaking TO THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY. I think I might liken you, on a large scale, to that little band of pilgrims—Christiana, Mercy, Matthew, James and the rest of them who started from the City of Destruction—who, when they came to the Interpreter's House, were put under the escort of Mr. Great-Heart. I am not Mr. Great-Heart—I am but one of the children—but our great Savior is Mr. Great-Heart, and He is going with us all the way to the Celestial City! We are but like those boys and girls and we are afraid of what we may meet on the road. There are lions in the way, but Mr. Great-Heart can kill them, or restrain them from hurting us. There is Apollyon in the valley, but our Great-Heart is more than a match for the arch-fiend. We shall have to go through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, yet each one of us shall be able to say, "I will fear no evil, for You are with me." We shall have to go through the Enchanted Ground, but, as Christ will be with us, we shall not fall asleep there to our grievous hurt. We shall have to go through Vanity Fair and to bear the jeer and the jibe of the mocking mob, but we can bear all that, for we shall have our great Captain with us.

But—and here comes the dark thought to some—we shall at last come to the dark river without a bridge. Mr. Great-Heart—whom Bunyan meant to be the minister, had to go through the stream with the rest. But when we come to the river, our Mr. Great-Heart, Christ Himself—will go through the river with each one of us! He will put His almighty arm around us and when we get where our feet cannot feel the bottom, He will say to each one of us, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you." To die with Jesus is better, even, than living with Him except that higher style of living with Him beyond the river of death, for—

***"Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are,***

***While on His breast I lean my head
And breathe my life out sweetly there."***

In this sense, our text shines like a cluster of stars. Jesus died, Jesus rose again—in that He died, He can sympathize. In that He rose again, He can aid. Lay hold of this text whenever you think of death with any gloomy cast in your mind. And let us go on our way, each one singing—

***"Since Jesus is mine, I'll not fear undressing
But gladly put off this garment of clay.
To die in the Lord is a Covenant blessing,
Since Jesus to Glory through death led the way."***

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
2 CORINTHIANS 6:1-18.**

2 Corinthians 6:1. *We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that you receive not the Grace of God in vain.* God's servants are called to take many different positions. They are ambassadors under one aspect. They are workers under another. As ambassadors, they are ambassadors for Christ. As workers, they are workers together with God. Oh, how much it costs to win a soul! I mean, not only how much it cost the Savior, so that He broke His very heart over it and poured out His life's blood—but also how much it must cost the messenger of peace! He must know how to beseech and implore—and when even this fails, he must still go on toiling, laboring as a worker together with God.

2. *(For He says, I have heard you in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored you: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation).* I trust that if I am addressing any who say that it is too late for them to be saved and that their sin is too great to be forgiven, this text will drive away that unholy and unwarranted fear—"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Then the Apostle goes on to speak of himself and the rest of the Apostles and other preachers of the Word.

3, 4. *Giving no offense in anything, that the ministry be not blamed: but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God.* As those early servants of the Lord really did.

4-10. *In much patience, in afflictions in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watching, in fasting; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, by the Word of Truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown and yet well known, as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing and yet possessing all things.* All these things Paul and his Brothers were to be and to do in order to win souls for Christ. Just as the hunters in the cold North seek after furs and try all sorts of schemes to catch the wild creatures on which they grow. They will trap them, or snare them, or shoot them, but, somehow or other,

they will get them. They will be on the alert all day and all night, too. They will learn the habits of every creature they have to deal with, but they will get the furs somehow. And so must the true minister of Christ be willing to *be* anything, to *do* anything, to *suffer* anything, to bear reproach and shame, to be nothing, or to be all things to all men—if by any means he may save some.

11, 12. *O you Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. You are not straitened in us, but you are straitened in your own hearts.* If they were not saved, it was not because Paul did not open his mouth to speak to them and to warn and invite them, nor because he did not open his heart and feel in it the movements of a sacred compassion for them. Now, having thus spent himself in his endeavor to bring them to Christ, he writes to those whom he did bring.

13. *Now in return for the same.* There must be some wages for this blessed work. The Apostle wisely puts it on that footing, as if, surely, they were indebted to him, but the payment that he seeks is, of course, no personal gain to him. He only puts it in that form, but it is a gain to them.

13. *(I speak as unto my children), be you also enlarged.* “There has been so much earnest labor to secure your conversion, so be you also in earnest to bring in others. Get large thoughts of God; be fully consecrated to Him, spend and be spent for Him. Follow a good example.” Paul could well urge them to that consecration when he had given himself so completely to the work of winning souls—“Be you also enlarged.”

14. *Be you not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.* Not in any way—neither in marriage which is the chief of all forms for yoking, nor yet in business or other partnerships.

14. *For what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion has light with darkness?* You must be in the same world with them, but keep yourself distinct from them. Go not into their society by your own choice, nor seek your pleasure with them.

15-18. *And what concord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has he that believes with an infidel? And what agreement has the Temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be My people. Therefore 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.*

—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 TEMPTED SAVIOR—OUR BEST SUCCOR NO. 487

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 4, 1863,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“For in that He Himself has suffered being tempted, He is able
to succor them that are tempted.”
Hebrews 2:18.*

My text, furnishing the motto for the congregation for the New Year is, as you know, always supplied to me by a most venerable clergyman of the Church of England who has ever showed to me the most constant and affectionate regard. I have no doubt that the present text has been suggested to this aged servant of the Lord by his deep experience at once of affliction and deliverance—for there he has learned his need of solid, substantial food—fat things full of marrow, fit for the veteran warriors of the Cross. Having been tempted these many years in the wilderness, my esteemed friend finds that as his natural strength decays, he needs more and more to cast himself upon the tenderness of the Redeemer’s love. And he is led more fully to look to Him who is his only help and succor in every day of trouble, finding consolation alone in the Person of Christ Jesus the Lord.

My text seems to me to be a staff fitted for hoary age to lean upon in the rough places of the way—a sword with which the strong man may fight in all hours of conflict. A shield with which youth may cover itself in the time of peril and a royal chariot in which babes in grace may ride in safety. There is something here forever one of us. As Solomon puts it, a portion for seven and also for eight. If we consider the Great Prophet and High Priest of our profession—Jesus Christ—as being tempted in all points, we shall not grow weary or faint in our minds, but shall gird up our loins for our future journey and like Elijah go in the strength of this meat for many days to come.

You that are tempted—and I suppose the major part of this present congregation is included in the list—you that are tempted—and indeed if you know yourselves you are all in your measure thus exercised—you that are tempted listen to me this morning while I endeavor to speak of your temptations and in parallel lines of the temptations of Him who, having known your trials is able to succor you at all times.

I. Our first point this morning is this—MANY SOULS ARE TEMPTED—CHRIST WAS TEMPTED. All the heirs of Heaven pass under the yoke. All true gold must feel the fire. All wheat must be threshed. All diamonds must be cut. All saints must endure temptation.

1. They are tempted *from all quarters*. It is as Christ’s parable puts it concerning the house whose foundation was on the rock—“The rain descended, the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house but it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.” The descending rain may represent temptations from above. The floods pouring their devastating

torrents upon the land may well denote the trials which spring from the world while the howling winds may typify those mysterious influences of evil which issue from the Prince of the power of the air.

Now whether we shudder at the descending rain or fear before the uprising flood. Whether we are amazed at the mysterious energy of the winds, it is well to recollect our blessed Lord was tempted in all points like as we are. This is to be our consolation—that nothing strange to the Head has happened to the members.

Beloved Friends, it is possible that we may be tempted *by God*. I know it is written that “God is not tempted, neither tempts He any man.” Yet I read in Scripture, “It came to pass that God did tempt Abraham.” And I know it is a part of the prayer which we are taught to offer before God—“Lead us not into temptation”—by which it is clearly implied that God does lead into temptation or why else should we be taught to entreat Him not to do so? In one sense of the term “tempt,” a pure and holy God can have no share. But in another sense He does tempt His people. The temptation which comes from God is altogether that of trial.

A trial, not with an evil design as are the temptations of Satan, but a trial meant to prove and strengthen our graces. And so at once to illustrate the power of divine grace, to test the genuineness of our virtues and to add to their energy. You remember that Abraham was tried and tested of God when he was bid to go to a mountain that God would show him, there to offer up his son Isaac. You and I may have a like experience. God may call us in the path of obedience to a great and singular sacrifice. The desire of our eyes may be demanded of us in an hour—or He may summon us to a tremendous duty far surpassing all our strength.

We may be tempted by the weight of the responsibility, like Jonah, to flee from the presence of the Lord. We can only know when placed in the position what temptations the Lord’s message may involve. But, Beloved, whatever these may be our Great High Priest has felt them all. His Father called Him to a work of the most terrific character. He laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. He ordained Him, the second Adam, the bearer of the curse, the destroyer of death, the conqueror of Hell, the seed of the woman to be wounded in the heel and elected to bruise the serpent’s head. Our Lord was appointed to toil at the loom and there, with ever-flying shuttle, to weave a perfect garment of righteousness for all His people.

Now, beloved, this was a strong and mighty testing of the character of Him who was found in fashion as a man and it is not possible that we can ever be thrust into such a refiner’s fire as that which tried this most pure gold. No other can be in the crucible so long or subjected to such a tremendous heat as that which was endured by Christ Jesus. If then, the trial is sent directly from our heavenly Father, we may solace ourselves with this reflection—that He Himself has suffered and being tried of God—He is able also to succor them that are likewise tried.

But, dear Friends, our God not only tries us directly but *indirectly*. All is under the Lord’s control of Providence. Everything that happens to us is meted out by the decree and settled by His purpose. We know that nothing can occur to us save as it is written in the secret roll of providential

predestination. Consequently all the trials resulting from circumstances are traceable at once to the great First Cause. Out of the golden gate of God's ordinance the armies of trial march forth in array. No shower falls without permission from the threatening cloud. Every drop has its order before it hastens to the earth.

Consider poverty for instance. How many are made to feel its pinching necessities? They shiver in the cold for want of raiment. They are hungry and thirsty. They are houseless, friendless, despised. This is a temptation from God, but all this Christ knew—"Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have not where to lay My head." When He had fasted forty days and forty nights He was hungry and then it was that He was tempted of the devil.

Nor does the scant table and the ragged garment alone invite temptation, for all Providences are doors to trial. Even our mercies, like roses, have their thorns. Men may be drowned in seas of prosperity as well as in rivers of affliction. Our mountains are not too high and our valleys are not too low for temptation to travel. Where shall we flee from their presence? What wings of wind can carry us? What beams of light can bear us? Everywhere, above and beneath, we are beset and surrounded with dangers.

Now, since all these are under the superintendence and direction of the great Lord of Providence, we may look upon them all as temptations which come from Him. But in every one of these Christ had His part. Let us choose the special one of *sickness*—sickness is a strong temptation to impatience, rebellion and murmuring. But He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses. That visage had not been marred more than that of any man had not the soul been sore vexed and the body consequently much tormented.

Bereavement, too—what a trial is this to the tender heart! You arrows of death, you kill but you wound with wounds worse than death. "Jesus wept," because His friend Lazarus slept in the tomb. In that great loss He was schooled to sympathize with the widow in her needs, with the orphan in his fatherless estate and with the friend whose acquaintance has been thrust into darkness. Nothing can come from God to the sons of men the like of which did not also happen unto the Lord Jesus Christ. Herein let us wrap ourselves about with the warm mantle of consolation, since Christ was tempted in this point like as we are.

2. But still more do temptations *arise from men*. God does try us now and then, but our fellow men every day. Our foes are found in our own household among our friends. Out of a mistaken kindness it often happens that they would lead us to prefer our own ease rather than the service of God. Links of love have made iron chains for saints. It is hard to ride to Heaven over our own flesh and blood. Kinsfolk and acquaintances may much hinder young disciples. This, however, is no novelty to our Lord.

You know how he had to say to Peter, well-beloved disciple though he was, "Get you behind Me, Satan. You savor not the things that are of God." Poor ignorant human friendship would have kept Him back from the Cross, would have made Him miss His great object in being fashioned as a man and so have robbed Him of all the honor which only shame and

death could win Him. Not only true, but false friends attempt our ruin. Treason creeps like a snake in the grass and falsehood, like an adder, bites the horse's heels.

Does treachery assault us, let us remember how the Son of David was betrayed. "He that eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me." "Yes, my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread has lifted up his heel against me." What shall be done unto you, you false tongue? Eternal silence rest on you! And yet you have spent your venom on my Lord—why should I marvel if you try your worst on me?

As by friends you and I are tempted, so often are we assailed by enemies. Enemies will waylay us with subtle questions, seeking to entrap us in our speech. O cunning devices of a generation of vipers! They did the same with Christ. The Herodian, the Sadducee, the Pharisee, the lawyer—each one has his riddle and each one is answered—answered gloriously by the Great Teacher who is not to be entrapped. You and I are sometimes asked odd questions. Doctrines are set in controversy with doctrines. Texts of Scripture are made to clash with other portions of God's Word and we hardly know how to reply. Let us retire into the secret chamber of this great fact—in this point, too, Christ was tempted.

And then, when His foes could not prevail against Him, they slandered His character. "A drunken man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners," said they and He became the song of the drunkard till their reproach had broken His heart. This may happen to us. We may be subjected to slander just in that very point where we are most clear. Our good may be evil spoken of. Our motives misinterpreted. Our words misquoted. Our actions misconstrued—but here also, we may shelter ourselves beneath the eagle wings of this great truth—our glorious Head has suffered and being tempted He can give us aid.

But His foes did even more than this—when they found Him in an agony of pain they taunted Him to His face. Pointing their finger they mocked His nakedness. Thrusting out their tongue they jeered at His claims and hissed out that more than diabolical temptation, "If You are the Son of God, come down from the Cross and we will believe in You." How often do the sons of men, when they have gone to the full length of their tether, charge us in like manner? They have caught us in some unhappy moment—surprised us when our spirits were broken, when our circumstances were unhappy and then they say, "Now—now where is your God? If you are what you profess to be, now prove it."

They ask us to prove our faith by a sinful action which they know would destroy our characters—some rash deed which would be contrary to the profession we have espoused. Here, too, we may remember that, having been tempted, our High Priest is able to succor those that are tempted. Moreover, remember that there are temptations which come from persons who are neither friends nor foes—from those with whom we are compelled to mix in ordinary society. Jesus went to the Pharisee's table. The example of the Pharisee reeked with infectious pride—he sat with the publicans, whose characters were contagious with impurity.

But, whether it was in one leper house or another, the Great Physician walked through the midst of moral plagues and leprosies unharmed. He

associated with sinners, but was not a sinner. He touched disease but was not diseased Himself. He could enter into the chambers of evil but evil could not find a chamber in Him. You and I are thrown by our daily avocations into constant contact with evil. It were impossible, I suppose, to walk among men without being tempted by them. Inadvertently, men who have no studied design to betray us, by the mere force of their ordinary behavior entice us to evil and corrupt our good manners.

Here, too, if we have to cry, “Woe is me, for I dwell in Meshech and sojourn in the tents of Kedar,” we may remember that our great Leader sojourned here, too, and being here He was tempted even as we are.

Dear Friends, we shall not complete the list of temptations if we forget that a vast host and those of a most violent character can only be ascribed to *Satanic influence*. These are usually threefold—for Christ’s temptation in the wilderness, if I read it right, was a true picture of all the temptations which Satan uses against God’s people. The first grand temptation of Satan is usually made against our faith. Being hungry, Satan came to our Lord and said, “If you are the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.” Here was that devilish “if,” that cunning suggestion of a doubt concerning his Sonship coupled with the enticement to commit a selfish act, to prove whether he were the Son or not.

Ah, how often does Satan tempt us to unbelief. “God has forsaken you,” he says. “God has no love for you. Your experience has been a delusion. Your profession is a falsehood. All your hopes will fail you—you are but a poor miserable dupe. There is no truth in religion—if there is, how is it that you are in this trouble? Why not do as you like, live as you like and enjoy yourself?” Ah, foul Fiend, how craftily do you spread your net. But it is all in vain, for Jesus has passed through and broken the snare. My Hearers, beware of intermeddling with Divine Providence! Satan tempts many believers to run before the cloud, to carve their own fortunes, build their own house, to steer their own vessels. Mischief will surely befall all who yield to this temptation.

Beware of becoming the keepers of your own souls, for evil will soon overtake you. Ah, when you are thus tempted by Satan and your adoption seems in jeopardy and your experience appears to melt, fly at once to the Good Shepherd remembering this, “In that He Himself has suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.”

The next foul temptation of Satan with Christ was not to unbelief but to the very reverse—presumption. “Cast Yourself down,” said he as he poised the Savior on the pinnacle of the temple. Even so he whispers to some of us, “You are a child of God. You know that and therefore you are safe—live as you like—cast yourself down, for it is written, ‘He shall give His angels charge over you to keep you.’” Oh, that foul temptation! Many an Antinomian is led by the nose of this—driven like a fatted bullock to the slaughter and like a fool to the correction of the stocks—for many an Antinomian will say, “I am safe, therefore I may indulge my lusts with impunity.”

But you who know better! When you are thus molested. When the devil brings the doctrine of election or the great truth of the final perseverance of the saints and seeks to soil your purity and stain your innocence by

temptations drawn from the mercy and love of God—then console yourselves by this fact—that Christ was tempted in this point, too, and is able to succor you even here.

The last temptation of Christ in the wilderness was to idolatry. Ambition was the temptation, but idolatry was the end at which the tempter aimed. “All these things will I give you if you will fall down and worship me.” The old serpent will suggest, “I will make you rich if you will only venture upon that one swindling transaction. You shall be famous, only palm off that one falsehood. You shall be perfectly at ease, only wink at one small evil. All these things will I give you if you will make me Lord of your heart.” Ah, then it will be a noble thing if you can look up to Him who endured this temptation before you, and bid the fiend depart with, “It is written, you shall worship the Lord with all your heart and Him only shall you serve.”

Thus shall Satan leave you and angels minister unto you as they did to the Tempted One of old. Still further, to enlarge on this point let me observe that we are tempted not only from all quarters, but *in all positions*. No man is too lowly for the shafts of Hell—no person too elevated for the arrows of evil. Poverty has its dangers—“Lest I be poor and steal”—Christ knew these. Contempt has its aggravated temptations—to be despised often makes men bitter of spirit, exasperates them into savage selfishness and wolfish cruelty of revenge. Our great Prophet knew experimentally the temptations of contempt.

It is no small trial to be filled with pain—when all the strings of our manhood are strained and twisted it is little wonder if they make a discord. Christ endured the greatest amount of physical pain, especially upon the Cross. And on the Cross, where all the rivers of human agony met in one deep lake within His heart, He bore all that it was possible for the human frame to bear. Here, then, without limit He learned the pain of pain. Turn the picture—Christ knew the temptations of riches. You will say, “How?” He had the opportunities to be rich. Mary and Martha and Lazarus would have been too glad to give Him their substance.

The honorable women who ministered to Him would have begrudged Him nothing. There were many opportunities when He might have made Himself a king. He might have become famous and great like other teachers and so have earned honors and wealth. But as He knew, so also He overcame the temptations of wealth. The temptations of ease—and these are not small—Christ readily escaped. There would always have been a comfortable home for Him at Bethany. There were many disciples who would have thought themselves but too honored to have found for Him the softest couch on which head ever rested—but He who came not to enjoy but to endure.

He spurned all—but not without knowing the temptation. He learned, too, the trials of honor, of popularity and of applause. “Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna,” said the multitudes in the streets of Jerusalem, when palm branches were strewed in the way and He rode in triumph over the garments of His disciples! Knowing all this, He was still meek and lowly and in Him was no sin. We cannot either be cast down or lifted up. We cannot be put into the most strange and singular positions without still being

able to remember that Christ has made a pilgrimage over the least trod of our paths and is therefore able to succor them that are tempted.

3. Further, let me remark *that every age has its temptations*. The young while yet children, if believers, will discover that there are peculiar snares for the little ones. Christ knew these. It was no small temptation to a youth, a lad of some twelve years of age, to be found sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and answering their questions. It would have turned the heads of most boys and yet Jesus went down to Nazareth and was subject to His parents. It is small peril to grow in knowledge and in favor with God and man, if it were not for the word “God” put in it. To grow in favor constantly with men would be too much of a temptation for most youths.

It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth, for youth, when honored and esteemed is too apt to lift its head and grow conceited, vain and obstinate. When a young man knows that by-and-by he shall become something great it is not easy to keep him balanced. Suppose that he is born to an estate and knows that when he comes of full age he will be lord and master and will be courted by everybody—why he is apt to be very wayward and self-willed.

Now there were prophecies that went before concerning Mary’s son—which marked him out as King of the Jews and a Mighty One in Israel. But I find not that the holy child Jesus was ever decoyed by His coming greatness into any actions inconsistent with the duty of a child. So young believers, you who are like Samuel and Timothy—you can look to Christ and know that he can aid you. In His full manhood it is unnecessary for me to repeat the various afflictions which beat upon our Lord. You who today bear the burden and heat of the day will find an example here.

Nor need old age look elsewhere for we may view our Redeemer with admiration as He goes up to Jerusalem to die. His last moments are manifestly near at hand. He knows the temptations of an expected dissolution—He sees death more clearly than any of you—even though your temples are covered with gray. And yet, whether in life or in death, on Tabor’s summit or on the banks of the river of death, He is still the same—always tempted—but never sinning. Always tried, but never found wanting.

O Lord! You are able thus to succor them that are tempted. Help us! I need not say more. If I have not mentioned the particular trial of everyone here today, I think it may be included in some one of the general descriptions. Whatever it may happen to be it cannot be so out of the catalogue as not to come in somewhere or other in the temptations of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I, therefore, now turn to the second part of the discourse upon which I shall speak with brevity.

II. Our second point is THAT AS THE TEMPTED OFTEN SUFFERED Christ ALSO SUFFERED.

Notice, the text does not say—“In that He Himself also has been tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” It is better than that—“In that He Himself *has suffered*, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” Temptation, even when overcome, brings with it to the true child of God a great degree of suffering. The suffering con-

sists in two or three things. It lies, mainly, *in the shock which sin gives to the sensitive, regenerate nature.*

A man who is clothed in armor may walk in a wilderness through the midst of tearing thorns and brambles without being hurt. But let the man be stripped of his garments and then let him attempt the same journey and how sadly will he be cut and torn. Sin, to the man who is used to it, is not suffering. If he is tempted it is no pain to him. In fact, frequently temptation yields pleasure to the sinner. To look at the bait is sweet to the fish which means to swallow it by-and-by. But to the child of God who is new-made and quickened, the very thought of sin makes him Shudder. He cannot look at it without abhorrence and detestation and without being alarmed to think that he is likely ever to fall into so abominable a crime.

Now, dear Friends, in this case, Christ indeed has fellowship and far outruns us. His detestation of sin must have been much more deep than ours. A word of blasphemy, a thought of sin must have cut Him to the very quick. We cannot get a complete idea of the degree of wretchedness which Jesus must have endured in merely being upon earth among the ungodly. For infinite Purity to dwell among sinners must be something as terrible as if you could suppose the best educated, the most pure, the most amiable person condemned to live in a den of burglars, blasphemers, and filthy wretches. Such a man's life must be miserable. No whip, no chain would be needed—merely associating with such people would be pain and torment enough.

So the Lord Jesus, in merely bearing the neighborhood of sin without any other troubles, would have had to suffer a vast, incalculable amount of woe. Suffering, too, arises to the people of God *from a dread of the temptation when its shadow falls upon us before it comes.* At times there is more dread in the prospect of a trial than there is in the trial itself. We feel a thousand temptations in fearing one. Christ knew this. What an awful dread was that which came over Him in the black night of Gethsemane! It was not the cup—it was the *fear* of drinking it. "Let this cup pass from Me," just seemed to indicate what the sorrow was.

He knew how black, how foul, how fiery were its deeps and it was the dread of drinking it that bowed Him to the ground till He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. When you have the same overwhelming pressure upon your spirit in the prospect of a trial yet to come, fly to the loving heart of your sympathizing Lord—for He has suffered all this—having been Himself tempted.

The suffering of temptation also lies often *in the source of it.* Have you not often felt that you would not mind the temptation if it had not come from where it did? "Oh," you say, "to think that my own friend, my dearly beloved friend, should test me!" You are a child and you have said, "I think I could bear anything but my father's frown, or my mother's sneer." You are a husband and you say, "My thorn in the flesh is too sharp, for it is an ungodly wife." Or you are a wife which is more frequently the case and you think there is no temptation like yours, because it is your husband who assaults your religion and who speaks evil of your good. It makes all the difference where the temptation comes from.

If some scoundrel mocks us we think it honor—but when it is an honored companion we feel his taunt. A friend can cut under our armor and stab us the more dangerously. Ah, but the Man of Sorrows knew all this since it was one of the chosen twelve who betrayed Him. And besides, “it pleased the Father to bruise Him, He has put Him to grief.” To find God to be in arms against us is a huge affliction. “Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani! My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?” is the very emphasis of woe. Jesus surely has suffered your griefs, from wherever they may come.

I have no doubt, too, that a portion of the sorrow and suffering of temptation may also lie in the fact *that God’s name and honor are often involved in our temptation*. It happens to some of us who are more publicly placed than others to be reviled and when the reviling is merely against our own personal character, against our modes of speech or habit. We not only receive it gratefully but thankfully—blessing God that He has counted us worthy to suffer for His Name’s sake. But sometimes the attack is very plainly not against us but against God and there will be things said of which we should say with the Psalmist David—“Horror has taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that keep not Your law!”

When direct blasphemies are uttered against the Person of Christ, or against the doctrine of His holy Gospel, we have been “very heavy.” We have thought—“If I have opened this dog’s mouth against myself it matters not, but if I have made him roar against God—then how should I answer and what should I speak?” This has often been the bitterness of it—“If I fall, God’s cause is stained. If I slip through the vehemence of this assault, then one of the gates of the Church will be carried by storm. Mischief comes not to me alone, but to many of the Israel of God.”

David says, of grieving the saints—“When I thought to know this it was too painful for me.” David’s Lord had to suffer this, for He says, “The reproaches of them that reproached You fell on Me.” He was made the target for those errors which were really shot at God and so He had to feel first this bitterness of sympathy with His ill-used God.

I cannot, of course, particularize this morning so as to hit upon the precise sorrow which you, beloved Brother in Christ, are enduring as the result of temptation. But whatever phase your sorrow may have assumed this should always be your comfort—that He has suffered in temptation—that He has not merely known the temptation as you sometimes have known it—when it rattled on your harness and fell harmless to the ground. But it has rankled in His flesh. It has not made Him sin, but it has made Him smart. It has not made Him err, but it has caused Him to mourn. Oh, child of God, I know not a deeper well of purer consolation than this—“He Himself has suffered being tempted.”

III. Now for the third and last point. THEY THAT ARE TEMPTED HAVE GREAT NEED OF SUCCOR, AND CHRIST IS ABLE, HAVING HIMSELF BEEN TEMPTED TO SUCCOR THEM THAT ARE TEMPTED.

Of course this is true of Christ as God. Apart from any temptation He has ever endured, He would be able to succor the tempted. But we are now speaking in our text of Christ as a High Priest in which we are to regard Him in His complex character as God-man. Christ is not only God but Man and not only man but God. The *Christos*—the Anointed One, the

High Priest of our profession—is in His complex character able to succor them that are tempted. How? Why, first, *the very fact that He was tempted has some succor in it to us.*

If we had to walk through the darkness alone we should know the very extremity of misery. But having a companion we have comfort—having such a companion as Jesus Christ—we have joy. It is all black about me and the path is miry and I sink in it and can find no standing. But I plunge onwards, desperately set on reaching my journey's end. It frets me that I am alone, but I hear a voice (I can see nothing)—but I hear a voice which says, “Yes, though I pass through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil.”

I cry out, “Who goes there?” and an answer comes back to me—“I, the faithful and true witness, the Alpha and the Omega, the Sufferer who was despised and rejected of men, I lead the way.” And at once I feel that it is light about me and there is a rock beneath my feet. For if Christ, my Lord, has been here then the way must be safe. The very fact that He has suffered, then, consoles His people.

But further, the fact *that He has suffered without being destroyed is inestimably comforting to us.* If you could see a block of ore just ready to be put into the furnace, if that block of ore could look into the flames and could mark the blast as it blows the coals to a vehement heat—if it could speak, it would say, “Ah, woe is me that ever I should be put into such a blazing furnace as that! I shall be burnt up. I shall be melted with the slag. I shall be utterly consumed!” But suppose another lump, all bright and glistening could lie by its side and say, “No, no, you are just like I was, but I went through the fire and I lost nothing! See how bright I am and how I have survived all the flames.”

Why then that piece of ore would rather anticipate than dread the season when it, too, should be exposed to the purifying heat and come out all bright and lustrous like its companion. I see You, I see You, Son of Mary—bone of our bone, flesh of our Flesh—You have felt the flames but You are not destroyed. The smell of fire has not passed upon You. Your heel has been bruised, but You have broken the serpent's head. There is no scar, nor spot, nor injury on You. You have survived the conflict and I, bearing Your name, purchased with Your blood and dear to God as You are dear to Him—I shall survive it too. Therefore will I tread the coals with confidence and bear the heat with patience.

Christ's conquest gives me comfort, for I shall conquer, too. And please remember, too, that Christ, in going through the suffering of temptation was not simply not a loser *but He was a great gainer*, for it is written it pleased God “to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” It was through His suffering that He obtained the mediatorial glory which now crowns His head. Had He never carried the Cross He had never worn that crown—that transcendently bright and glorious crown which now He wears as King in Zion and as leader of His people whom He has redeemed by blood.

God over all, blessed forever He would have been, but as God-man Mediator He could never have been extolled unless He had been obedient even unto death. So He was a gainer by His suffering. And glory be to His

name *we* get comfort from this, too, for we also shall be gainers by *our* temptations. We shall come up out of Egypt enriched! As it is written, “He brought them forth also with silver and gold,” so shall we come forth out of trial with better than these treasures.

“Blessed is the man that endures temptation, for when he is tried he shall obtain a crown of life which fades not away.” The deeper their sorrows the louder their song. The more terrible their toil the sweeter their rest. The more bitter the wormwood the more delightful the wine of consolation. They shall have glory for their share. They shall have honor for their contempt. They shall have songs for their sufferings and thrones for their tribulations.

But more—in that Christ has suffered being tempted, He is able to succor us who are tempted *by sending His grace to help us*. He was always able to send grace, but now as God and Man He is able to send just the right grace at the right time and in the right place. You know a doctor may have all the drugs that can be gathered, but an abundance of medicine does not make him a qualified practitioner. If however he has been himself and seen the case, then he knows just at what crisis of the disease such-and-such a medicine is wanted. The stores are good, but the wisdom to use the stores—this is even more precious.

Now it pleased the Father that in Christ should all fullness dwell—but where should the Son of Man earn His diploma and gain the skill with which to use the fullness correctly? Beloved, He won it by *experience*. He knows what sore temptations mean for He has felt the same. You know if we had comforting grace given to us at one part of our temptation it would tempt us more than before—even as certain medicines given to the patient at one period of the disease would aggravate the malady, though the same medicine would cure it if administered a little later.

Now Christ knows how to send His comfort at the very nick of time, to afford His help exactly when it will not be a superfluity—to send His joy when we shall not spend it upon our own lusts. And how knows He this? Why, He recollects His own experience—He has passed through it all. There appeared an angel unto Him strengthening Him—that angel came just when he was wanted. Jesus knows just when to send His angelic messenger to strengthen you, when to lay on the rod more heavily and when to stay His hand and say, “I have forgiven you. Go in peace.”

Once more, dear Friends, lest I keep you too long. Having suffered Himself, being tempted, Christ knows how to succor us *by His prayers for us*. There are some people whose prayers are of no use to us because they do not know what to ask for us. Christ is the intercessor for His people—He has prevalence in His intercession—but how shall He learn what to ask for? How can He know this better than by His own trials? He has suffered being tempted. You hear some Brethren pray with such power, such unction, such fervor. Why? Part of the reason is that theirs are *experimental* prayers—they pray out their own life.

They just pray the great deep waters over which they themselves sail. Now the prayer of our great High Priest in Heaven is wonderfully comprehensive—it is drawn from His own life and it takes in every sorrow and every pain that ever rent a human heart, because He Himself has suffered

being tempted. I know you feel safe in trusting your case in the hand of such an Intercessor, for He knows which is the precise mercy to ask for and when He asks for it, He knows how to put the words and frame the petition so that the mercy shall surely come to you at the right time.

Ah, dear Friends, it is not in my power to bring out the depth which lies under my text—but I am certain of this—when through the deep waters He shall cause you to go, or you are made to pass through furnace after furnace, you cannot want a better rod and staff nor a better table prepared for you in the wilderness than this my text, “In that He Himself has suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” Hang this text up in your houses. Read it every day—take it before God in prayer every time you bend the knee and you shall find it to be like the widow’s cruse, which failed not and like her handful of meal which wasted not. It shall be unto you till the last of December what now it is when we begin to feed upon it in January.

Will not my text suit the awakened sinner as well as the saint? There are timid souls here. They cannot say they are saved—yet here is a loophole of comfort for you, you poor troubled ones that are not yet able to get a hold of Jesus. “He is able to succor them that are tempted.” Go and tell Him you are tempted—tempted, perhaps, to despair. Tempted to self-destruction. Tempted to go back to your old sins—tempted to think that Christ cannot save you. Go and tell Him that He Himself has suffered being tempted and that He is able to succor you.

Believe that He will and He will. You can never believe anything too much of the love and goodness of my Lord. He will be better than your faith to you. If you can trust Him with all your heart to save you, He will do it. If you believe He is able to put away your sin, He will do it. If you can but honor Him by giving Him a good character for grace, you cannot give Him too good a name—

***“Trust Him, He will not deceive you,
Though you hardly on Him lean;
He will never, never leave you,
Nor will let you quite leave Him.”***

Receive, then, the blessing—May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God our Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you forever. Amen and Amen.

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THE ENTREATY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

NO. 1160

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 1, 1874,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, Today if you will hear
His voice, harden not your hearts.”
Hebrews 3:7.*

THE peculiar circumstances in which we are now placed as a congregation demand of me that my discourses should be principally directed to the unconverted, that the awakened may be decided, that those may be awakened who as yet remain unmoved, and that a desire to seek the Lord may spread all around us. We may leave the 99 in the wilderness for a little while, just now, and go after that which has gone astray. It is our duty, usually, to feed the children, but for a while we may leave that to other agencies, and hand out food to those who are perishing of hunger. These seasons of revival do not last forever—they come and they go and, therefore—they must be taken advantage of while they are with us.

The farmer tells us that he must make hay while the sun shines and we, also, must attend, in the season, to the labor which it suggests—and that duty seems to me to look in the direction of the undecided. While God is speaking so mightily, we should plead with men to hear His voice! Clearly, it is our wisdom to say, “Amen,” to what the Lord is saying, for as His Word cannot return unto Him void, ours will be sure to be fruitful when it tallies with the Lord's. Therefore the subject of my sermon this morning shall be that of our hymn writer—

*“Hear God while He speaks,’ then hear Him today.
And pray while you hear, unceasingly pray!
Believe in His promise, rely on His Word,
And while He commands you, obey your great Lord.”*

I have taken this text with the earnest hope that God may bless it and I look to the Lord's people to baptize the text in floods of anxious tears for the unsaved.

I. The first point which it presents for serious consideration is this—THE SPECIAL VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. “As the Holy Spirit says, Today if you will hear His voice.” The Apostle is continually quoting from the Old Testament, but he does not often present his quotations in this peculiar fashion. In the very next chapter, when he is speaking of the same passage, he uses the expression, “Saying in David”—mentioning the *human* author of the Psalm. But in this case, to give full emphasis to the Truth of God, he quotes the Divine Author alone—“As the Holy Spirit says.”

These words, it is true, are applicable to every passage of sacred Scripture, for we may say of all the Inspired Books—“As the Holy Spirit says.” But it is designedly used here that the passage may have the greater

weight with us. The Holy Spirit, in fact, not only speaks thus in the 95th Psalm, but it is His unvarying utterance. The Holy Spirit *says*, or continues, still, to say, “Hear you His voice today.” He has a certain doctrine upon one occasion and a still deeper Truth of God at another period, according as there was need, or as His people were prepared for it. But this particular utterance is for all time and for every day of Divine Grace. The Holy Spirit, by Paul, as before by David, says, “Today.”

Yes, that is still the burden which He lays upon His ministering servants—in every place they entreat and persuade men, saying, “Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” How does the Holy Spirit thus speak? He says this first, *in the Scriptures*. Every command of Scripture calls for immediate obedience. The Law of God is not given to us to be laid by upon the shelf to be obeyed at some future period of life! And the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is not so intended for the 11th hour as to be lightly trifled with during the first ten. Wherever the Holy Spirit exhorts, He speaks in the *present* tense, and bids us *now* repent, or *now* believe, or *now* seek the Lord!

I pray you always remember, whenever you read the Bible, that it is the Spirit of the living God who there admonishes you to immediate obedience! The calls of the Inspired Word are not those of Moses, or David, or Paul, or Peter, but the solemn utterances of the Holy Spirit speaking through them. With what a dignity does this Truth invest Holy Scripture and with what solemnity does it surround our reading of it! Quibbling with Scripture, trifling with it, disputing its doctrines, or neglecting its admonitions we grieve the Spirit of God! And this is very dangerous ground to trespass on, for although He is long-suffering and pitiful, yet remember it is of the sin against the Holy Spirit that it is said, “It shall never be forgiven.”

Not every sin against the Holy Spirit is unpardonable—God be thanked for that! But there is a sin against the Holy Spirit which shall never be forgiven. Therefore do we tread, I say, on very delicate ground when we vex Him, as we do if at any time in reading His Word we count His teachings to be light matters. Beware, I say, you men of England, who have your Bibles in your houses among whom the Word of the Lord is common as wheat bread! Beware how you treat it, for in rejecting it you reject not only the voice of Apostles and Prophets, but the voice of the Holy Spirit Himself! The Holy Spirit says, “Today.” He bids His people make haste and delay not to keep the commands of God! And He bids sinners seek the Lord while He may be found—and call upon Him while He is near. Oh, may you hear His warning voice and live!

Further, while the Holy Spirit speaks in Scripture in this way, He speaks in the same manner *in the hearts of His people*, for He is a living and active Agent. His work is not ended—He still speaks and writes—the pen is still in His hand! Not to write with ink upon paper, but upon the fleshy tablets of prepared hearts! Now the Spirit of God has been in this Church communicating with His people, and the tenor of the communication has been this—“Seek to win souls.” And I will guarantee this assertion, that in no case has the Spirit said, “Seek the conversion of sinners at

the end of the year—awake to earnestness about their souls when you have become more mature in years and judgment.” But every man and woman here saved by Grace, who has felt the Holy Spirit within him, has felt an impulse to seek the conversion of sinners at once! He has felt a longing that they should no longer abide in sin, that they should now be awakened, should *immediately* lay hold of eternal life and find instantaneous peace in Christ.

I appeal to my Brothers and Sisters if it is not so. Have you not felt, “it is high time to awake out of sleep”? Have you not felt the force of the admonition, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might”? At other times we have been satisfied to feel that there was a good work going on secretly, that the soil was being prepared for future harvests, that somehow or other God’s Word would not return unto Him void. But now we are not so readily contented! We feel as if we must, during each service, see the Lord at work and we plead for immediate conversions! We are as eager for souls as misers are for money! I say not that all of you feel this, but I say that all who have been fully influenced by the Holy Spirit during this period of gracious visitation have been filled with agony for the immediate salvation of souls.

Like unto a woman in travail they have longed eagerly to hear the cry of new-born souls. Their prayer has been, “Today, good Lord, answer our entreaties and lead our fellow men to hear Your voice that they may be saved.” I appeal to the people of God whether the Holy Spirit, when He stirs them up to soul-winning, does not say, “Today—today seek the salvation of men.” The same is also true when the Holy Spirit speaks *in the awakened*. They are not yet numbered with the people of God, but they are under concern of soul—and I shall make my appeal to them, also.

You are now conscious that you have offended your God—you are alarmed to find yourselves in a condition of alienation from Him—you want to be reconciled and you pine for the assurance that you are really forgiven. Do you wish to wait for that assurance till six or seven years have passed away? Do you feel, this morning, that you could be perfectly satisfied to go out of this house in the state you are now in—and continue in it month by month? If such delay would satisfy you, the Spirit of God has not spoken with you in an effectual manner. You have been but partially influenced, like unhappy Felix, and having said, “When I have a more convenient season I will send for you,” we shall hear no more of you.

If the Spirit of God is upon you, you are crying “Help, Lord, help me now! Save me now or I perish! Make haste to deliver me, make no tarrying, O my God. Hasten on wings of love to pluck me from the pit of destruction which yawns beneath my feet.”—

**“Come, Lord, Your fainting servant cheer,
Nor let Your chariot wheels delay.
Appear, in my poor heart appear,
My God, my Savior, come away!”**

A truly awakened sinner pleads in the *present tense* and cries mightily for a present salvation! And it is certain that whenever the Holy Spirit strives with men, He urgently cries, “Today! Today!”

Once more, the Holy Spirit speaks, thus, *by His deeds* as well as by His words. We have a common proverb that actions speak more loudly than words. Now the acts of the Holy Spirit, in the leading of many in this place to the Savior, are so many practical invitations, encouragements and commands to others. The gate of Mercy stands open everyday of the year—and its very openness is an invitation and a command to enter—but when I see my fellow men go streaming through, when I see hundreds finding Christ as we have seen them, do not all these, as they enter the portal of Grace, call to others to come? Do they not say, “This way may be trod by such as you are, for we are treading it! This way assuredly leads to peace for we have found rest in it!”

It is surely so! This way of speaking from the Holy Spirit has come very closely home to some of you, for you have seen your children enter the kingdom, and yet you are not saved yourselves! Some of you have seen your sisters saved, but you still remain unconverted! There is a husband, yonder, whose wife has told him with sparkling eyes of the rest she has found in the Savior, but he himself refuses to seek the Lord! There are parents here who have found Jesus, but their children are a heavy burden to them, for their hearts are unrenewed! Did I see my brother pass the gate of salvation? May I not take that as an intimation from God’s Spirit that He is waiting to be gracious to me, also? When I see others saved by faith, may I not be sure that faith will also save me?

Since I perceive that there is Grace in Christ for the sins of others exactly like myself, may I not hope that there is mercy, also, for me? I will venture to hope and dare to believe! Should not that be the resolve of each? And is not that the point to which the Holy Spirit would lead us? Is not the bringing of one sinner to Himself intended to allure others? “The Holy Spirit says, Today.” But why so urgent, blessed Spirit, why so urgent? It is because the Holy Spirit is in sympathy with God—in sympathy with the Father who longs to press the prodigal to His bosom—in sympathy with the Son who is watching to see of the travail of His soul!

The Holy Spirit is urgent because He is grieved with sin and would not see it continued for an hour! And every moment that a sinner refuses to come to Christ is a moment spent in sin. Yes, that refusal to come is, in itself, the most wanton and cruel of offenses! The hardness of man’s heart against the Gospel is the most grievous of all provocations! Therefore does the Holy Spirit long to see man rid of it, that he may yield himself to the Omnipotent power of love. The Holy Spirit desires to see men attentive to the voice of God because He delights in that which is right and good. It is to Him a personal pleasure. He is glad to behold His own work in the sinner carried on till salvation is secure. Besides, He waits to execute His favorite office of Comforter, and He cannot comfort an ungodly soul! He cannot comfort those who harden their hearts.

Comfort for unbelievers would be their destruction. As He delights to be the Comforter and has been sent forth from the Father to act specially in that capacity, that He may comfort the people of God, He watches with longing eyes for broken hearts and contrite spirits, that He may apply the balm of Gilead and heal their wounds. Therefore “the Holy Spirit says, To-

day.” I leave this fact with you. The special voice of the text is not of man, but of the Holy Spirit Himself. He that has ears to hear let him hear—

**“Then while ‘tis called today,
Oh, hear the Gospel sound!
Come, Sinner, hurry, oh, hurry today,
While pardon may be found.”**

II. The text inculcates A SPECIAL DUTY. The duty is that we should hear the voice of God. If you so read it, the text bids us hear the voice of the Father saying, “Return unto Me, you backsliding children. Come now, and let us reason together: though your sins are as scarlet they shall be as wool.” Or it may be the voice of Jesus Christ, for it is of Him that the Apostle is here speaking. It is Jesus who calls, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” In fact, the voice to be heard is that of the Sacred Trinity, for with the Father, the Son and the Spirit also say, “Come.” We are bid to hear and that, surely, is no hard duty. The grand evangelical precept is, “Incline your ear and come unto Me, hear and your soul shall live,” for, “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.” Hear, then, the Lord’s voice!

“Well,” says one, “we do hear it. We read the Bible and whatever is preached on Sunday we are willing enough to hear.” Ah, my dear Hearers, but there is hearing and *hearing*. Many have ears to hear, but they do not hear in *reality*. The kind of hearing which is demanded of us is the hearing with *reverence*. The Gospel is God’s Word, not man’s—the voice of your Maker, your Lord—the voice of Infallible Truth, of Infinite Love, of Sovereign Authority and therefore no common attention should be bestowed upon it. Listen to it devoutly, summoning all your powers to adoring attention. Angels veil their faces in Jehovah’s Presence—and shall man trifle before Him? When God speaks do not regard it as the voice of merely a king, to whose message it might be treason to turn a deaf ear, but as the voice of your God, towards whom it is blasphemy to be inattentive!

Hear Him earnestly, with anxiety, to know the meaning of what He says, drinking in His doctrine, receiving with meekness the engrafted Word which is able to save your soul, bowing your understanding to it, longing to comprehend it, desirous to be influenced by it. “Hear His voice”—that is, hear it obediently, eager to do what He bids you, as He enables you. Do not hear and forget, as one that looks in a glass and sees his face, and afterwards forgets what manner of man he is? Retain the Word in your memories and, better still, practice it in your lives? To hear in this case is, in fact, to yield yourselves to the will of God, to let *yourselves* be as the elastic clay and His Word as the hand which molds you, or your tears as the molten metal and the Word as the mold into which you are delivered.

Hear the Lord when He *instructs* you. Be willing to know the Truth of God. How often are men’s ears stopped up with the wax of prejudice, so that they are dull of hearing? They have made up their minds as to what the Gospel ought to be and will not hear what it is. They think themselves the *judges* of God’s Word, instead of God’s Word being their judge. Some men do not want to know too much—they might be uncomfortable in their

sins if they did. And, therefore, they are not anxious to be instructed. When men are afraid of the Truth of God there is abundant reason to fear that the Truth of God is against them. It is one of the worst signs of a fallen condition when a son of Adam hides away from the voice of His Creator.

But, O dear Hearers, today hear His voice! Learn of Jesus! Sit as scholars at His feet, for, "Except you are converted and become as little children, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Hear Him as scholars hear their teacher, for all the children of Zion are taught of the Lord. But the Lord does more than instruct you—He *commands*. Let men say what they will, the Gospel to be preached to the ungodly is not merely warnings and teachings, it has its solemn, positive commands. Listen to this—"The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commands all men everywhere to repent." As to faith, the Lord's Word does not come as a mere recommendation of its virtues, or as a promise to those who exercise it, but it speaks on this wise—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; he that believes not shall be damned." The Lord puts the solemn sanction of a *threat* of condemnation upon the command to show that it is not to be trifled with!

"All power," says Christ, "is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth," and therefore clothed with that authority and that power, He sends out His disciples, saying to them, "Go you, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The Word goes forth with Divine authority, saying, "Repent you and believe the Gospel." This is as much God's command as that which says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart," and there is this much the more of solemn obligation, that whereas the Law was given by Moses, the Gospel command was given by the Son of God Himself!

"He that despised Moses' Law died without mercy: of how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall he be thought worthy, who has trod under foot the Son of God! Hear, then the commands of Jesus, for be sure of this—His Gospel comes to you with the imperial authority of the Lord of All! But the Lord does more than command, He graciously *invites*. With tenderness He bids sinners come to His banquet of mercy, for all things are ready. As though He pleaded with men and would gladly persuade where He might command, He cries, "Ho, everyone that thirsts, come you to the waters; and you that have no money, come buy wine and milk without money and without price."

Many of the Lord's invitations are remarkable for their extreme sympathy, as though it were rather He that would suffer than the sinner, if the sinner remained obstinate! He cries, "Turn you, turn you, why will you die, O house of Israel?" Like a father pleading with a beloved but disobedient son who is ruining himself, God, Himself, pleads as if the tears stood in His eyes—yes, the Incarnate God in very deed wept over sinners, and cried—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not." Will you not listen, then, when *God* instructs? Shall He give

light and your eyes be closed? Will you not obey when *God* commands? Do you intend to be rebels against Him? Will you turn your backs when *God* invites? Shall His love be slighted and His bounty treated with scorn? *God* grant it may not be so! The good Spirit asks no more than is just and right when He cries, "Hear you the voice of the Lord."

But the Lord does more than invite, *He adds His promises*. He says, "Hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an Everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." He has told us that, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Glorious promises are there in His Word—exceedingly great and precious! Oh, do not, I beseech you, count yourselves unworthy of them, for if so, your blood will be on your own heads! The Lord also *threatens* as well as entreats. He warns you, "If you turn not, He will whet His sword: He has bent His bow and made it ready." He declares that the despisers shall wonder and perish. He asks, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"

He says, "The wicked shall be cast into Hell with all the nations that forget God." Though He has no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but had rather that he should turn unto Him and live, yet He will by no means clear the guilty, but every transgression and iniquity shall have its just recompense of reward. If Christ is rejected, eternal wrath is certain! By that door you enter Heaven, but if you pass it by, even He who at this hour stands with pierced hands to woo you, will, at the Last Great Day come with iron rod to break you. "Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." I leave these thoughts with you. May God grant they may make impressions where His will designs they should.

III. There is, in our text, A SPECIAL TIME EMPHASIZE. "The Holy Spirit says, *Today*." Today is the set time for hearing God's voice. Today, that is, *while God speaks*. Oh, if we were as we should be, the moment God said, "Seek you My face," we should reply, "Your face, Lord, will I seek." As soon as the invitations of mercy were heard there would be an echo in our souls to them and we should say, "Behold, we come unto You that we may be saved."

Observe how in creation God's voice was heard in an instant. The Lord said, "Let there be light, and there was light." He said, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature," and straightway it was so. There were no delays. God's fiat was immediately executed. Oh, you whom God has made men and endowed with reason, shall the insensible earth be more obedient than you? Shall the waves of the sea swarm with fish and the earth teem with grass as soon as Jehovah speaks—and will you sleep on when the heavenly voice cries, "Awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you life"? Hear God today, for today He speaks.

The Apostle says in the next chapter, "Today—*after so long a time*," and I will dwell upon that phrase—"after so long a time." I see that some of you have bald heads, or gray hairs lie thick upon them. If you are unconverted, well may the Holy Spirit say, "Today, after so long a time, hear His voice." Is it not long enough to have provoked your God these 60 years?

Man, are not 70 years of sin enough? Perhaps you have almost fulfilled your fourscore years and still you hold out against the overtures of Divine mercy! Is not a graceless old age a standing provocation of the Lord? How long do you intend to provoke Him? How long will it be before you believe Him? You have had time enough to have found out that sin is folly and that their pleasures are vanity. Surely you have had time enough to see that if there is peace it is not to be found in the ways of sin! How long do you intend to linger on forbidden and dangerous ground? You may not have another day, O aged man, in which to consider your ways! O aged woman—you may not have another year granted you in which to provoke your God. “After so long a time,” with sacred pressure would I urge you—“Today, if you will hear His voice.”

I hope it is not only I pleading with you but, I trust, the Holy Spirit, also, says in your conscience, “Today attend the voice of God.” “Today,” that is, especially *while the Holy Spirit is leading others to hear and to find mercy*. Today, while the showers are falling. Today, receive the drops of Grace! Today, while there are prayers offered up for you. Today, while the hearts of the godly are earnest about you. Today, while the footstool of Heaven’s Throne is wet with the tears of those who love you. Today, lest lethargy should seize the Church again. Today, lest the preaching of the Word of God should come to be a matter of routine and the preacher, himself, discouraged, should lose all zeal for your soul! Today, while everything is peculiarly propitious, hear the voice of God! While the wind blows, hoist the sail! While God is abroad on errands of love, go forth to meet Him!

Today, while yet you are not utterly hardened—while there is still a conscience left within you—today, while yet you are conscious of your danger in some degree, while yet there is a lingering look towards your Father’s house—hear and live! Today, lest, slighting your present tenderness, it should never come again—and you should be abandoned to the shocking indifference which is the prelude of eternal death! Today, young people, while yet you are undefiled with the grosser vices. Today, you young men who are new to this polluting city, before you have steeped yourselves in its streams of lust. Today, while everything is helpful to you, hear the loving, tender, wooing voice of Jesus and harden not your hearts!

To me the text seems wonderfully Gospel-like when it says “Today,” for what is it but another way of putting the doctrine of that blessed hymn—

“Just as I am, without one plea.”

“Today”—that is, in the circumstances, sins and miseries in which you now are—hear the Gospel, and obey it! Today, since it finds you in yonder pew, hear God’s voice of mercy in that pew! Today, you who have never been concerned before, while God speaks, let it concern you! “Ah,” you say, “if I were living in another house.” You are culled today, even if you are living with the worst of sinners! “I will hearken when I have enjoyed that sinful pleasure which I promised to myself next Wednesday” you say. Ah, if it is a sinful one, flee from it, or it may make a turning point in your history and seal your soul’s ruin. “Today, if you will hear His voice.”

“Ah, if I had attended a few more revival meetings, and felt in a better state, I would obey.” It is not so written, Sinner! It is not so! I am not told to preach the Gospel to those of you who are *ready* to receive it and say, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, if he is already, in a measure, prepared to believe.” No, but to every creature here I have the same message to deliver! In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, who is also God Almighty at the right hand of the Father, believe in Him and you shall live, for His message to you is for TODAY—it admits of no delay. “But I must reform, I must amend and then will I think about believing.” That is to put the effect before the cause! If you will hear His voice, the reforming and the amending shall come to you. But you must not *begin* with them as the first matter.

The voice of God does not say that, but it says, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.” Oh, hear that voice! I must occupy a moment in showing you why the Lord in mercy says, “Today.” Do you not know that other people die? Why may you not die, yourself? During these present services several have been taken from among us. I was surprised when I came home to find how many have died of late concerning whom I should have predicted a much longer life. Why may you not die speedily? “I am robust and healthy,” says one. If you ever hear of a sudden death, does it not generally happen to the robust? It seems as if the storm swept over the sickly and they bowed before it like reeds—and so escaped its fury—while the vigorous in health, like powerful forest trees, resist the storm and are torn up by it. How often does sudden death come just where we least expected it! “Today, if you will hear His voice.”

I will put a question to you which that holy man, Mr. Payson, puts to the awakened. He says, How would you like to arrange that you would find Christ at the end of the year and that your existence should depend upon the life of another person? Select the strongest man you know, and suppose that everything in reference to your eternal welfare is to depend upon whether *he* lives to see the next year. With what anxiety would you hear of his illness! How concerned you would be about his health! Well, Sinner, your salvation is risked by you upon your *own life*—is that any more secure? If you are procrastinating and putting off repentance, why should you be any more secure about your own life than you would be if all depended upon the life of another? Be not such fools as to trifle yourselves into your graves and trifle your souls into Hell.

“You would not stake your fortune on the cast of the dice, as the mad gambler does, and yet you are staking your soul’s eternity upon what is quite as uncertain, for you do not know, when you fall asleep tonight, whether you shall awake tomorrow in your bed or in Hell! You do not know that the next breath you are expecting will ever come—and if it does not come you will be driven forever from God’s presence.” Oh, Sirs, if you want to play at hazards, hazard your gold, or hazard your reputations, but do not jeopardize your souls! The stakes are too heavy for any but those who are made mad by sin. Risk not your souls, I beg you, upon the hazard of your living another day, but listen to the voice of God today!

IV. I have little time for my last point, but I still must have space for it even if I detain you beyond the accustomed time of departure. The last point is this—The SPECIAL DANGER which is indicated in the text. “To-day, if you will hear His voice, *harden not your hearts.*” That is the special danger. And how is it incurred? When persons are under concern of soul their heart is, in a measure, softened—but they can readily harden it—first, by willingly *relapsing into their former indifference*—by shaking off all fear and saying in willful rebellion, “No, I will have none of it.”

I once preached in a certain city and I was the guest of a gentleman who treated me with great kindness. But I noticed on the third occasion of my preaching that he suddenly left the room. One of my friends followed him out of the place and said to him, “Why have you left the service?” “Well,” he said, “I believe I should have been converted altogether if I had stayed any longer, for I felt such an influence coming over me. But it would not pay—you know what I am—it would not pay.” Many persons are of that kind. They are shaped, for a while, according to the earnest word they hear, but it is all in vain—the dog returns to his vomit and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. This is to harden your heart and provoke the Lord.

A common way of provoking God and hardening the heart is that indicated by the context. “Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness”—that is to say, by *unbelief*—by saying, “God cannot save *me*, He is not able to forgive *me*. The blood of Christ cannot cleanse *me*. I am too black a sinner for God’s mercy to deal with.” That is a copy of what the Israelites said—“God cannot take us into Canaan; He cannot conquer the sons of Anak.” Though you may look upon unbelief as a slight sin, it is the sin of sins! May the Holy Spirit convict you of it, for “when the Spirit of Truth is come He shall convince the world of sin,” and especially of sin, “because they believe not on Jesus.” “He that believes not is condemned already,” says Christ, “because he has not believed on the Son of God,” as if all other sins were inconsiderable in power to condemn in comparison with this sin of unbelief!

Oh, do not, therefore, doubt my Lord! Come, you blackest, filthiest sinner out of Hell! Jesus can cleanse you! Come, you granite-hearted sinner, you whose affections are frozen like an iceberg so that not one melting tear of penitence distils from your eyes! Jesus’ love can soften your heart! Believe Him, believe Him, or else you harden your heart against Him! Some harden their hearts by *asking for more signs*. This, also, is after the manner of the Israelites. “God has given us manna. Can He give us water? He has given us water out of the Rock, can He give us meat, also? Can He furnish a table in the wilderness?” After all that God had done, they wanted Him to work miracles or they would not believe!

Let none of us harden our hearts in that way. God has already worked for men a miracle which transcends all others and is, indeed, the compendium of all wonders! He has given His own Son out of His bosom to be a *Man* and to *die* for sinners! The sinner who is not content with that display of the mercy of God will never be satisfied with *any* proof of it! Christ on the tree is the sum of all miracles under the Gospel dispensation. If

you will not believe God, who “so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” then you will never believe!

“Oh, but I want to *feel!* I want the influence that is abroad to come upon me in a strange manner! I want to dream at night, or to see visions by day.” Do you? You are hardening your heart! You are rejecting what God gives and demanding Him to play the lackey to you—and to give you what your petulant pride demands. If you had these things you would still not believe! He who has Moses and the Prophets and rejects them, would not believe, even though one came to him from the dead! Christ on the Cross is before you—do not reject Him! For if you do, nothing else can convince you and *there* must you remain—hardening your heart in unbelief.

Those also harden their hearts who *presume upon the mercy of God* and say, “Well, we can turn when we please.” Ah, how different will you find it. “We have only to believe and be saved.” Yes, but you will find, “only believing,” to be a very different thing from what you imagine! Salvation is no child’s play, believe me. I have heard of one who woke up one morning and found himself famous—but you will not find salvation in that way. “He that seeks finds, and to him that knocks it shall be opened.” You harden your hearts if you *plunge into worldly pleasures*—if you allow loose companions to talk with you—if on this holy day you indulge in idle talk, or listen to unhallowed mirth. Many a tender conscience is hardened by the company which surrounds it. A young woman hears a powerful sermon and God is blessing it to her, but she goes off tomorrow to spend the evening in a scene of gaiety—how can she expect that the Word of God will be blessed to her? It is a deliberate quenching of the Spirit and I wonder not that God should swear in His wrath that those who do so shall not enter into His rest. Oh, don’t do these things, lest you harden your hearts against God!

Now, I must conclude, but I must put the matter fully before you. I want every sinner here to know his position this morning. God *commands* all men everywhere to repent! Christ *commands* men to believe in Him *today*. One of two things you have to do, you have no other choice—either you must say that you do not intend to obey God’s command, or else you must yield to it. Like Pharaoh, you must say, “Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?” Or else, like the prodigal son, you must resolve, “I will arise and go unto my Father.” There is no other choice! Do not attempt to make excuses. God makes short work with sinners’ excuses. Those who were invited to the great supper said, “We are going to our farm and our merchandise. We are about to try our yokes of oxen, or we have married a wife,” but all the Lord said about it was, “None of the men which were bidden shall taste of My supper.” That was the end of it.

There was a man, once, who had a talent, and he buried it in a napkin and said, “I knew that You were an austere man,” and so on. What notice did his Master take of that speech? He merely said, “Out of your own mouth will I condemn you. You knew that I was an austere man, and therefore, for that very reason you ought to have been the more diligent in

My service.” The Lord sees through your excuses, therefore do not insult Him with them! I have you here, this morning, before me, and you shall say one thing or the other before the living God—and before Christ—who shall judge the quick and the dead. He bids you turn from your sin and seek His face *now*, and believe in His dear Son. Will you do it or not? Yes or no? And mark you, that, “Yes,” or, “No,” may be final.

This morning the last appeal may have been made to you! God *commands* and I charge you, if your heart intends rebellion, say, if you dare, “I will not obey.” Then you will know where you are and you will understand your own position. If God is not God, fight it out with Him. If you do not believe in Him, if He really is not the Lord who made you and who can destroy you, or if you mean to be His enemy—take up your position and be as honest, even, if you are as proud as Pharaoh, and say—“I will not obey Him.” But, oh, I pray you, do not thus rebel! God is gracious! Will you be rebellious? God is love! Will you, therefore, be hard-hearted? Jesus, by His wounds, invites you to come to Himself! And the Holy Spirit, Himself, is here and is saying in the text, “Today harden not your hearts.”

Yield yourselves now to His love—

***“Who round you now
The bands of a man would cast,
The cords of His love who was given to you
To His altar binding you fast.”***

At His altar may you be found safe in the day of His appearing! God bless you. I beg those of you who know how to pray to implore a blessing on this word, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—

Numbers 13:26-33, 14:1-23; Psalm 95.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—98 (VERSION II), 497, 546.

**A MESSAGE FROM BROTHER SPURGEON, IN 1874, TO HIS READERS
[IN THE 21st CENTURY?]**—

Those readers who think this sermon likely to be useful are earnestly requested to give it away, that it may be useful to others. The preacher is most anxious that his message should be scattered broadcast over the land.

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

THE CALL OF "TODAY"

NO. 3160

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1909.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 1, 1873.

*"Therefore (as the Holy Spirit says) 'today if you will
hear His voice, harden not your hearts.'"
Hebrews 3:7.*

THE Holy Spirit says, "Today." There is a great talk about yesterday. There are some who will have it that there are none like the days that are past—"the good old times." There are some who glory in what they did years ago. Their work was done yesterday. They have long ago retired from the business of life, but still they are accustomed to indulge in the recollections of what they did in days gone by. Yesterday is also dwelt upon in lamentation and even in despair. Yesterday! Alas, opportunities are past. "The harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Yesterday we lived in sin. Yesterday we rejected Christ. Yesterday we stifled conscience and, therefore, despair says that it is now all over. Time is gone. Closed forever are the gates of Mercy—the death warrant is signed—the gallows are erected for the execution.

Now it is noteworthy that the Holy Spirit, neither that we may take comfort in it, nor despair about it, said not, "yesterday"—He said, "*Today*." He points us not to the past—(we shall have to look at that and weep over it, or bless God for it either with repentance or gratitude)—He points us not to the time of the Flood but to *today*. A very large proportion of mankind, you will find, delight in dwelling upon the word, "tomorrow." Oh what will they not do tomorrow! Sin shall be rejected tomorrow! The Savior shall be sought tomorrow! Clashed in the arms of faith, they will exult in the peace of Christ tomorrow! They will pray tomorrow! They will serve God tomorrow! Alas, of all the nets of Satan as a fowler for the souls of men, perhaps there is none in which he took in more that in this big net of procrastination. "I will—I will," and there it ends! "I go, Sir," and he went not. To resolve and re-resolve, and then to die—the same is the melancholy history of thousands of hearers who bid fair for Heaven a thousand times and yet will never enter there!

Tomorrow! Oh, you cursed word, tomorrow! How has man made you cursed! I find you not in the almanac of the wise—you are only in the calendar of fools. Tomorrow! There is no such thing except in dreamland,

for when that comes which we *call* tomorrow it will be *today*—and still forever, *today, today, today*. There is no time but that which is. Time was, is not—and time to come is not!

Today is the only time we have. Happily for us, the Holy Spirit says, "TODAY IF YOU WILL HEAR HIS VOICE." Never do I find Him saying, "tomorrow." His servants have often been repulsed by men like Felix who have said, "Go your way for this time. When I have a more convenient season I will send for you." And never did any Apostle say, "Repent tomorrow, or wait for some convenient season to believe." The constant testimony of the Holy Spirit with regard to the one single part of time—which I have shown, indeed, to be *all* time, is—"Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

Now I am trying to speak, tonight, not as though I were preaching at all. But I need to talk to you Christians, first, and then to you unconverted people very seriously—and may God the Spirit speak through the words.

I. First to you that love the Lord, or profess to do so—Christian people I have to say to you tonight—THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYS, "TODAY." That is to say, that it is essential to duty that we attend to it at once. Every command of Christ bears date today. If a thing is right, it should be done at once. If it is wrong, stop it immediately! Whatever you are bound to do, you are bound to do *now*. There may be some duties of a later date, but for the present, that which is the duty, is the duty now. There is an immediateness about the calls of Christ. What He bids you do, you must not delay to do. The Holy Spirit says, "*Today*." And I would say this with regard to everything. Do you love the Lord? Have you ever professed His name? Then the Holy Spirit says, "*Today*." Hesitate not to take up His Cross at once and follow Him—the Cross of Him who was nailed to the Cross for you! The Cross of Him who, by His precious blood, has made you not your own, but His! Confess Him before men. Has He not said, "He that denies Me before men, him will I deny before My Father who is in Heaven"? Confess with your mouth, if you have believed with your heart.

It is the immediate duty of the Believer to be baptized. "As soon as you believe in Christ you may." "*Today*," says the Holy Spirit. Having united yourself to the people of God, then whatever, according to your position and calling, is incumbent upon you, do it! Are you a young Christian—warm, fervent in spirit—and do your seniors call you impudent and dampen your ardor? Listen not to them! Go and do what is in your heart! I would give nothing for a man's zeal if that zeal does not make him sometimes indiscreet. Imprudence, so far from being a sin, is often an index of the possession of the highest Grace. No, David, imprudent as you are, take the smooth stones from the brook. Wait not till you have become a king or a gray-headed monarch about to resign the crown to

Solomon. While you are ruddy and a youth, hesitate not! The Holy Spirit says, "*Today.*" Or are you called in middle life? Your sun has already spent half its day. Is it suggested to you that you should seek your children's conversion? Plead at once that your little ones, so long neglected, may now be saved. The Holy Spirit says to you, parent, father, mother—"*Today.*" Have you come into the midst of a multitude of workers of which you are the master seeking their good? Seek it today! Have you in your heart the intention to serve God when you have amassed so much wealth? What? Shall God be second? Shall mammon take the first place and Jehovah be put in the background? No! Let your gold come in second or not at all. Let your God come in now! The Holy Spirit says, "*Today.*" "But there are urgent things pressing." If you can claim that they are duties, God forbid that I should bid you neglect them! But if they are covetous and lustful, put them aside and *now*, in the prime of your life, while yet the marrow is in your bones and your eyes are not dim, give to God what He claims of you *TODAY!*

Have you lingered long upon the road and has the evening come, and has the sun almost touched the horizon, and is the red light gleaming in the sky? Then the Holy Spirit says to you, "O aged Christian, serve God today." I cannot comprehend the postponements of old age, yet do we frequently meet with them. There was an aged man who meant to devote all his substance to the Church of God, but he put it off and the thing was never done. There was another who meant to have spoken to his children. He would gather them together on a certain day and would speak to them and their children, for so had it come about that he was a grandfather, now, but he said he would do it, by-and-by—but *the time never came*. "Whatever your hand finds to do"—what do the Scriptures say? "Think about it?" No—"Do it." Give God your first and choicest thoughts! Many a man has thought over a good thing till the devil has come in with a second thought and the thing has never been done. I love that blessed thing that made Magdalene, or Mary—whichever it was—break the alabaster box over the Savior. She did not sit down to calculate, or the thing would not have been done! And this is especially incumbent upon the aged. You are not likely to be guilty of indiscretion—your blood is not hot—therefore you may fling the reins on the back of your zeal! You are not likely to exceed in your zeal—therefore go at once, I pray you!

Oh, I wish Christians were in the habit of following the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Remember, there are many things He gives to us that we do not deserve at all or do not receive so as to carry them out. Be you not as the horse or mule which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle. Oh, be guided by gentler means, the softer touches of God's hand! The Holy Spirit says, "*Today.*" Whatever Christian service may come across you, Christian Brothers and Sisters, *let me urge*

you not to let the night pass away, nor tomorrow, until you have accomplished the whole of it. Get through it, dear Brothers and Sisters, get through it at once. The Lord knows when duty will be most acceptable to Him. The Lord loves fresh gathered fruit. You are not to store it up until the bloom is gone and say, "I will bring it tomorrow." The Holy Spirit says, "*Today.*" **WHATEVER IS TO BE DONE FOR THE LORD, LET IT BE DONE NOW!**

And then there is a second set of obligations which come upon the Christian—*undoing*. Now **THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYS TODAY.**" Have I done wrong towards my neighbor? Have I spoken an unkind word? Have I made an unjust speech? Let me make my peace with my friend. But when? "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." I heard the other day that when a wasp had stung one, the sting would go away if the wasp died before the sun went down. And perhaps there may be about each one of us some bad habit, something we cannot justify ourselves in. Let us seek to be purged from it, for "the Holy Spirit says, '*Today.*'" Is there any sin to be conquered? There is no such time to kill sin as today. You will never kill this Amalekite as well as now. He will be off his guard if you smite him now. **AT ONCE, THEN, STRIKE THE BLOW AGAINST THE SIN, WHATEVER IT MAY BE.** There is no time for killing weeds in the garden of the soul like today! There is no time for throwing salt upon the field which is full of noxious poison like now. Never imagine that you will get rid of sin by degrees. I know some people have been cured of a taste for strong drink by degrees, and such things may be possible, but the Christian will find it easier to wean himself at once by a sacred total abstinence from everything that is sinful—for as long as you parley with the enemy, the enemy will still have power over you—and blessed is that man who does not begin to take off one finger of his right hand and then another and then another, but takes the axe and chops it off as one whole thing at once! "If your right hand offends you, cut it off." [Not to be taken literally.] Some think this is enough—"If your right hand offends you, cut the nails." It is not so. Oh, yes—for doing and for undoing—the Holy Spirit says, "*Today.*"

But I cannot linger where there is so much to say. Remember, beloved Christian friends, that there are some duties which if you **DON'T DO TODAY YOU WILL NEVER DO.** I called upon a Christian some time ago and saw him looking very sorrowful. He was a man of earnest spirit, always trying to do good, and I was surprised to see sorrow on his face. But he said, "My dear Sir, I met with a very sad thing this morning. There is a man who has been doing certain errands around here, and I noticed him and felt a great concern about his soul. And yesterday I had resolved that when he came into the shop, I would speak to him. It has been my habit to speak to all I come in contact with. Well, I don't know whether I can excuse myself or not, but this man came upon his usual

errands, but I was busy and did not speak to him as I designed. I intended to do it this morning, but his wife has come round and said he is dead. and I cannot forgive myself, for there is nothing else I can do for him, and I feel almost as though his blood will lie at my door."

You cannot tell but what you will be in company this evening with somebody who will never have a warning if you do not give it *tonight*. Never have another invitation to come to Jesus—and if you should hear tomorrow that your friend has suddenly dropped dead and that he was unconverted—it would cause you some regret and remorse that you had not spoken. *Now, now*, because it is "*now*, or never." If it might be, "Now or tomorrow," there might be some reason for delay, but it is not so! It is "*now* or never!" Therefore I pray you, Brothers and Sisters, (and I am speaking much more to myself than to you), to be instant in season and out of season. Oh, pity those poor souls who live in darkness and do not know our sweet Lord Jesus! "You are the light of the world." Defer not the light-giving lest the night come to them wherein you cannot help them!

Notice again—WHEN WE INTEND TO DO CHRISTIAN SERVICE TOMORROW, AND DO IT FAITHFULLY AND WELL, YET WE SIN. There is a contract for certain steamers to carry her Majesty's mails and they are bound to leave Liverpool at such a time and arrive at New York so long afterwards. Suppose they leave six hours after the time? If they make the best voyage they can, they break the contract! And an action which is done tomorrow, but should have been done today, whatever is its acceptableness in itself, is faulty. It is as an untimely fruit, out of date. If I do not do till tomorrow what I ought to do today, I cannot do tomorrow's duties! I cannot possibly put Thursday's work into Friday. Cannot I call in help? Yes, but I am robbing my Master of my friend's service. I have work to do which never can be done in eternity unless it is done today. Throughout the whole of eternity I can never make up for that lost hour. The work of that hour is gone and can never be done. Eternal mercy can wipe out the sin and, blessed be God, it will—but there is the fact for all that. Therefore the Holy Spirit says, "Today." Today's work is to be done today—therefore let it is done.

For, beloved friends, there is one remark with regard to service for God and that is, that DUTIES PUT OFF TEND TO THE HARDENING OF THE HEART. You begin to be familiar with the neglect of them and nothing is more injurious to the mind than familiarity with sin! To be acquainted with sin is to be made sinful! When I postpone a duty, I am acquainted with the neglect of that duty. How many times—(I will put a riddle to you if I can. You will probably remember it)—how many times does a man sin in an hour who does not perform the duties of that hour? There is one act of omission, which he has committed the first minute. He ought to have done it at once. Is there a sin each minute or is there a sin each tick

of the clock? I would like you to think about that. It seems to me that we do not know how many sins there may be crowded into the neglect of a duty for an hour. And some have neglected duties for a week! They have disobeyed God for a week. Have you ever seen your child sin in that way? You have said, "John, go to the door!" Has he been an obstinate child and not gone but stood still? You say again, "John, go to the door!" Still he does not go. I wonder how long you would let your child stand still? I think I know some who could not manage for five minutes to keep their hands off him—and perhaps it is well they should not stand it long.

But now God has had His hands off you, some professors, by the week together and the year together for what you know you ought to have done—and yet you have not done it. And all the while the Word of God says to you, "Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation." But you have still continued to tempt the Lord and tried Him, though by the wonders of His mercy He has kept His hands off. Don't provoke Him anymore, but go and say, "I have delayed too long. Now, Father, I will do what You bid me. Help me, by Your Grace, for I will not be a disobedient child anymore." Delay not, for you have already provoked Him too long! I have often pitied God, to think He should be so badly treated that His children, whom He treats so well, should make Him such poor return. Let us have sympathy with our dear heavenly Father and say, "We will grieve Him no more."

There is one more thing that I want to say to you, dear Christian. I have been putting it very strongly today, but I have felt authorized to do so because the text puts it so. THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYS, "TODAY." *The Holy Spirit!* That clothes it with deep solemnity. The Holy Spirit! That is, the Divine Person of the Godhead concerning whom we find that there is a sin against Him which will never be forgiven! If we want to keep clear of that sin, grieve not the Holy Spirit of God! Be very tender concerning all sin—be tender most of all concerning this. Remember how the Holy Spirit loves you—how He *loves you!* Jesus Christ loved men so that He came and lived *among* them, but the Holy Spirit loves men so that He comes and lives *in* them! I wonder which is the more admirable in condescension—the Incarnation of the Son, or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? They are both Divinely merciful and gracious. Grieve Him not, then—He is your Comforter—He is your Comforter! And have you vexed Him who dwells in you and shall be with you? The human heart never entertained so Divine a guest! Resist Him not. Yield to Him *now*, for that is the very point on which He lays stress. The Holy Spirit says, "*Today.*" Now I have said in myself (and I pray God to help me carry it out) I will strive after more Grace and I will seek to do what good I can now. Dear Brothers and Sisters, let that not merely be a resolution, but let us practice it, for the Holy Spirit says, "*Today.*"

II. Now I am going to turn away from you Christians to talk to the unconverted a little, and I pray that what is said may go to their hearts. TO YOU UNCONVERTED SINNERS, THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYS, "TODAY." I asked a Brother why he was not present on a certain occasion and he said, "I never got an invitation." I am afraid there are some sinners that never come to Christ because they do not get an invitation. I know that is not the case with any sinner who is in the habit of coming to *this* house. I believe Christian ministers would do well, or, at any rate, no ill if they never preached anything but invitation! There is much more to preach to advanced people of God, but still there are men who all their lives have invited men to come to Christ, and I believe they do no ill to spend their whole time in that.

Now the point in the invitation is—When is it? Somebody says, "Will you come to my house to dinner?" Well, if that is all he says, I do not come. But if he says, "I dine at half-past five," then he gives me the time of day and tells me when he wants to see me. You know if a person says, "Whenever you are going by this way I shall be glad to see you," you never call in at all. But if a man says, "I shall be glad to see you at such-and-such a time," you understand his invitation. And now the Holy Spirit puts a time to the invitation. I am not invited tomorrow, but this first of May—this sweet May day, the Holy Spirit says to me, "Come to Christ, today." And He says to you tonight through these lips of mine, "Today, even now, come seek and find every good in Jesus joined." "Look unto Him and be you saved, all you ends of the earth." The time is fixed, and the time is fixed for today!

Why did He fix *today*? Well, first, it was His that mercy fixed it. Suppose He had said, "tomorrow"? It would have been unkind to detain you in the gall of bitterness all the night. You would have had a wretched night and have said, "I shall not live through it." You would have wanted Christian people to come and sit with you and pray with you, while you were under condemnation, that you might reach tomorrow morning! But He has not said to you that you have got to wait until you are seventeen, or to you, yonder, that you have got to wait until you are thirty. Oh, no! He says, "*Today*." And then it is in wisdom that He says "today," because it is wisdom to seek the Lord at once—for otherwise the thread of life may be snapped. Have you ever noticed how much more frail our life is than glass? I have seen thin Venice glass three or four hundred years old, but I never saw a man last that time! We are frail things. A moment's touch and we are dust. The Holy Spirit therefore does not put it off unwisely, but He says, "*Today*."

And the Holy Spirit does it, too, in addition to His mercy and wisdom, out of love to holiness. He would be a partaker of our sin if He excused our living an hour in sin! He never does. If I had God's liberty to remain in sin a week, He would be a partaker in my sin. But He has bid us fly to

the fountain *now*. Lovingly and yet with a sort of sternness does He bid me come today! "Today if you will hear His voice," forsake your sin and fly for refuge.

I might mention other attributes of God which would move Him to put it, "Today," but I will not. If you are at all affected by what I have said (and I hope you may be) don't say, "Well, I will resolve to *think about my soul*." I have noticed so many people who have felt, "I'm a good fellow after all—I have made a splendid resolution, haven't I?" Just as I have seen men in commercial life head over heels in debt go to a loan society or raise a little money at their bankers, or perhaps do what is much the same thing without raising money at all—give a promissory note and say, "Well, I've paid that man!" when they have never paid him a penny, but have given him merely a bit of paper! They get on wonderfully easy because they have passed a bit of paper saying that they will pay at a certain time when they know that they never mean to do it! Resolutions are promissory notes that men give to God and nothing ever comes of them! I sometimes wish there was no "paper" in business—and certainly I wish there were no "resolutions" in religion. A resolution to repent may damn a man, but a belief would save him! A resolution to believe in Christ may only check the voice of conscience, but a belief would save! Your resolutions are of no use whatever—like draughts from Aldgate Pump—they are not worth thinking of! Oh, to have real practical obedience to Christ, for the Holy Spirit says, "*Today*."

Let me just speak further to you for a moment or two. It does seem very sweet that the Holy Spirit says, "Today." Do you know what I would do if I were in your case and you in mine? I recollect when I sought the Lord I hoped that after some months of darkness I might get light, and it was according to my hope. Now if I had to seek Him over again, I would go and say, "Lord, You have said, 'Today.' Lo, I seek You today! And shall I say, 'Today,' and You say, 'Tomorrow?' Dear Savior, I trust You today! Today speak peace to my conscience! Today apply the blood of sprinkling and give my spirit rest." I would make a plea of it if I were you—for if a man made a great feast and said to the poor, "Come today," the poor would not expect to sit shivering there to get a meal tomorrow! But they would say, "Our invitation was *today*. There is food and drink today." So, Sinner, if you will come to the Lord and say, "My Lord, my Father, You have called me today—therefore today I feel Your love to me and I pray You, today, to put my sins away as far as the east is from the west"—God will keep His word and you will find speedy rest!

Oh, some of you HAVE LIVED LONG ENOUGH WITHOUT GOD! Some of you have lived 50 years without God and long enough to be condemned! Oh, you would not like to be converted and then be of no service to your Lord at all, or only have given Him a few months of your life, would you? I pray you, think of this—the long time past which may have

sufficed you to have worked the will of the flesh and the short time that is to come. Do you know how soon you are to die? Is there any man here who is certain that he will live to see another year? When the next service is held to watch the old year out and the new year in, will you be here, or where will you be? The Holy Spirit says, "*Today*." Every hour that passes is hardening you if you are remaining out of Christ! It becomes less probable that God will meet with you. There are so many more opportunities wasted, so many more appeals thrown away. O, dear Hearers, if God made you stand on this platform and said, "I will tell you who they are that will reject your message and perish," I would say, "Good Spirit, tell me no such thing! Conceal the secret! I do not wish to know it!" I think it would break my heart to look in some of your faces and think, "That man will be in Hell and be in anguish and ask for a drop of water to cool his tongue." I could not bear to feel that it would be so! And yet I feel morally certain it will be so with some of you. Oh, I am staggered when I feel how souls come into this Tabernacle (and some of you are always here) and do not get the blessing. I pray tonight that some of us may get the blessing!

An incident occurred this afternoon. An aged minister, an excellent man, came into my vestry and shook my hand and said, "I have got this letter which I would like you to see." Well, I had many things to attend to, but he was so anxious and said, "I know you will like to see it," that I took the letter. Before I read it, he explained to me that he had a son who had made a profession of religion, but had gone aside from it, and it had pretty well broken his heart. At last, he was to go to America, and the father sent him away with a very heavy heart. The old man took off his spectacles. The letter was from his son and it said, "I went to hear Mr. Spurgeon, and I have not the slightest doubt that it has had an influence on my whole life. The text was, 'He is as a root out of a dry ground.' The sermon was divided into four parts." I remember the sermon well enough—I was suffering from great pain at the time. "The point which lasted longest was that in which he said that God had made Christ to grow up like a root, like a root out of a dry ground. He went on for 25 minutes"—(then he gave an opinion of my style which I won't read to you)—"but what surprised me most was that out of five or six thousand, he fastened his eyes on me though I was in the farthest gallery"—(the young man's name was Thomas So-and-So, the son of the Baptist minister)—"and suddenly he shouted out these words, 'There's that wild, dare-devil Tom! God means to save him and he will be a comfort to his father in his old age.'" The old gentleman, when I got to that, said, "And so he is." The letter went on, "I thought he was going to say my name. I trembled lest the people should know my name was Tom!"

Well, that cheered my heart to think of that young fellow. And I thought I would have a shot at some of you tonight—and I pray that it may go right straight through your hearts!

And now, this first of May, if you meet with God tonight, if you pray and believe in Jesus tonight, this will be your spiritual birthday! You will remember the night that Believers were baptized and that, that night Christ met with you. It is now 23 years, I think, within an hour or two, since I was also baptized on the first of May, confessing Christ in my early youth. And I will close my sermon by saying that if He had been a bad master I would have run away from Him. And if He had not kept His promises, I would not believe Him. But He has been a good Master and a dear Savior! I think it is 23 years during which I can bear an earnest testimony to the goodness and love of Christ. If you knew Him you would not live a minute without Him! "Ah," you say—"will He have *me*?" Will you have Him? That is the point! You won't have any wooing to do towards Christ. He loved sinners. He died for sinners. "Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYS, TODAY. Do you say, *Today*, too? Amen and amen!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
HEBREWS 3; 4:1.**

Hebrews 3:1. *Therefore, holy brethren, partaker of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.* "Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." What wonderful titles! "Holy brethren," made brethren in holiness and made holy in our brotherhood—"partakers of the heavenly calling"—called of God from among the worlds. Our occupation and our calling henceforth is to serve the Lord. Well, if you are holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." Think much of Him! Remember who it is you follow, with whom you are brethren! If you think little of your Leader, you will live but poor lives. Consider Him, often think of Him, try to copy Him. With such a Leader, what manner of people ought we to be?

2, 3. *Who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as also Moses was faithful in all His house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who has built the house has more honor than the house.* Moses was but a part of the house, after all—a prominent stone in the building—but Christ is the Builder! Not only the Builder of the house, but Foundation, Topstone of it! Then think much of Him. Get an high idea of Him as faithful unto God in everything. Moses kept the Law and was a good example to Israel save in some point of weakness,

but Christ perfectly carried out His Father's commission and He is worthy of more honor than Moses.

4-6. *For every house is built by one man but He that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all His house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.* "But Christ as a Son"—far higher degree—"Christ as a Son over His own house," of which He is the heir, of which He is even now the sole proprietor—"whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." None are truly Christ's but those who persevere in Grace. Men may be nominally Christ's, but they are not Christ's house unless they hold fast to the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Temporary Christians are not really Christians.

7, 8. *Therefore (as the Holy Spirit says, Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.* You are His house, give Him rest, do not provoke Him! If you belong to Him, be holy, do not grieve Him. If you are His house, be not defiled—surely He should dwell in a holy place!

9. *When your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years.* Oh, children of God, you have, some of you, been more than forty years, now, in the Lord's service! Do not vex Him. You have been long called out of Egypt and brought into the separate place in this wilderness world—be careful to be fit for the Divine indwelling.

10, 11. *Therefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known My ways. So I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest).* God grant that none of this congregation may be of that mind who, having named the name of Christ and being known as His people, continue to grieve Him one way and another—to put Him to the test by their doubts—to make Him angry by their sins. No, God grant we may be of another sort lest He should lift His hand and swear, "They shall not enter into My rest."

12. *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* Here the charge is not to the outside world but to those whom he had called, "holy brethren." He drops the word, "holy," for there are some brethren, so-called, who would not deserve that name, and to them he speaks very pointedly, "Take heed, take heed, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief." And how will that be shown? By wandering off, one way or another, away from the living God. If your God is not a living God to you in whom you live and move and have your being. If He does not come into your daily life, but if your religion is a dead and formal thing, then you will soon depart.

13, 14. *But exhort one another daily, while it is called, Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made par-*

takers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. Not otherwise. Again I say they who do not hold on and hold out are not really partakers of Christ—we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. Those that fly to this Doctrine and that, unsettled spirits, wandering stars, mere meteors of the night—these are not Christ's, but we must hold the beginning of our faith steadfast unto the end.

15. *While it is said, Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.* Twice over we are warned of this, to avoid hardness of heart. God save us from ossification of heart, petrification of heart, till we get a heart of love or a heart of stone—may God save us from this.

16. *For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.* There were two—it was a slender remnant that were faithful!

17. *But with whom was He grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?* God speaks very lovingly of the bodies of His saints, but see how He speaks of the bodies of apostates, "whose carcasses," as if they were no better than so many brute beasts, "whose carcasses fell in the wilderness."

18. *And to whom swore He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not?* Sinning and not believing seem to go together. The 17th verse asks the same question as the 18th, but the answer is different. "With them that had sinned" says the 17th verse, "to them that believed not," says the 18th verse. Lack of faith brings lack of holiness, and when we abide in the faith we abide in obedience.

19. *So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

Hebrews 4:1. *Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.* I left out the, "us," because that is inserted by the translators and should not be there. The promise is left to somebody, it does not say to us—"a promise being left of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Not come short of it but even *seem* to do so. God keep us from the very shadow of sin, from the very appearance of evil. "For unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them." In the old time that Gospel which was preached to them was preached to us—"but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." God send us this holy mixture of the hearing and the believing, to our soul's salvation, to His Glory. 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.**

“TAKE HEED, BRETHREN”

NO. 2552

**A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 16, 1898.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 23, 1884.**

***“Take heed, brethren, lest there is in any of you an evil heart
of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”
Hebrews 3:12.***

THIS message is not addressed to strangers far away, but to “brethren.” Paul wrote it to the Hebrews, who were his brethren according to the flesh. It was kind of him to call them by that name. He also writes it to all of us who are Believers in Christ, and we ought to receive his word with all the greater intensity of attention because he writes to us as his brethren. The term applies to all who are Brothers and Sisters in Christ—really so—those who are quickened by the one Spirit, made children of the one Father and going to the one heavenly Home. The Apostle would not have us begrudge this title to any genuine member of our Lord Jesus Christ’s true Church. It is not for us to read men’s hearts—we have not the Lamb’s Book of Life in our possession, so we cannot discover whether such-and-such a man’s name is really written in it, or not, but, in the judgment of Christian charity, all those who have joined themselves to Christ’s Church are our brethren—and the more we recognize that relationship, the better. To all of you, therefore, who bear the Christian name, this message comes with power, “Take heed, brethren, lest there is in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”

There are other persons who are associated with us in our congregations who do not profess, as yet, to have passed from death unto life, although they come up with us to the House of the Lord. They swell the chorus of our praise, they bow their heads with us in prayer, they are, in many respects, our fellow worshippers and they have, apparently, a warm heart towards good things, though not yet fully one with us in the highest *spiritual* sense. We will not exclude them from this message of the Apostle, for they are our brethren as men, even if they are not our brethren as Christians, and the Word of God comes to them as well as to us who are avowedly on the Lord’s side, “Take heed, brethren, lest there is in any of you an evil heart of unbelief.”

You see, then, that we are, all of us, called upon to “take heed.” The word means that we are to be careful, to be watchful. True religion is not

a thing that can be acquired by carelessness or neglect—we must take heed or we shall never be found in the narrow way. You may go to Hell heedlessly, but you cannot so go to Heaven. Many stumble into the bottomless Pit with their eyes shut, but no man ever yet entered into Heaven by a leap in the dark. “Take heed, brethren.” If ever there was a matter that needed all your thought, all your prudence and all your care, it is the matter of your soul’s salvation. If you trifle with anything, let it be with your wealth, or with your health, but certainly not with your eternal interests. I recommend all men to take heed to everything that has to do with this life, as well as with that which is to come, for in the little the great may be concealed—and the neglect of our estate may end in mischief to our immortal spirit. Certainly, the neglect of the body might lead to great injury to the soul, but if ever neglect deserves condemnation, it is when it concerns our higher nature! If we do not carefully see to it, that which is our greatest glory may become our most tremendous curse.

Brothers and Sisters, the watchword for every one of us is, “Take heed.” You are an old Christian, but “take heed.” You are a minister of the Gospel and there are many who look up to you with veneration—“take heed.” You have learned the Doctrines of Grace and you know them well—there is little that any human being can teach you, for you have been well instructed in the things of the Kingdom of God—but still, “take heed.” Yes, and if you were so near to Heaven that you could hear the songs within, I would still whisper in your ear, “Take heed.” Horses fall most often at the bottom of the hill when we think that we need not hold them up any longer. And there is no condition in life which is more dangerous than that feeling of perfect security which precludes watchfulness and care. He who is quite sure of his strength to resist temptation may be also equally certain of his weakness in the hour of trial. God grant us Grace, whatever sort of “brethren” we may be, to listen to the admonition of the Apostle, “Take heed.”

Paul means not only take heed for yourself—though that is the first duty of each one of us, for every man must bear his own burden and it becomes every prudent man to look well to the matter of his own salvation—but the Apostle says, “Take heed, brethren, lest there is *in any of you* an evil heart of unbelief.” You are to watch over your brethren, to exhort one another daily, especially you who are officers of the Church, or who are elderly and experienced. Be upon the watch lest any of your brethren in the Church should gradually backslide, or lest any in the congregation should harden into a condition of settled unbelief and perish in their sin. He who bids you take heed to yourself would not have you settle down into a selfish care for yourself, alone, lest you should become like Cain who even dared to say to the Lord, Himself, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Nothing can be more horrible than the state of mind of a man whose talk is like that of Cain, who slew his brother. “Take heed,” therefore, you who are in the Church of God, not only to yourselves, but to those who are round about you, especially to such as are of your own family!

The text naturally divides itself into an exhortation. “Take heed, brethren”—a warning—“lest there is in any of you an evil heart of unbelief.” And a description of the danger which would follow from a neglect of this warning—“in departing from the living God.” Lay up those three things in your memory and heart and may God cause them to work there for the effectual blessing of your spiritual life.

I purpose, as I may be helped of God’s Spirit, to take the text and apply it to the three classes of persons whom I indicated at the outset of my discourse—first, *to the inner Church*, the true elect, redeemed, regenerated, called, sanctified people of God. The message of the text is for you, my Brothers and Sisters! Secondly, *to the visible Church*, to all who are, I trust, as truly saved and regenerated as the first class are, but yet I have a fear that there is a mixture in the nominal Church—that there is chaff mingled with the wheat upon Christ’s floor and bad fish caught in the Gospel net along with the good ones. To all these persons I speak with great earnestness and say, “Take heed, brethren.” Then I am going to take *the whole congregation* and address the message of the text to all without exception—“Take heed, brethren, lest there is in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”

I. First, then, TO THE INNER CHURCH, God’s own chosen people—to you who are really His—the Apostle says, “Take heed, brethren.” If you dare to put yourself among that privileged company and say, “Yes, by God’s Holy Spirit I have been quickened, renewed, sealed, preserved—and I have the witness of the Spirit, Himself, within my own spirit, that I am, indeed, born of God—then to you comes the Apostolic watchword, “Take heed.”

For, first, dear Friend, *even you may fall into unbelief*. Are you not aware of that fact? Have you not been already tormented with it? I dare say, like myself, you did, at one time, indulge the idea that old Incredulity would soon die. You took him by the heels and you put him in the stocks and said to yourself, “He will never trouble me again! I shall never doubt the promise of God, anymore, as long as I live. I have had such a wonderful experience of God’s faithfulness—He has been so exceedingly gracious to me that I cannot doubt Him any more.” You remember how Mr. Bunyan says, in *The Holy War*, that, after the enemies of King Shaddai had been sentenced to death, “One of the prisoners, Incredulity by name, in the interim between the sentence and time of execution, broke prison, made his escape and got out of the town of Mansoul and lay lurking in such places and holds as he might, until he should again have opportunity to do the town of Mansoul a mischief for their thus handling of him as they did.”

Incredulity will work his wicked will upon you if he can and you must always remember that it is possible, even, for *you* to fall into unbelief—you who are rejoicing, you who have hung out all your flags and are keeping high festival—oh, tell it not in Gath! Yes, even *you* may yet be found doubting your God! May the Lord grant that you may be delivered from this evil! But it is only Almighty Grace which can keep you with

faith pure and simple and free from any tincture of doubt and unbelief. Pressure of circumstances may drive you into an unbelieving state of mind. Depression of soul, due to physical causes, may do it—the spirit often truly is willing and believing, but the flesh is weak—and it may pull you down. Association with doubters may have a similar effect. Conflict for the Truth of God may make you familiar with the poisoned arrows of skeptics and, in attempting to do them good, you may imbibe mischief from them. The Lord will preserve you from the positive, stark, black Egyptian darkness of unbelief, but there are other grades and degrees of it which you may have to endure. It is bad for a Christian to have *any* mixture of darkness with his light and to have *any* measure of doubt mingled with his faith. Yet it may be so and, therefore, the Spirit of God says to the people of God, “Take heed, lest there is in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”

Note, next, that *in proportion as unbelief gets into your heart, you will begin to depart from the living God.* I am not speaking, now, of open glaring sin—you have not fallen into that and I pray God that you never may. But, Beloved, we may have all the decencies of morality, all the proprieties of Christian conduct and yet we may be, all the while, “departing from the living God.” The moment we begin to trust in man and to make flesh our arm, we have, to that extent, forgotten Jehovah and departed from the living God. The moment our heart’s deepest affections twine about the dearest creature—be it husband, or wife, or child—we are, to that degree, “departing from the living God.” To the true Believer, in his best estate, the sweetest line that he can ever sing is that which we sang just now—

“Yes, mine own God is He.”

That is the circle which surrounds all his joy! It is the center of his soul’s highest delight. He has God for his very own! On his God he relies and towards Him he sends out the full streams of his earnest affection. Remember what the Lord wrote by the pen of the Prophet Jeremiah—*“Cursed is the man that trusts in man: and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good comes; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreads out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat comes, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.”*

Brothers and Sisters, it is easy to depart from the living God spiritually—gradually to lose that serene and heavenly frame which is our highest privilege, to forget Him who ought to always be before our eyes as the chief factor in our entire life, the great All-in-All, compared with whom everything else is but as a dream, a fleeting shadow. I bear my witness that to walk with the living God is life—but to get away from Him is death! And that in proportion as we begin to depart and put a distance

between ourselves and the great Invisible—in that proportion our life ebbs away and we get to be sickly and scarcely alive! Then doubts arise as to whether we are the people of God at all—and it is sad that such a question as that should ever be possible! We ought to live like the angel whom Milton pictures as living in the sun—in the very center of the orb of light—so near to God that we do not merely *sometimes* enjoy His Presence, but that in Him we live altogether and never depart from Him!

I remember a minister calling upon a poor old saint and before coming away he said he hoped that the Divine Father would constantly visit the sick man. But he replied, “O Sir, I do not want you to ask that the Father should merely visit me, for by these many months together He has been living with me and I have been living in Him.” So may it be with each one of you, my Brothers and Sisters! And that it may be so, give attention to the message of the text, “Take heed, brethren, lest there is in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing”—in any measure or degree—“from the living God.”

“But,” you say, “why should we take such heed about that matter? We are Believers and, therefore, we are saved.” Are you Believers? They who can trifle with heavenly things are not true Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. And if ever it becomes a thing of small importance to you whether you dwell with the living God, or not, the question may well arise in your heart, “Am I truly a Believer in Jesus Christ with the faith of God’s elect—the faith that really saves the soul?”

But, my Brothers and Sisters, if you do not continue steadfast and firm in your faith in its simplicity—if your evil heart of unbelief begins to prevail and you are turned aside from your confidence in Christ, and so begin to get away from God—*you will be great losers thereby* even if you do manage to get to Heaven, “saved, yet so as by fire.” For, first, you will lose your joy. That is no small thing. “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” The joy of the Lord is one of the means by which you are to be made useful. The joy of the Lord sweetens trial, lightens care and turns service into delight. But if you lose that joy, you are as one who travels alone in the dark and who stumbles and falls. I pray you, do not depart from the living God in any degree, for if you do so, your joy will begin to get clouded, the brightness and the warmth of it will be taken from you—and you will become faint-hearted, trembling, timorous and sad. If the evil heart of unbelief shall prevail against you, depend upon it, you will lose your joy.

Then you may be certain, also, that you will lose your assurance. Full assurance cannot exist with unholiness. One has well said, “If your assurance does not make you leave off sinning, your sinning will make you leave off enjoying assurance.” And I am sure that it is so. If we begin to look to second causes and do not trust in God, we shall then put forth our hand to some one sin or another. And when we do that, we cannot be certain that we are children of God at all! That man who feels sure of his safety and yet can play with sin and find pleasure in it, may be assured of his own damnation! I remember, in my boyhood, one who never talked

so religiously as when he was the worse for drink. And in public, before ungodly men, he used to boast of his full assurance of salvation—when he was much too far gone to be assured that he would get home in safety that night! That kind of conduct is atrocious and no one would excuse it for a moment! We know that men who talk so only proclaim their own shame to their own eternal disgrace. But do not let any of us indulge even in a measure of that kind of sin. That evil heart of unbelief will not only lead us away from a holy walk with God, but it will also take from us our assurance if it is an assurance that is worth having.

Then, next, it will take from us our fruitfulness. Dear child of God, I am sure that you do not wish to live here without doing good to others. But how can you do good if you are not, yourself, good? You cannot bring forth fruit unto holiness unless you are watered with the dew of Heaven and the sunlight of God shines upon you. And you will not have either of those blessings if you live carelessly and if you fall into an unbelieving state of mind and get away from contact with the ever-living God. If any of you have tried this kind of life, you must have become painfully aware what it is to have all the sap and juice, out of which the clusters ought to come, dried up within the tree and everything turned to barrenness because you have yourself departed from God!

These are all serious losses to a child of God. It is no light matter for you to lose joy, assurance and fruitfulness. But the evil heart of unbelief will cause you, also, to lose purity. There is a delicate bloom upon the fruit that grows in Christ’s garden, where He, as the Gardener, cultivates it with tender care. But sin comes and rubs away that bloom and spoils the fruit. If you and I fall into sin, we shall have to weep bitterly over it. We shall not be able to enjoy the high privilege which belongs to those who keep their garments unspotted from the world. Of these the Savior says, “They shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy.” I believe that, of all fortes of spiritual loss, one of the worst is to lose tenderness of conscience, quickness of apprehension when sin is near—to lose a sense of cleanness of heart and of sanctification by the Spirit of God. When those are gone, we are something like Adam when he lost Paradise, and we turn our faces back again toward that purity and cry to the Lord to restore it, as we moan rather than sing—

***“Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?”***

Take care that you do not lose it, for it will hardly be likely to be restored to you in the same degree as you had it at the first.

The child of God who wanders away also loses peace and many other attainments of the spiritual life. He is like a boy who is sent down from the top of the class—it may take him a long time to get up again. Or he is like the soldier who has risen from the ranks, but who has misbehaved himself and is, therefore, made a Private again. He who once could lead the people of God has to be very thankful that he is permitted to go into the rear rank and to follow where others lead. He who could talk for God boldly now has to sing very small and let others speak. He who used to

encourage others, now needs to be encouraged, himself. He was once strong in faith and a mighty man of valor, but now he has to use Mr. Ready-to-Halt’s crutches and to go along with the feeble ones among the pilgrims because an evil heart of unbelief has made him depart from the living God!

This brings, of course, a loss of influence with the people of God and with worldlings, too, for when a man has injured his reputation, it is not soon repaired. If he has slipped and fallen, brethren weep over him and love him, and seek to restore him, but they do not trust him as they used to do. They are some little while before they dare to follow where he leads the way. I have seen a man whose judgment was like that of Solomon, whose position in the midst of his brethren was that of a hero inciting them to daring deeds—but he has fallen and all Israel has wept over him! Perhaps there has been no shameful sin, but yet there has been an evident decline in spirituality and in force and power. The Lord has left him and great Samson, though he shakes himself as before, is fast bound in chains and his eyes have been put out. Happy will he be if, at some future day, when the locks of his hair have grown back, he shall be able to pull down the temple of the Philistine lords upon them. But so far as his brethren are concerned, he will have to be the object of loving pity rather than of joyful confidence.

Do not tell me, then, that you do not lose anything by getting into a state of unbelief and departing from God, for, in addition to all this, such a child of God loses power in prayer. It is “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man” that “avails much.” Our Lord Jesus told His disciples, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.” But disobedient children will find that the Father will turn a deaf ear to their supplication. “No,” He will say, “you would not listen to Me—neither will I listen to you,” for God has a way of walking contrary to them that walk contrary to Him.

Then there very often follows at the back of that, chastisements, heavy and multiplied. Take heed, my Brothers and Sisters, as you remember the history of David. What a blessed life, what a glorious life, is that of David until the unhappy day when kings went forth to battle, but the king of Israel went not! He tarried in inglorious ease at home and, as he walked upon the top of his palace, he saw that which tempted him to evil desire. To that ill desire he fell a prey and the man after God’s own heart became an adulterer and a murderer! Alas! Alas! All the rest of his life he travels on toward Heaven with broken bones and sorrowful spirit. At every step he limps—his prayers are sighs, his Psalms lack the jubilant notes that once made them ascend joyously unto the Lord! He is still a true man of God and, in his deep repentance, he becomes a pattern to us all in repenting of sin, but the brave joyous David is not there! And at the last, though he pleads the Covenant, he has to say, “Although my house is not so with God.” There was a great mass of heart-break packed away in those few words, more than we need to explain just now.

What a dreadful family David had! None of us have had a family like his—that was his chastisement—his own children! What a mercy it was for him that Sovereign Grace did not cast him away, for after he had uttered that deep bass note, “Although my house is not so with God,” then came the sweet assurance of faith, “Yet He has made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure, although He make it not to grow.” There came in again the note of deep sorrow mingled with his holy faith in God. O Brothers and Sisters, I have heard men say that a broken leg, when it is mended, is sometimes stronger than it was before. It may be so, but I am not going to break my leg to try the experiment! I know one who says that his arm was broken when he was a boy and that he believes it is stronger than the other one. So it may be, but I will not break my arm if I can help it! May the Lord rather keep me in His hands lest I dash my foot against a stone! There is a great deal of experience which I hope you will never have—and that is the kind of experience which comes of an evil heart of unbelief—in departing from the living God. Take heed that you never come to know that sorrow!

II. Now, in the second place, and very briefly, I want to apply my text TO ALL IN THE VISIBLE CHURCH, whether they are, indeed, God’s people or not. If you profess to belong to Christ, it is enough for my present purpose. “Take heed,” I pray you, professing Christians, “lest there is in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”

For, first, many *professors have had an evil heart*. It is not every Church member who has a new heart and a right spirit. Judas was in the Church, but he had an evil heart and was a devil. It may be so with me, my Brothers and Sisters, or with you. There are some in the Church who have no real faith in Christ. Their very heart is crammed full of unbelief, though they pretend that they have believed in Christ. I know that it is so—we cannot help observing that there are unbelievers who bear the name of Christians!

Many of these have turned aside. To our sorrow, we have lived to see it in far too many cases. They were members of Churches, but they grew weary of the good way. Nothing pleased them. The preacher who used to charm them lost all his power over them. Prayer Meetings became dull and they would rather not have anything at all to do with religion. We have known some go back to the world for no reason that they dared even to tell themselves—it was because of the fickleness of their unregenerate spirits. We have seen this happen to others when they have been strongly tempted. Satan knew their particular weakness and he assailed them there. How many professors have given way to strong drink! They would have a little and who could condemn them? But when they began by taking a little, they soon took what was not little to others—and it turned out, by-and-by, not to be little to themselves—and he who should have been a pattern of self-denial to the people of God has become a victim of intoxication!

Others have fallen through the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. A man has been tempted to get gain by dishonesty.

At first the bribe did not affect him—but it was doubled, or tripled—and then he fell. Many more have we seen very gradually turning aside. It was almost impossible to tell exactly when they left the line of strict integrity. It was only by a hair’s breadth that they turned aside, at first, but afterwards their apostasy was visible to all. Some have been frost-bitten—they have grown lukewarm and then, at last, ice-cold—and we have lost them. Some professors have been turned aside by pride. They were too rich to join with any but a “*respectable*” worldly church, or they were so learned—so *conceited* is the right word—that the plain Gospel was too inferior an article for their profound minds! Some, alas—and I fear, very many—have turned aside through poverty. We meet with cases where the visitor in the lowest haunts of degradation says that he has come across a woman in the depths of penury and with scarcely rags enough to cover her, yet she has produced a communion ticket, for in better days she was a member of the Church, but she could not get clothes quite good enough, as she thought. She fancied that she would be looked down upon if she came when poor—and so she ceased to attend the means of Grace and, by-and-by, gave up everything like a profession of religion. Oh, if there are any members of the Church of that sort, here, I pray you, if you ever do become very poor, do not go away from us because of that! And if your clothes should be all rags, I am sure that none of us will despise you! Or if there should be any who do so, I will bear the responsibility of *despising them*—but do not ever stay away from the House of God, or the company of your Christian Brothers and Sisters because of poverty!

Why, it seems to me that the less you have of earthly good things to comfort you, the more you need of Divine treasure and the companionship of Christ! And you should rather seek the society of your friends in Christ than for a moment to shun it. Yet it has been so and, therefore, I put it to all here who profess to be followers of Christ—“Take heed, brethren, lest there is in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”

III. Now I have only a very few minutes left in which to apply my text TO THOSE WHO ARE SIMPLY IN THE CONGREGATION.

There is a large number of you who come to worship with us who are only camp-followers. You are not in the regular regiments of the Lord’s Army, yet you cling to us and we cannot help regarding you with much affection as “brethren” so far as you allow that brotherhood to be true. We wish that you would make it truer, still, but we do not want any of you to perish because of your unbelief. Remember, dear Friends, that *your unbelief is an affair of your heart*. It is not an evil head of unbelief, but, “an evil *heart* of unbelief” of which the Apostle speaks. And that is what is wrong with you. You know that you believe everything that is in the Bible. You look with horror upon any heretical doctrine. You love to hear the Gospel and yet you have not received it for yourselves. I want you to give my Lord credit to think Him no liar, but a true Savior. And if He is such, then come and trust Him! You are fit to come to Him, for

your fitness lies in your *need* of Him, and I am sure you need Him. Come and do Him this act of justice—trust Him! He is so strong, so true, so tender, that if you will but commit your soul to Him, He will take care of it. If you will bring your sins to Him, He will wash them away. If you will bring your weakness to Him, He will strengthen you. If you will really come to Him, He will take you as you are at this moment, for He never cast out one who came to Him—it is not like He—He could not do it! It is no more possible for Christ to reject a sinner who trusts Him than it is for God to lie! It is contrary to the Nature of God and He cannot do what is contrary to Himself!

Come, then, and do not depart from the living God by an evil heart of unbelief. Nothing will bring you near to God but believing—and nothing can shut you out from God and from the life and light and liberty that there is in God in Christ Jesus—but your unbelief. Only trust Him! That is the whole of the matter. I pray God, of His infinite mercy, to make you "take heed, lest there is in any of you an evil heart of unbelief," which shall get such mastery over you that you shall depart, not only from the living God, but even from the ways of morality, till God shall say to you, at the last, "Depart, you cursed. You always were departing, keep on departing."

And this shall be the punishment of your sin—you shall reap it fully developed, for Hell is sin full grown! God save us from the baby, which is sin, that we may not know the man, which is Hell! God save us from the seed, which is sin, that we may not know the harvest, which is Hell! God save us from the spark, which is sin, that we may not know the conflagration, which is eternal damnation! God save and bless you, dear Friends, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
HEBREWS 3:1-16.**

Verse 1. *Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.* Oh, that He had more consideration at our hands! Consider Him—you cannot know all His excellence, all His value to you, unless He is the subject of your constant meditation. Consider Him—think of His Nature, His offices, His work, His promises, His relation to you. "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.

2. *Who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.* See how our Lord Jesus Christ condescended to be appointed of the Father. In coming as a Mediator, taking upon Himself our humanity, He "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a Servant." And being found in fashion as a Servant, we find that He was faithful—to every jot and tittle, He carried out His charge.

3. *For this Man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who has built the house has more honor than the house.* And

Moses was but one stone in the house. Though in a certain sense he was a servant in it, yet in another and, for him, a happier sense, he was only a stone in the house which the Lord Jesus Christ had built. Let us think of our Lord as the Architect and Builder of His own Church—and let our hearts count Him worthy of more glory than Moses—let us give Him glory in the highest. However highly a Jew may think of Moses—and he ought to think highly of him, and so ought we—yet infinitely higher than Moses must ever rise the Incarnate Son of God!

4. *For every house is built by some.* By someone or other.

4. *But He that built all things is God.* And Christ is God and He is the Builder of all things in the spiritual realm—yes, and in the natural kingdom, too, for, “without Him was not anything made that was made.” So He is to have eternal honor and glory as the one great Master-Builder.

5, 6. *And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firmly unto the end.* You see, then, that the Apostle had first made a distinction between Christ and Moses on the ground of the builder being greater than the house he builds. Now, in the second place, He shows Christ’s superiority to Moses on the ground that a son in his own house is greater than a servant in the house of his master. How sweetly he introduces the Truth of God that *we* are the house of Christ! Do we realize that the Lord Jesus Christ dwells in the midst of us? How clean we ought to be, how holy, how heavenly! How we should seek to rise above earth and keep ourselves reserved for the Crucified! In this house, no rival should be permitted ever to dwell—the great Lord should have every chamber of it entirely to Himself! Oh, that He may take His rest within our hearts as His holy habitation! And may there be nothing in our church life that shall grieve the Son of God and cause Him, even for a moment, to be withdrawn from us—“whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firmly unto the end.” Perseverance—final perseverance—is the test of election! He whom God Has chosen holds on and holds out even to the end, while temporary professors make only a fair show in the flesh, but, by-and-by, their faith vanishes.

7. *Therefore.* Now comes a long parenthesis.

7-11. *(As the Holy Spirit says, Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known My ways. So I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest).* Oh, that none of us, as professors of the faith of Christ, may be like Israel in the wilderness! I fear there is too much likeness—God grant that it may be carried no further! May we hear the voice of God as they did *not* hear it, for their ears were dull of hearing! May we never harden our hearts as they did, for they kicked against the command of God and rebelled against the thunders of

Sinai! May God grant that we may never test Him, as they did, when they were continually proposing to God to do other than He willed to do—something for their gratification which would not have been right and which, therefore, He did not do! Oh, that we might never grieve Him as they did, for they grieved Him forty years! He bore with them and yet they bored Him. He forgave and overlooked their errors only to be provoked by the repetition of them, for they would not know what God made very plain. His works were such that the wayfaring men might have read them, but they did not know God’s ways and, at last, He banished them from all participation in His rest. Their carcasses fell in the wilderness and they entered not into the land of promise. “Therefore”—

12, 13. *Take heed, brethren, lest there is in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* Watch over each other as well as over yourselves. Take heed lest sin hardens you before you are aware of it! Even while you fancy that you have wiped it out by repentance, petrification will remain upon your heart “through the deceitfulness of sin.”

14-16. *For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; while it is said, Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.* Not all, for there were two faithful ones. See how the Spirit of God gathers up the fragments that remain! If there are but two faithful ones out of millions, He knows it and He records it.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—42 (VERSION I), 512, 621.

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

THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN

NO. 2130

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 16, 1890.

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

***“But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today;
lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”
Hebrews 3:13.***

SIN is the greatest evil in the universe. It is the parent of all other ills. All manner of evils draw their bitterness from this fountain of wormwood and gall. If a man had every possession a mortal could desire, sin could turn every blessing into a curse. And, on the other hand, if a man had *nothing* for his inheritance but suffering and stood clear from all sin, his afflictions, his losses, his deprivations might each one be a gain to him. We ought not to pray so much against sickness, or trial, or temptation, or even against death itself, as against sin! Satan, himself, cannot hurt us except as he is armed with the poisoned arrows of sin.

Lord, keep us from sin. “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” There is no evil like the evil of sin—deliver us from it, O Lord! Alas, we are sadly prone to sin and evil has great influence over us. When I say this, I refer not only to those who are “dead in trespasses and sins,” in whom sin is the great reigning power—for they are the *servants* of sin—but I refer also to the people of God. Even we that have been born-again and are, in a measure, sanctified by the Spirit of God—even we, I say—have a fleshly nature whose tendencies are evil, whose desires draw towards sin.

How soon we slip! How much we need to be held up! How ought we daily to cry for Divine Grace lest we, also, should be “hardened through the deceitfulness of sin”! Upon that subject I am going to speak this morning, dwelling, for the most part, upon “the deceitfulness of sin.” To God’s people this is a very important matter—for in the deceit of sin lies our main danger. If sin comes to us as sin, we are swift to hate it and strong to repel it, by the Grace of God. When we are walking with God, we only need to know that an action is forbidden and straightway we avoid it—we shun the evil thing when it is plainly evil.

But when sin puts on another dress and comes to us speaking a language which is not its own—even those who would avoid sin as sin, may, by degrees, be tempted to evil and deluded into wrong. It is well when sin carries its black flag at the masthead for then we know what we are dealing with. The deceitfulness of sin is most ruinous. We have grave cause to watch and pray against secret sins, veiled sins, popular sins, fascinating sins, deceitful sins. May God grant that the words which I may now utter may set us on our watchtower and excite all our faculties to enquire diligently, lest we be “hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

Let us come at once to the center of our subject. Our first head is, *sin has a singular power to deceive*. Secondly, *its deceivableness has hardening influence upon the soul*—we may grow “hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” And, therefore, thirdly, *there is great need that this be fought against*. We must strive against our cunning enemy and resist him in many ways, one of which is mentioned in the text—“Exhort one another daily, while it is called Today.” May the Holy Spirit put power into our meditation at this hour!

I. First, then, SIN HAS A SINGULAR POWER TO DECEIVE. We have only to look back to the beginning of our race to be sure of this. Eve, in the Garden, was pure, intelligent and filled with good dispositions. Her faculties were well balanced for no original sin or natural depravity had put her mind out of order. Yet that lovely woman, without a taint upon her heart or will—perfect as she came from her Maker’s hand—was overcome by Satan who embodied in himself the deceitfulness of sin.

The serpent played his part right cunningly with the woman and soon withdrew her from her loyal obedience to the Lord God. She began to question, to parley, to argue with rebellious suggestions and after a while she put forth her hand and took of the fruit which had been forbidden. And she also gave it to her husband with her and he did eat of it. If man in his perfection was so readily deceived by sin, what do you think of yourself, fallen and inclined to evil as you are? Will not sin soon deceive you? I will even go further back than the Garden—for the serpent who was the instrument of evil in the Garden was once an angel of God!

Lucifer, the light-bearer, Son of the Morning, once stood high in the hierarchy of spirits. But sin entered into his heart and the sublime angel became a loathsome fiend! Lucifer became Satan, as prompt for evil as once he had been swift for good. If sin overcame angels, can we fight with it? If sin entangled in its thrice-accursed net even the pure spirits of Heaven, what do you think, sons and daughters of fallen parents—will you not soon be deceived by it unless the Grace of God shall make you wise unto salvation? Since your hearts are deceitful and sin is deceitful, you are in peril, indeed!

The deceitfulness of sin will be seen in several points to which I call your attention. *Its deceit may be seen in the manner of its approaches to us*. Sin does not uncover all its hideousness nor reveal its horrible consequences—but it comes to us in a very subtle way offering us advantages. Intellectually, it comes with a question, or an inquiry. Ought we not to question and to enquire? Are we to receive everything implicitly? The question is, however, full often the thin end of the wedge which Satan drives home in the form of carnal wisdom, doubt, infidelity and practical atheism.

The practice of sin may be encouraged by a doubt as to its penalty. “Yes, has God said?” is the speculative question which is meant to undermine the foundations of godly fear in the heart. How tiny a drop of sinful distrust of God’s Word will poison all the thoughts of the soul! Sin frequently comes as a bare suggestion or an imagination—an airy thing spun of such stuff as dreams are made of. You do not think of committing the

fault, nor even of talking of it—but you think of it pleasantly and view it as a thing bright and lustrous to the imagination. The thought fascinates and then the spell of evil begins its deadly work—thought condenses into desire and desire grows to purpose—and purpose ripens into *act*.

So slyly does sin come into the soul that it is there before we are aware of it. I have known a sin insinuate itself by the way of the repulsion of another sin. A man has wasted his substance in profligacy—and by way of repentance in later days he becomes a miser—greedy, wretched, living only for himself and his hoard. So have I seen the publican reform and develop into a Pharisee. The pendulum went sadly far in this direction and now, to make amends, it swings too far the other way. The shivering fit follows upon the burning heat—it is but the same fever of sin in different phases. A man will fly from pride to meanness, from moroseness to jollity, from obstinacy to laxity. Thus the shutting of one gate may open another and one sin may crawl in as another creeps out.

You set all your guards to keep the northern border and the enemies come up from the south, taking you unawares. You pursue a virtue till you hurry into a vice and shun one evil so much that you fall into a worse. Sin has a way of adapting itself to us and to our circumstances. One man is of a sanguine temperament and he is tempted to speculate, to gamble and ultimately to become dishonest. Another man is of a sober frame of mind and he is tempted to be melancholy, disputatious, peevish, rebellious against God. To the young man sin will come with fire for passions which are all too ready to blaze. To the old man sin will come with the chill frost of parsimony, or the frost of sloth, or the canker of care.

Sin's quiver has an arrow for the rich and a dart for the poor—it has one form of poison for the prosperous and another for the unsuccessful. This master fisherman in the sea of life does not use the same bait for all sorts of fish but he knows the creatures he would capture! If sin finds you poor as an owlet, it will tempt you to envy, or to steal, or to doubt God, or to follow crooked ways of gain. If sin finds you abounding in riches, it will follow quite another tack and lure you on to self-indulgence, or to pride, or worldly fashion.

Satan knows more about us than we know about ourselves—he knows our raw places and our weak points—and in what joint there was a breakage in our youth. Sin, like the north wind, finds out every cranny in the house of manhood and comes whistling in where we fondly dreamed that we were quite screened from its intrusion. Sin creeps towards us as a lion stealthily draws near to his prey, or as the enemy creeps towards his victim without sound of foot or stir of twig. Beware of the sin which, like Agag, comes delicately! Watch well against the temptation whose words are smoother than butter but inwardly they are drawn swords.

Next, *sin is deceitful in its object*, for the object which it puts before us is not that which is its actual result. We are not tempted to provoke our Maker, or willfully cast off the authority of righteousness. We are not invited to do these things for their own sake. No, no—we are moved to do evil under the idea that some present *good* will come of it! The man thinks, when he yields to sin, that he shall enjoy an additional pleasure or

shall gain an extra profit—or at least shall avoid a measure of evil and escape from something which he dreads. He does the wrong for the sake of what he hopes will come of it. In brief, he does evil that good may come! Thus, the seemingly good is dangled before the short-sighted creature, man, as the bait before the fish.

In every case, this object is a piece of deceit. Evil does not lead to good, nor sin promote our real profit—we are fooled if we think so. Yet, in most cases the man does not commit the sin with the design of breaking the Law of God and defying his Maker, but because he fancies that something is to be gained—and, in his judgment, he better understands what is good for him even than the Lord God by whose wisdom he ought to be guided. Just as in the case of the old serpent, the argument is, “God refuses you that which would be for your advantage and you will be wise to take it.” The arch-deceiver insinuated that God knew that if Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit their eyes would be opened and they would be as gods—and therefore, to keep them under subjection, He denied them the charming fruit.

Perhaps Milton’s idea is right. “See what this fruit has done for me,” says the serpent. “I, a mere reptile, am now able to speak and argue like a man! Go, take the fruit and you, as men, will rise to the rank of God.” Thus are we lured and limed like the silly fowls of the air! The object set before us is delusive—the reward of sin may glitter, but it is not gold—but yet, as gold, it thrusts itself upon our erring judgment. This deceitfulness of sin is present everywhere—the street, the house, the private room—all come to be enchanted ground unless we dwell in God. Are we not often caused to think that we could make at least a little gain, or do a measure of extra good if we might just to a small degree quit the strait and narrow way? This is falsehood, base as Hell.

Sin is deceitful, next, in the names it wears. It is very apt to change its title. It seldom cares for its own true description. Fine words are often used to cover foul deeds. We read, at times, in the newspapers, of gentlemen who have an alias, or possibly half-a-dozen—in such cases there is always a reason for it. Sin has many names by which it would disguise its real character. In his, “Holy War,” Mr. Bunyan tells us that Covetousness called himself by the name of Prudent-Thrifty. Lasciviousness was named Harmless-Mirth and Anger was known as Good-Zeal. Nowadays anger is known as “proper spirit,” and infidelity is “Advanced Theology.”

Almost every sin, nowadays, has a pretty name to be called by on Sundays and silver slippers to wear in fine society. The paintbrush and the powder box are much used upon the wrinkled countenance of sin to make it look fair and beautiful. The fig leaf is not only worn on the man’s body—sin itself puts on the apron. To hide the nakedness of sin is the great desire of Satan, for thus he hopes that even the better sort may fall in love with a decent evil though they might have shunned an odious transgression. Alas, how sadly prone are men to call things by false names! Even those who profess to be godly men—when they are indulging sin—will speak of it as though it were no raven, black as night, but a dove, with its wings covered with silver.

I knew one who often drank to excess but he spoke of himself as obliged to “take a little for his health.” He was not drunk, but excited. And if he shouted uproariously, it was caused by his convivial temperament. This dear innocent only took “a glass” or a “drop” and yet one might not be further off the truth if he described him as taking a barrel or a hog’s-head! Diminutives are names of endearment and men would not talk of their sins as such little things unless they loved them dearly. Today, “worldliness” is “being abreast of the age.” False doctrine is described as “advanced thought.” Indifference to the Truth of God is liberality; heresy is breadth of view. Yet names do not alter things! Call garlic perfume and it remains a rank odor. Style the fiend an angel of light and he is none the less a devil. Sin—call it by what names you may—is still evil, only evil and that continually.

Hear how our God cries concerning it—“Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate!” Lord, save us from the wolf in the sheep’s clothing! May we have Grace to see through the mask of sin, detect its loathsome face and turn from it with full purpose of heart! *Sin also shows its special deceitfulness in the argument which it uses with men.* Have you never heard its voice whispering to you, “Do not make much ado about nothing. Is it not a little one? There is no need to boggle over so small a matter as this. It is not right, but still it is a mere trifle, unworthy of notice. Do it! Do it!” My Friends, can there be such a thing as a *small* sin? The point of the rapier is small and for that reason the more deadly. That which grieves the Lord cannot be a little evil. To pluck the fruit from the forbidden tree was, of all actions, the simplest—yet it brought death into the world with all its train of woe—and that which seems most trifling may have infinite consequences following in its track.

Then sin will raise the question, and say, “Is this really wrong? May we not be too precise? Are not the times changed? Do not circumstances alter the command?” Sin is great at raising difficult points of reasoning. “Are there not some points of view in which this act may be allowable, though from more usual points of view it must certainly be regarded as an unhallowed thing?” He that wills to do wrong is eager to find a loophole for himself. He that has begun to seek an excuse is on the border of the enemy. He that is loyal to the core and true to his King in everything makes short work of questions, for when he is not sure that a thing is right he leaves it alone.

The deceitfulness of sin creates in the mind a tendency to do evil because others have done so. We have known people so eager to excuse sin that they cry, “Look at Noah, at David, at Peter,” and so on—as if the fault of others were an excuse for them. It is true that these men did wrong and were restored—but they suffered greatly. That is a vile mind which eats up the sins of God’s people as men eat bread. Arguing for the indulgence of sin because of the failings of good men is not only folly, but wickedness! What if a man was saved who had taken poison? Shall I, therefore, drink the deadly draught?

Some time ago a person sought to blow out his brains with a pistol. He still lives—and shall I, therefore, put a revolver to my forehead? Yet such

detestable arguments often suffice to mislead men through the deceitfulness of sin! Beware of the witchery of sin! With feeble minds the argument is, "Beware lest you be singular. As well be out of the world as out of fashion. When you are at Rome you must do as Rome does." Weak minds are plentiful and to these, to be thought singular and odd is a thing to be dreaded and shunned—they must be in the swim though the water should be of the foulest. To them it would be next door to a crime or a calamity to be out of fashion. To some of us this is no temptation for we prefer to quit the crowd and walk alone—but to the bulk of people this is a mighty argument and yet a most deceitful one.

Sin has often whispered in the vain minds of men, "This action might be very wrong for other people, but it will not be evil in you. Under your present circumstances you may take leave to overlook the command of God. True, you would severely condemn such a sin in another, but in yourself it is quite another matter. Things must be left to your superior discretion. You who do so much that is good and are such a remarkable person, you may venture where others should not."

Sin will also plead with you that your circumstances are such that they furnish you with an excellent justification—you cannot do otherwise than make an exception to the general rule under the singular conditions in which you are now placed. It tempts you to put forth your hand unto iniquity, arguing that it is the quick way and the only way out of your present difficulties. This is specious reasoning—yet are men foolish enough to be swayed by it. Sin will also flatter a man with the notion that he can go just so far and no farther and retreat with ease. He can tread the verge of crime and yet be innocent. Another person would be in great danger—but this self-satisfied fool thinks that he has such power over himself and that he is so intelligent and so experienced—that he can stop at a safe point. This moth can play with the candle and not singe its wings. This child can put its finger between the bars and yet never burn himself.

I know you, my self-contained Friend, and I know your boast that you can stand on the edge of a cliff and look down upon the foaming sea and while other people's heads grow giddy, your brain is clear and your foot is firm. You may try the experiment once too often! The deceivableness of sin is such that it makes those most secure who are most in peril. Oh, for Grace to watch and pray lest we, also, become "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin"!

This deceivableness is further seen in the excuses which it frames afterwards. It needs a great general to cover a retreat and conduct it to a safe conclusion. Sin knows how to furnish a rear-guard for itself lest it be assailed by the troops of repentance. To screen the conscience from regret is one of the efforts of deceitful sin. "Ah," says the man to himself, "I did wrong but what can you expect of poor flesh and blood?" To hear him talk you would think him a pitiable *victim*, rather than a blameworthy offender! With a sham tear in his eyes he lays this flattering unction to his soul—that he is weak but not wicked—he was compelled to do wrong! He deludes himself into thinking he would not have thought of it had there

not been a necessity. Beware of aptness in the making of an excuse! And above all beware of casting the blame of sin on Providence, or on God.

Sin will also add, "And, after all, though you were wrong, yet you were not so bad as you might have been. And considering the temptation, you may wonder at your own moderation in transgression. On the whole, you have behaved better than others would have done." Thus the sinner will weave a garment out of the cobwebs of his sins. Self-righteousness is poor stuff when it can be fashioned even out of our faults! Such is the deceivableness of sin, that it makes itself out to be praiseworthy.

Then sin will suggest, "Well, you can soon make up for lost time. Live nearer to God and be more useful! And then your little divergence will soon be made up." It even ventures coarsely to propose a price for pardon. "Give something extra to a good cause and make amends for offenses." The old Popish idea of purchasing pardon by some extra piece of religion comes up in many forms. "Ah!" you say, "surely nobody hears such deceitful talk!" Has sin never whispered all this to you? If it has not, then it has taken another way of deceiving you—but deceive you it will unless Almighty Grace shall keep you ever on the watch against its devices!

The deceitfulness of sin is seen again in its promises. We shall not go far into sin without finding out how greatly it lies to us. It promises liberty and the man who yields to it becomes a slave. It promises light and the man gives up the old faith to go after the new light and before long the darkness thickens about him into sevenfold midnight! Sin promises elevation of mind and spirit and before long the wretch is worldly, pleasure-loving, groveling, superstitious! Sin keeps none of its promises, save only to the ears. Holiness is truth—but sin is a lie. Sin is false through and through—it promises pleasure and it leads to misery—it feigns a Heaven, but inflicts a real Hell.

Once more, *sin is deceitful in the influence which it carries with it.* At first sin cultivates a free and easy bearing and it says to the sinner, "Don't think. Leave consideration to older heads."—

***"I count it one of the wisest things
To drive dull care away."***

The guilty one goes on day after day without looking to his way. His happiness lies in carelessness. He hurries downward to destruction and it is enough to him that the road is easy. With a laugh and a joke he puts off serious things till tomorrow. He is a free-thinker and, to a large extent, a free actor, too—those who are near him often find him making too free. Yes, but he is being deceived and by-and-by, when conscience wakes up, he will find it so. Out of his own mouth will come the death warrant of his jollity.

In these more serious days, what does sin say?—"You have provoked the Spirit of God and there is no mercy for you. Do not listen to the preacher of the Gospel, it is impossible that you should be forgiven. Your case is hopeless—you are finally condemned—and there is no changing the verdict. As for the promises of God, they are not for such a sinner as you are. You are given up to despair and you will, without doubt, perish everlastingly." This is the opposite pole of sin's deceiving, for, though it

has changed sides, it is still deceiving. Despair is as much a sin as profanity—to doubt God is as truly a crime as to take pleasure in uncleanness.

Thus will sin, by any means, by all means, endeavor to keep men under its tyranny so as to work their ruin. Let no man in this place think that he cannot be deceived—he is already deluded by his pride. Let no woman dream that she has come to such a state of perfection that she cannot be deluded by sin—she is even now in imminent peril. We have a cunning enemy and we have no wit of our own wherewith to match the subtlety of the old serpent and the deceitfulness of sin. Unless we call in the help of Him who is “the Wisdom of God,” we shall be led as an ox to the slaughter and perish in our folly.

II. I want you, in the second place, to notice very carefully that THIS DECEITFULNESS HAS A HARDENING POWER OVER THE HEART—“Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” How does that come about? Partly through *our familiarity with sin*. We may look at hateful sin till we love it. It has the eyes of a basilisk and its gaze is fascinating. At first you are shocked by sin—but if you see it every day it will cease to distress you. Persons who have never heard profane language are greatly grieved as they go down the streets of London—and yet even good people who live in certain localities come to hear it without horror.

This is one of the sad influences of sin—it makes the heart rough by contact with it. The lion in the fable alarmed the fox when first he saw him but soon he ceased to tremble at him and at last made him his companion. Familiarity with sin makes the conscience dull and at length deadens sensibility. *Security in wrongdoing* also leads to this kind of hardening. A man has been dishonest—he is found out and he suffers for it. I could almost thank God, for now he may cease from his evil course. But one of the greatest curses that can happen to a man is for him to do wrong with impunity—he will do it again and again and again and he will proceed from bad to worse.

I am always glad when I hear of a young gambler whose pocket is cleaned out at his first venture—if he has any wit he will quit the way of destruction—at least we hope he will. But if he gains at first he will stake more and more and become a confirmed gamester. It is just so with sin. Its deceitfulness is assisted by a man’s being able to go a little further and a little further without any great hurt appearing to come of it—and so the heart grows used to the increasing heat and is hardened to it—until he can live in a furnace heated seven times hotter by sin.

Sinners descend by an inclined plane till they find themselves far down in the abyss and think it impossible to rise out of it. Then there follows on the back of this insensibility to sin *an insensibility to the Gospel*. I think I could mention some who come here who once trembled under the Word—but they do not tremble now. They still come because they like to pick out the few smart bits the preacher may say, or the witty anecdotes that he may let fall—but nothing touches their conscience or arouses their fears.

If there is a sermon that is likely to disturb them, they play the part of the adder which will not hear. I think with sadness, of one, who, in reply

to the remark, "What a terrible sermon we had this morning!" answered, "I never pay any attention to that kind of thing. I only listen to him when he is comforting us." Hypocrites get into such a condition at last, that if all the Apostles were to preach to them and Jesus Himself were to denounce the judgments of God, they would simply make an observation upon the style of the address, or remark that it was a very searching discourse. But as for themselves being moved, they are so "past feeling" that nothing comes home to them. The devils believe and tremble—these profess to believe every Truth of God—but trembling is not for them.

In time comes in the help of *unbelief*. When a man begins to doubt his Bible, to doubt the Atonement, to doubt the wrath to come and so on, there is generally a cause for it—and that cause is not always intellectual, but moral and spiritual. "There is something rotten in Denmark." I mean something rotten in the *heart* and this makes something rotten in the head. Very naturally a man does not like that Truth of God which does not like him. That which condemns him he tries to condemn. A Truth makes him uneasy and so he tries to doubt it—and the tone of society soon helps him to discover a stale objection which will answer his turn and enable him to set up in business as an unbeliever. Then he ceases to feel the preaching, for, as a rule, we only feel under the Gospel in proportion as we believe it to be true! And if we persuade ourselves that it is all a myth, or a fiction, we have made a pillow for our guilty heads.

One of the worst points about hardening in sin is companionship in it. Evil men seek other evil men to be their associates. Oh, how many are ruined by company! We do not wonder that they get no good on Sundays when we know where they spend their week evenings. Who are their chosen companions when they take their pleasure? Many a man will do, when connected with others, what he himself would never have thought of doing. Inasmuch as others are of the same mind, he joins hand in hand with them and encourages *himself* in evil. The daring, the looseness, the profanity, the infidelity of abler persons tempt the weak-minded to venture where they would have been afraid to go. So the deceitfulness of sin which led the man to seek evil company leads to the further hardening of his heart by that company.

O Sirs! Your hearts are every day either softening or hardening! The sun that shines with vehement heat melts the wax, but it, at the same time, hardens the clay. The effect of the Gospel is always present in some degree—it is a savor of life unto life—or a savor of death unto death—to all who hear it. You cannot listen to my plain rebukes and earnest warnings without growing worse, if you do not grow better! Pray God to give you a lively conscience and when you have it, do nothing to deaden it. It is much better, even, to be morbidly sensitive and fear that you are wrong when you are right than to grow careless as to whether you are right or wrong—and so to go on blindly till you fall into the ditch of open sin.

"Do professing Christians ever do this?" Do they *not* do it? Is not this the heartbreak of pastors, the dishonor of the Church, the crucifying of our Lord afresh? O Lord, preserve us from it, lest any one of us is hardened through the deceitfulness of sin!

III. Now I conclude by a practical observation that THIS DECEITFULNESS OF SIN AND THIS TENDENCY TO BECOME HARDENED NEED TO BE FOUGHT AGAINST. How is it to be done? I will not keep to my text just now, but enlarge the scope of my discourse by taking in the context. The way to keep from hardness of heart and from the deceitfulness of sin is *to believe*. We read, “To whom swore He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”

Believe!—Faith *has* saved you. Believe!—Faith *will* save you! Believe!—Faith has brought you to Christ! Believe!—Faith will keep you in Christ! Believe against the present temptation. Believe against all future deceitfulness of sin. You shall find that just in proportion as faith grows strong, the deceit of sin will be baffled. Under the strong light of a living faith you see through the sinful imposture and you no longer put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! But under the half light, the twilight, the darkness of a questioning, half-hearted faith you cannot see the true color of an act and you are easily deceived. Believe in the living God and in His righteousness and in your obligation to serve Him—then sin will appear exceeding sinful. Believe in Christ, who took your sin, and bore it in His own body on the Cross—then sin will be seen in its black colors. Believe in the Holy Spirit, by whose power you can be delivered from the deceitfulness of sin and as you believe, so shall it be unto you and you shall stand fast where the half-Believer slides.

The next advice I would give is this—if you would be saved from the deceitfulness of sin *confess it* honestly before God. It is necessary to lay bare your heart before the living God. Though sin calls itself by another name, you call it by its right name. When you have sinned, make no excuses for yourself, but with weeping and lamentation cry, “Lord, I have sinned.” Tell the Lord all the evil connected with your transgression and try to spy out and humbly learn the villainy of your heart, the falseness of your nature, the crookedness of your disposition and the loathsomeness of your corruptions.

Pray that sin may appear *sin*—it cannot appear in a worse light. Thus you shall not so readily be caught in its traps and lures. It lays its snares in the darkness—keep yours eyes open. It digs its pits and covers them most cunningly—look before you put your foot down. Tread very cautiously, for your way is full of pitfalls. When you have sinned, then confess the great evil of your wickedness—for this humble penitence will be not only your way to pardon—but to future purity. Oh, that the Spirit of God may teach you this! Again, *cultivate great tenderness of heart*. Do not believe that to grieve over sin is lowering to manhood—indulge yourself largely in sweet repentance. Do not think that to yield to the power of the Word and to be greatly affected by it, shows you to be weak—think, rather, that this is an infirmity in which your strength lies.

As for myself, I would be swayed by the Word of God as the ripe corn is swayed by the summer wind. I would be by God’s Spirit as readily moved as the leaves of the aspen by the breeze. I would be sensitive to the gentlest breath of my Lord. God grant that we may have a conscience quick

as the apple of an eye! A conscience seared as with a hot iron is the sure prelude of destruction. God save us from a heart over which sin has cast a coat of callous insensibility!

But the text, itself, says, "*Exhort one another daily,*" from which I gather two lessons. First, hear exhortation *from* others and, secondly, practice exhortation *to* others. I have known people of this kind, that if a word is spoken to them, however gently, as to a wrong which they are doing, their temper is up in a moment. Who are they that they should be spoken to? Dear Friend, who are you that you should *not* be spoken to? Are you such an off-cast and such an outcast that your Christian Brothers and Sisters must give you up? Surely you do not want to bear that title!

I have even known persons take offense because the Word has been spoken from the pulpit too pointedly. This is to take offense where we ought to show gratitude! "Oh," says one, "I will never hear that man again! He is too personal." What kind of a man would you like to hear? Will you give your ear to one who will please you to your ruin and flatter you to your destruction? Surely you are not so foolish! Do you choose that kind of doctor who never tells you the truth about your bodily health? Do you trust one who falsely assured you that there was nothing the matter with you when all the while a terrible disease was folding its cruel arms around you?

Your doctor would not hurt your feelings. He washes his hands with invisible soap and gives you a portion of the same. He will send you just a little pill and you will be all right. He would not have you think of that painful operation which a certain surgeon has suggested to you. He smirks and smiles until, after a little while of him and his pills, you say to yourself, "I am getting worse and worse and yet he smiles and smiles and flatters and soothes me. I will have done with him and his little pills and go to one who will examine me honestly and treat me properly. He may take his soap and his smile elsewhere."

O Sirs, believe me, I would think it a waste of time—no, a crime like that of *murder*—to stand here and prophesy smooth things to you! We must all learn to hear what we do not like. The question is not, "Is it pleasant?" but, "Is it true?" We ought to be able to take a loving exhortation from our Brothers and Sisters. We must do so if we are to be preserved from the deceitfulness of sin. Another eye may see for me what I cannot see myself. Reproofs should be given with great tenderness but even if they wound us, we must bear them. "Let the righteous smite me. It shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil." Let us be thankful that some saints love us well enough to give themselves the pain and trouble of exhorting us.

And then let us endeavor, if the Lord is keeping us by His Grace, to "exhort one another daily." We are not to scold one another daily, nor to suspect one another daily, nor to pick holes in one another's coats daily—but when we see a manifest fault in a Brother, we are bound to tell him of it in love—and when we do not see any fault of commission, but the Brother is evidently growing lax and cold, it is well to stir him up to greater zeal by a loving exhortation. Wisely said, a word may save a soul

from declension and sin. A good fire may need a little stirring. The best of Believers may grow better by the communications of his friends.

Alas, we do not care enough for the souls of our Brethren! If we thought more carefully of others, we should probably think more carefully about ourselves. "Exhort one another daily." Watch over your own children, your wife, your husband and then do not forget your neighbors and fellow workmen. Cry to God to give us union of spirit with all the Lord's chosen and may that union of spirit be a living and loving one! We would not be frozen together in chill propriety, but we would be *welded* together at a white heat of loving earnestness, so as to be truly one in Christ Jesus! Let us take for our motto, "One and all." Let us maintain individuality by each one watching against personal sin and merging individuality in the commonwealth of saints by each one laboring for the sanctification of his brother.

But, oh, dear Friends, after all that I have said, he is well kept whom the Lord keeps! Commit yourselves unto the Lord—the Holy Spirit who is able to keep you from stumbling. Let us, by a renewed act of faith, hand ourselves over to the Lord Jesus that He may save us. You that have never done so, I pray that you may be moved to it. You *cannot* keep yourselves. Up till now you may have been virtuous, sober, honest, respected and beloved—but will it last? Take a life assurance policy upon your moral character by going to Jesus Himself and asking Him to renew you in heart and soul, by His Spirit, that you may be in Christ Jesus and in Him may abide forever.

If you have been greatly deceived by sin, yet come to Jesus now! He can undeceive you and undo the damage you have suffered. Trust in Him, who is the faithful and true Witness, to deliver you from all falsehood and sin and to keep you true to the end. The Lord bless these words of mine, which, however feeble, have been earnestly meant for your good, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Hebrews 3.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—916, 649, 619.**

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A WARNING AGAINST HARDNESS OF HEART

NO. 620

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 19, 1865,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“But exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you
be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”
Hebrews 3:13.***

THE children of Israel, in their coming out of Egypt and in their forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, represented the visible Church of the living God—not the secret and elect body of the redeemed—but the professing company of the outward Church. They were very prone to the great sin of unbelief. They believed in God after a fashion while they saw His wonders, but the moment they were brought into straits or difficulties, they at once began to doubt the power of Jehovah and to cast off all reverence for His authority. Therefore they fell into another sin which at last fastened on them so as to become a part of their nature—they became stiff-necked, obstinate, rebellious, perverse and hard of heart.

They would not learn, although their lesson-book had miracles for its pictures. Their hearts became so hard that albeit they saw all the great things which God did for them, they despised the pleasant land and were ready at times for the sake of the flesh-pots of Egypt, to wear again the yoke of Pharaoh and to die the inglorious death of slaves. Such, too, are the great sins of the Christian Church—unbelief the root—and obstinacy the fruit.

Brothers and Sisters, if we know our own hearts we must confess that unbelief is a sin which does very easily beset us and that our obstinacy may well provoke the Lord to anger. We rejoice in God while the rocks run with rivers and while the daily manna drops about our tents. But when the fiery serpent bites us, or the wells are bitter, or our comforts are in any way interfered with, we begin to distrust and to suspect the faithfulness of God. And as the result of this, there is an obstinacy about us which often inclines us to stand out against the plain precepts of God, because, in the judgment of our unbelief, obedience might lead us into trouble and disobedience might make our path smooth.

Oh that it were not so! It is sadly true that God's people are liable to be overtaken by the worst of sins! Egypt itself did not produce worse sins than those which provoked the Lord to anger in the camp of Israel. And to this day the Church has some in it who defile her with all the sins of the world. I do not mean to insinuate that the Church of God is not infinitely to be preferred to the world in character—God forbid that I should slander the fair bride of Christ—she is as much superior to the world as the curtains of Solomon excel the smoke-blackened tents of Kedar!

But who dares deny that there are specimens to be found of the worst of sins occurring among the best of men? Just as in the most carefully tended garden there will spring up here and there some of the most nox-

ious weeds—not that the weeds are permitted to smother the whole garden and kill the flowers—but that their coming while men sleep is an indication of what the soil is. And it is a plain manifestation that although the garden is very different from the piece of waste ground on the other side of the wall, yet it differs not in nature—but owes all its superiority to the culture of the farmer! Even so, the saints owe all their excellence above the very chief of sinners to the guardian care and Omnipotent Grace of the great lover of souls.

It seems, dear Friends, that it is really necessary to warn God's people, although they have received the new nature and are partakers of the adoption, against being hardened in heart through the deceitfulness of sin. But there is a machinery provided by which the saints may be preserved from this great evil. "Exhort one another daily, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

We will talk together thus this morning. First, we shall dwell for a season upon the hardening effect of sin upon men, whether saints or sinners. Then we shall show the peculiar power by which sin hardens, namely, through its deceitfulness. Then we will consider the remedy which we are to use with others—"Exhort one another daily." But what if we should be diseased ourselves with this same hardness of heart? Then it will be necessary for us to have a few words concerning what to do for ourselves if we have to complain of a growing insensibility of Spirit, as I am afraid some of us may most justly do.

I. First, then, dear Friends, THE HARDENING CHARACTER OF SIN. This is matter of experience. The first sin which came into the world hardened man's heart in a most terrific manner so that he dared to excuse himself and even to charge God as being indirectly the author of his sin, by giving him the woman! No sooner had Adam tasted of the forbidden fruit than a stony hardness came upon his moral nature. The heart of sensitive flesh was suddenly petrified and became hard, unfeeling stone.

He no longer shrank from the thought of sin, but tried to hide himself from the Presence of his best Friend. He felt his nakedness in some degree but that which made him naked he did not lament or even confess before his God. He would never have been content with an apron of fig leaves if he had known the full measure of his degradation. His unborn children in that dread hour participated in his fall and are now born into the world with a stone in their hearts. Man's heart, naturally, is like that of Leviathan, of which the Lord says, "It is as firm as a stone, yes, hard as a piece of the nether millstone."

The lower stone of the two in the mill was always chosen on account of its peculiar hardness. Still, hard as the heart is by nature, it may grow harder by practice and by association with sin, even as Zechariah writes of sinners in his day, "Yes, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the Law" (Zech. 7:12). There is no doubt whatever that living among sinners has a hardening tendency upon men. You cannot walk about in this great lazar-house without receiving some contagion, though you were pure in heart. Unless you had the absolute perfection and Godhead of Christ Jesus to protect you, the Prince of this world would make you his prey. It were hard to dwell in so foul a world as this without contracting some impurity.

Those black coals which fill this earthly cellar—if they will not burn us—will at least blacken us. When so many fires of sin are pouring forth their smoke, the whitest of linen cannot escape the falling ash. If “the thought of foolishness is sin,” and we have Divine authority for so judging, then even to *think* of sin exercises a polluting influence. Can I read a description of another man’s sin without getting my heart hardened? I question if reading the daily reports of crime in the police news is not a very fertile cause of sin. Great crimes usually produce their like in congenial winds and even in the purest hearts their recital cannot but have an injurious effect.

The tree of knowledge of good and evil bears dangerous fruit—it were well if we restrained our curiosity—and left foul deeds alone, unknown, unread by us. What good can come from turning over the foul dunghill of crime? Let those traverse our sewers whose business it is to do so. Is it not better for the most of us to keep out of them? Those who are called in Providence to deal daily with the coarser sins had need to set a special watch over themselves lest they fall by little and little. Let me here remark that the sins of God’s people are peculiarly operative in this manner.

If I see a drunk intoxicated, I am simply shocked at him—but I am not likely to imitate his example. But if I see the same vice in a man whom I respect and whose example has up to now been to me the guide of my life, I may be greatly grieved at first, but the tendency of my mind will be to make an excuse for him. And when one has succeeded in framing a plausible excuse for the sin of another, it is very natural to use it on one’s own behalf.

Association with inconsistent Christians has been the downfall of many young Believers. The devil delights to use God’s own birds as a decoy for his nets. “I could not have thought it,” says the young Christian, “that men whom I esteemed as saints would have acted so.” “Well, well,” is the next reflection, “if these are good men and go to Heaven and yet act so badly, then I need not be so precise.” And thus, by a course of reasoning which sin makes as easy as casting up accounts by a ready reckoner, we arrive at the conclusion that perhaps what we avoided as a sin may have been no sin at all! And we therefore indulge in it without stint and step by step come down to the level of this evil generation.

He who handles edged tools, is apt to cut his fingers and none the less so because the knife is made of the best steel. Let us walk warily among men like a man with naked feet when going over thorny ground, lest our hurt be grievous. I am fearful that even preaching against sin may have an injurious effect upon the preacher. I frankly confess, my Brethren, that there is a tendency with those of us who have to speak upon these themes to treat them professionally, rather than to make application of them to ourselves. And thus we lose our dread of evil in some degree—just as young doctors soon lose their tender nervousness in the operating room.

We are compelled in our office to see ten thousand things which at first are heart breakers to us. In our young ministry, when we meet with hypocrisy and inconsistency, we are ready to lie down and die. but the tendency in after years is to take these terrible evils as matters of course. Worldliness, covetousness and carnality shock us most at the outset of our work—is not this a sad sign that even God’s ministers may feel the hardening effect of sin? I daily feel that the atmosphere of earth has as

much a tendency to harden my heart as to harden plaster which is newly spread upon the wall. And unless I am baptized anew with the Spirit of God and constantly stand at the foot of the Cross—reading the curse of sin in the crimson hieroglyphics of my Savior's dying agonies—I shall become as steeled and insensible as the mass of professors already are.

I cannot enter at length into the whole matter, but let me trace the gradual process of hardening of heart which may take place in a measure in a true Christian—but in its *full extent* in the mere professor whose religion lacks the inward vital principle. You must understand that the hardening of a tender conscience is a gradual process, something like the covering of a pond with ice on a frosty night. At first you can scarcely see that freezing is going on at all. There are certain signs which a thoroughly practiced eye may be able to detect as prognostics of ice, but the most of us would see nothing. By and by, there is ice, but it would scarcely support a pin. If you should place a needle upon it ever so gently, it would fall through.

In due time you perceive a thin coating which might sustain a pebble and before long a child trips merrily over it and if old Winter holds his court long enough, it may be that a loaded wagon may be driven over the frozen lake, or a whole army may march without fear across the stream. There may be no rapid congealing at any one moment and yet the freezing is complete enough in the end. Apostates and great backsliders do not reach their worst at one bound. The descent to Hell is sometimes a precipice—but far oftener a smooth and gentle slope. It were hard to find out in the worst of men exactly when they were utterly given up to judicial blindness. It is often a long and laborious process by which conscience is completely seared.

This dreadful work usually begins thus—the man's first carefulness and tenderness departs. When you were first converted you felt afraid to put one foot down before another for fear you should go astray. You scarcely ever ventured from your house without an anxiety to be kept by the Grace of God. You used to pray in the morning with great ardor and earnestness that not a thought might be awry, not one single word amiss. And, when business was over at night you felt uneasy lest in anything, however trivial, you might have injured your profession and grieved the Spirit of God.

Well do I recollect when I was the subject of excessive tenderness—some people called it “morbid sensibility.” How I shuddered and shivered at the very thought of sin which then appeared exceedingly sinful. I would to God I could always feel as I then did! O Believer, your new-born character was then white as the lily and the smallest grain of dust would show upon it! Your life was bright and shining and the least speck could be discovered and you, yourself, were like the sensitive plant—the slightest touch of sin sent a thrill of horror through every fiber of your soul. But it is not so now, at least not to the same admirable degree.

It may be you can hear talk to which formerly you would have closed your ears. You can tolerate sins which once you would have shunned as though they were deadly serpents. Your walk is somewhat careless now—great sins you avoid right heedfully—but secret sin gives you little or no concern. The departure of that blessed sensibility of soul which marks the new birth is one very serious mark of declension. It may not seem a great

evil to have less abhorrence of evil, but this truly is the egg from which the worst mischief may come. Hear me attentively, O my Brothers and Sisters to whom this message is directed—as I rebuke you in the words of the Savior in the Revelation—“Nevertheless, I have something against you, because you have left your first love.”

The next distressing sign of growing hardness is increasing neglect or laxity of private devotion without any corresponding shock of the spiritual sensibilities on account of it. The daily prayer will become shorter and shorter, if not irregular. Occasionally the period allotted to the reading of the Word will be given to business or worldly pleasure and perhaps frequently forgotten and neglected. It may perhaps have happened at the first that on some occasion we could not conveniently read the Scriptures according to our desire and our prayers were necessarily shortened. But then we sought to make up for the loss at the first opportunity and we felt like men who, having been cut short at their meals, must eat the more freely next time.

But now I am afraid these things become common with some professors and they scarcely care to invent an excuse for their slackness in Divine things. O what poor pleas do some men offer for deserting their closets! How unjustly may unread Bibles accuse those *pretenders* to Divine Grace who treat them so ill! Alas, Brothers and Sisters, we may look each other in the face and few of us can plead, “Guiltless.” Divine Spirit, help us to awake out of sleep and to shake off this deadly lethargy!

Another symptom of increasing callousness of heart is the fact that hidings of the Savior’s face do not cause that acute and poignant sorrow which they produced in former times. Ah, my soul recollects when she walked in the full blaze of Jesus’ love—when the very thought of His turning His face away seemed like the chill blast of winter nipping the summer flowers of my soul. Then I sang—

***“Your shining face can cheer,
This dungeon where I dwell.
‘Tis Paradise if You are here,
If You depart, ‘tis Hell.”***

I have sometimes walked in darkness and have seen no light. And I confess deep shame and profound sorrow that I have occasionally been half indifferent whether Jesus shone forth or not.

The spouse who fondly loves her husband longs for his return if he is absent. A long protracted separation from her mate is a semi-death to her spirit—and so with souls who love the Savior much. They must see His face—they cannot bear that He should be away upon the mountains of Bether and no more hold communion with them. A child that is full of love to its parent cannot endure a frown. An angry pat is heavy—a stroke cuts to the very heart. A reproaching look, a glance of rebuke, an uplifted finger will be grievous to good and loving children who fear to offend their tender father and are only happy in his smile.

Oh, Beloved, it was so once with you! A text of Scripture, a threat, a touch of the rod of affliction and you went to your Father’s feet, crying, “Show me why You contend with me.” Is it so now? Are you content to follow Jesus afar off? Content to be a wanderer from your Father’s house? Can you contemplate suspended communion with Christ without alarm? Can you bear to have your Beloved walking contrary to you because you

walk contrary to Him? Have your sins separated you and your God, and is your heart at rest? O my beloved Brothers and Sisters, let me affectionately and even tearfully warn you—it is a grievous token of hardness of heart when we can live contentedly without the present enjoyment of the Savior's face!

Still further, when the soul is hardened to this extent, it is probable that sin will no longer cause such grief as it once did. Brother, you remember how you humbled yourself before God with many fears when in your former days you felt that you had made a slip in your conversation? You could not sleep that night. Even that precious promise, which you tried to lay hold of, could hardly quiet your agitated mind. You bemoaned yourself most piteously, crying out upon your bed, "I have dishonored the Lord that bought me! I have been false to my profession and my love to Jesus!"

Your spirit had no rest even the next day, nor could time assuage your bitterness of grief. It was only when the Savior had, by His sweet consolations and the application of His precious blood, effectually purged your conscience that your soul at last had rest. My Brother, it may be you have lately sinned far worse than you did then, but you do not smart half so severely. Your life is not so pure as it once was, but still your heart is quite as peaceful, for an evil spirit whispers, "Peace, peace," where there is no peace.

Dr. Preston tells us of a professor who on one occasion was found drunk. And when much depressed on account of his folly, the devil said to him by way of temptation, "Do it again, do it again," for said he, "the grief you feel about it now, you will never feel any more if you commit the sin again." Dr. Preston says that the man yielded to the temptation and from that time he never did feel the slightest regret at his drunkenness and lived and died a confirmed sot, though formerly he had been a very high professor. Take special heed of the second sin if you have already fallen into the first, for that second fall may most effectually prevent your repenting and returning to the right way—the habit will take you as in an iron net and hold you fast to be dragged down with other hypocrites like you to the lowest depths of Hell.

It is a sad sign of coming declension, no, of decline already come, when we can talk of sin lightly, make excuses for it, or make jokes about it—when we can see it in others without sorrow—and in ourselves without the greatest shame. The next step in this ladder, down, down, down to destruction is that sin, thus causing less grief, is indulged in more freely. The man had fallen the first time—the second time he deliberately lies down. The first time he was overtaken in a fault—the second time he overtakes the fault and runs after the sin. The first time he was a victim—the second time he is most willingly given up to it.

The first time he drank the cup by mistake, or by a kind of compulsion—but the second time he comes to the feast like that of Ahasuerus, where none compel and yet he rejoices to be a ringleader in rioting. First he sipped, but now, like the ox, he drinks by the bucketful. At first he carried only a spark in his bosom, but now he bears a whole brazier of burning coals and cries that it is sport. The man may not be ripe enough yet for outward sins under the immediate eye of the world—the probability is

that he keeps his iniquities private. He eats the bread of sin in secret. He drinks, but no one calls him a drunk because it is done at home.

He commits lust, but no one charges him with it because he carefully conceals his tracks and indulges himself only when he is out of sight of his fellows. He robs in business, but no one can detect it. Perhaps even the ledger does not show it—there is a particular way of making ends meet in dishonesty by which a tradesman may be a gross thief and continue to be so and yet by putting a gloss on matters, can maintain his repute and be considered honest. Into such a state of heart I fear that even some of God's children may for a time, be suffered to fall—but the far greater probability is that those who descend so low are *hypocrites* and know not the Grace of God in truth. I pray God we may never prove by experience how nearly an heir of Heaven may become like a child of wrath.

After this there is still a greater hardening of heart—the man comes to dislike rebukes. He has sinned so long and yet he has been held in such respect in the Christian Church that if you give half a hint about his sin, he looks at you with a sharp look as if you were insulting him. He is not to be talked to or spoken with—he has been taken for a flaming professor so many years that he is not to be suspected now. You may rebuke the sins of the congregation and he will be gratified if you do not make too particular an application. You may declaim against his sin in public, but woe unto the friend who shall be daring enough to give a private admonition.

The more a man loves his sin and needs rebuke the more heartily will he hate the person who, with the best of motives, lays it at his door! Mark this word—if this hardening work goes on, the day comes at last to such a man that the Word of God loses all effect upon him—whether he reads it or hears it, it ceases to be an accusing voice any longer. He rather finds a song of lullaby in it, and rocked in the cradle of his sin he sleeps on to his own eternal ruin. You say, “Can a child of God come as far as this?” I believe not, my Brothers and Sisters, but I am speaking now of professors *at large*. These *professors* have, at last, learned to sleep over the mouth of Hell and dream of Heaven while damnation is denounced upon them.

I fear that some here are as easy under the thunders of God's Law as the blacksmith's dog under the sound of his master's hammer with the sparks flying about him. Some of you have heard the Gospel so long and have made a profession of being saved so long, that being still unconverted there is now little hope for you! The Gospel has no power over you—you know it so well and love it so little. If your character could be photographed, you would not acknowledge it. If we preach against hypocrisy, hypocrites say, “Admirable! Admirable!” If we deal out threats against secret sin, secret sinners feel a little twinge, but forget it all and say—“An excellent discourse.”

They have hardened their neck against God's Word! They have made their brows like flints and their hearts adamant stones and now they might just as well stay away from the House of God as not! There is but little hope that the Word will ever be blest to them—their soul has become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. And yet would I have them keep from the means of Grace? No, for with God nothing is impossible! The Sovereign Grace of God may yet step in and He who has power to heal may yet in the mighty majesty of His love speak to the heart of stone and

make it gush forth with rivers of repentance like the rock in the wilderness of old!

II. We come, in the second place, to notice THE PECULIAR POWER WHICH LIES IN SIN TO HARDEN THE HEART. It is the *deceitfulness* of sin. The heart is deceitful and sin is deceitful. And when these two deceitful ones lay their heads together to make up a case there is no wonder if man, like a silly dove, is taken in their net! One of the first ways in which sin deceives the professor is by saying, "You see no hurt has come of it. The thing is hid—nobody has mentioned it to the Church officers. It is not known among the members. In fact, nobody has heard of it—you may as well enjoy yourself as not. You are not doing any mischief—if there is anything wrong it is confined to yourself."

"Really," says Sin, "I cannot see that you are any the worse. You preached quite well last Sunday. You prayed quite well at the Prayer Meeting and as far as the family altar is concerned, there was not much difference there. Evidently sin has not hurt you—do it again! Do it again!" You must not forget that the immediate results of sin are not always apparent in this world, and that if hardness of heart is not apparent it is all the more real—for if a man could perceive the hardness or his own heart it would be pretty good evidence that it was somewhat softened.

Then Sin will whisper next, "This would be sin in other people, but it is not in *you*. You see you were placed in a peculiar position. There is indulgence for you which could not be accorded to other men—you are young," says Sin, "nobody could accuse you if you did go a little rashly to work—if you were an older professor it would be very wrong." Then if it is an old man who is to be deceived, Sin will cry, "You must take care of yourself! You need more indulgence than others." If a man is in private life, Sin will then suggest, "It does not matter in you—it would be wrong in a deacon, or any other Church officer—but nobody knows it in your case."

If it is some person in high repute, then Sin whispers, "Your character is so well established it will bear it." There is a way in which you can look at things and see them as they are not. Sin knows how to use the distorting glass so that a man will turn round on this side and condemn his fellow for a sin and call him some terrible name—and then he will turn to the other side and commit the same sin himself! And, like the adulterous woman in the Proverbs, he will wipe his mouth and say, "I have done no wickedness."

Sin, if it cannot deceive in this way, will beguile its victim by insinuating, "Now this is a dangerous thing for others to do. But in your case, you have so much prudence and have acquired so much experience that you can stop when you reach a certain point. I know," says Sin, "young So-and-So was ruined by frequenting such-and-such places, but you may go in and out of the same doors because you have so much discretion. It would be dangerous to expose your son to such a temptation, and of course you would not like the Church to know that you go there. But really, you are a person so well established and you know the world so thoroughly, that you may do without the slightest hurt what others may not even dream of."

It is a great and grievous lie, as we ought to know, that sin can ever be touched without injury, but yet this suffices for many—"I will go to the verge of the precipice. I will look down. I will get the delicious feeling of the

sublimity of danger and then will go back. I will mix with bad company sufficiently to know its evils. I would not go over the line for all the world—I shall be sure to stop just on this side of it.” Such boasters remind one of that simple story of the lady who wanted a coachman. When three applied, she had them in one by one. “Well,” she said to the first, “How near can you drive to danger?” “Madam,” said he, “I believe I could drive within a foot without fear.” “You will not do for me” she said.

To the second she said, “How near could you drive to danger?” “Within a hair’s breadth, Madam,” said he, “and yet, you would be perfectly safe.” “You will not suit me,” she said. The third came in and when asked the same question “How near could you drive to danger?” he said, “Please Ma’am, I never tried. I always drive as far off as ever I can.” Such should the Christian act. Some, through the deceitfulness of sin, are always testing how near they can go to the edge so as not to fall over. How near they can sail to the rock and not dash upon it. How much sin they can indulge in and yet remain respected Church members. Shame on us, that any of us should be guilty of such tampering with that accursed thing which slew the Lord of Glory!

Again, sin will sometimes have the impudence to say, “It is very easy to repent of it. If you have once plunged into the mire, you can at any time see the evil of it and you have only to repent and straightway there is forgiveness.” This vile traitor is even dastardly enough to take the Doctrines of Grace and turn them into a reason for sin. The old serpent hisses out, as none but the devil dares do, “God will not cast you off! He never casts away His people. He can soon visit you in mercy and lift you up to the highest state of spirituality! Though you may have fallen into the lowest condition of degradation, you run no risks as others would for the eternal purpose of God is engaged to keep you from final perdition and therefore you may drink the deadly thing and it shall not hurt you. You may tread upon serpents and they shall not bite you.”

“Their damnation is just,” says the Apostle, of those who use the Doctrines of Grace as an argument for licentiousness. The child of God scorns the thought of making the love of God a reason for sin! When a little boy was tempted to steal from an orchard, the others said to him, “You may safely do it. Your father is so fond of you that he will not beat you.” “No, no,” said the little fellow, “that is the very reason why I would not go a thieving, for I should grieve my father who is so kind and so good to me.” Yet the deceitfulness of sin is such that it will turn the strongest motive for holiness into an argument for rebellion against God!

My dear Friends, I feel the weight of this subject pressing down on my own heart. And for that very reason I cannot bring out these Truths of God as I would desire, so as to make them flash into your faces. But I do feel that it must be true of some of you who make a profession of religion, that sin, through its deceitfulness, is tampering with your spirits, trying to make you traitors to God—seeking, if it possibly can—to pervert your mind from hatred of sin and from true love to Jesus, Christ.

III. I pass on, however, to hint at THE REMEDY WHICH IS PROVIDED IN THE TEXT FOR US TO USE WITH OTHERS. “Exhort one another,” and we are told when to do it—“daily,” and when to begin to do it—“while it is called today.” Doubtless many professors would be saved from gross sins

if mutual exhortation were more commonly practiced in the Churches of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

This duty belongs *primarily* to the pastor and to Church officers. We are set in the Church to see after the good of the people and it is our business both in public and in private, as far as we have opportunity, to exhort daily. And especially where we see any coldness creeping over men. Where there begins to be a decline in the ways of God, it is our duty to be most earnest in exhortation. The duty belongs to you all, too, "Exhort one another daily." Parents should be careful concerning their children in this matter. You act not the part of a true father unless you see to it your son is in church membership.

Upon the slightest inconsistency your children should receive a gentle word of rebuke from you. You matrons in Israel—you are not true mothers of the Church unless you look after the young sisters to keep them out of sin. Sunday school teachers, this is peculiarly your work with regard to your own classes. In this Church so many have been brought out of the school into the Church, that I may insist the more earnestly upon this duty. Watch over your children, not only that they may be converted, but that after being converted they may be as watered gardens—no plants withering—but all the Graces of the Spirit coming to perfection through your care.

Here is work for the elders among us. You whose grey heads betoken years of experience and whose years of experience ought to have given you wisdom and knowledge, you may use the superiority which age affords you to offer a word of exhortation, lovingly and tenderly, to the young. You can speak as those of us who are younger cannot speak—for you can tell what you have tasted and have handled. Perhaps you can even tell where you have smarted by reason of your own faults and follies. All of you, without exception, whether you are rich or poor, see to each others' souls! Say not, "Am I my brother's keeper?" but seek your brother's good for edification.

I do hope there will be a larger degree of sociality among the members of this Church than ever, although up to now I have had no cause of complaint. Some churches never can practice mutual exhortation because the members do not know each other. The members are lumps of ice floating about—huge blocks of ice without connection with one another. It ought not to be so—the very fact of Church membership, drinking of the same cup, eating of the same bread, it seems to me, entitles every man to admonish and to be admonished. No, it makes it the imperative *duty* of every such person to see that he cares for the soul of his fellow.

I would not abolish social distinctions, God forbid! They must ever exist, I believe, at least till the Lord comes. But in the Church of God, membership and brotherhood should, at least when you come together here, override all social distinctions. And as in Cromwell's army, the private might often be heard around the campfire talking to the major and the captain taking it upon himself to rebuke the colonel—so should it be among us. We should feel that we are one in Christ Jesus—that while we regard distinctions among men in civil life, yet in spiritual things we so care for each other's good and so desire the edification of the entire body of Christ that we watch over one another carefully and prayerfully—and exhort one another daily.

In such a Church as this there is peculiar need of it. What can we, a handful of Church officers, do among three thousand of you? If you do not exercise oversight over one another, what can be done? I thank God the duty is not altogether neglected, but I would stimulate you to a greater diligence in the exercise of it. You know of someone, perhaps, who is backsliding—do not tell anybody else—go privately to him. You know of a Sister whose spiritual life is in a decline. Do not talk to your neighbors, or even, at first, communicate with us about it—labor to get your own heart right and then seek to restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, remembering yourself lest you also be tempted.

If we do not do this, we shall as a Church suffer great dishonor. It is unavoidable in so many but that we should be troubled with some hypocrites. How can our Church be kept right, instrumentally, except by much watchfulness? We do not wish to be dishonored. We do not desire by great falls to grieve the name of Christ. Then let us watch over one another. It is so pleasant and so blessed to restore a Brother from the error of his ways that I can offer you no greater reward than these two—to screen the name of Christ from shame—and to have the pleasure of saving a soul from death and covering a multitude of sins.

IV. Lastly, SUPPOSE THIS TO BE THE CASE WITH ANY ONE OF US, WHAT THEN? We cannot very well, as a rule, ask a Brother to exhort us when we feel conscious of insensibility, although it were well if some dear friend could be trusted to give us, every now and then, a solemn admonition. Some of us are in such a position that we are not very likely to be exhorted—we are keepers of the vineyard and have none who would take upon themselves to admonish us.

Our enemies, however, very ably supply the lack—for they often tell us very profitable, but very unpleasant truths which do us a deal of good and they are never restrained by any fear of hurting our feelings. We have great reason to thank God for some men's enmity—it is the only way in which they could serve us. Failing this—and private Christians miss this bitter medicine—what is to be done? Suppose we have begun to falter? What is to be done? Shall I say, "Suppose?" Come, pass the question round, dear Friends. Is it not true with too many of us that we are growing careless and insensible?

Do I not hear some honest hearts cry, "There is no supposition in the case, we have already gone back"? Public services to some of you have grown dull compared with what they used to be and yet the preacher is the same! Prayer Meetings you scarcely attend, or if you are there, your hearts are not on fire with vehement longings after your God. Private prayer drags heavily. Bible reading is almost given up. Communion with Christ is becoming a thing of the past. Holy joys and Divine ecstasies are things which you have read of and heard about—but do not yourselves enjoy! May it not be so with you!

I feel, sometimes as if were I cut in my heart with a sword, I would bless the sword, so long as I could but smart and bleed under it. Oh it is a horrible thing, an accursed thing, to abide in a state of insensibility! Oh, for heartbreaks! To have a heart broken thoroughly would be a blessing! Yes, to be driven to despair might be an enviable thing rather than not to feel at all! I will not, therefore, say, "Suppose," but I will say it is so with a great many! Then what had we better do? My Brethren, let us labor to feel

what an evil thing this is—little love to our own dying Savior—little joy in our precious Jesus! Little fellowship with our spiritual and well-beloved Husband, our Lord, our covenant Head.

Be ashamed and be confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel! Cover your faces, Brothers and Sisters, and let boasting be put away. Put on sackcloth! Heap ashes on your heads! Hold a true Lent in your souls, while you sorrow over your hardness of heart. Do not stop at sorrow! Remember where you first received salvation. Go at once to the Cross. There, and there only, can you get your spirit quickened. There hangs the Savior! There was life in Him ten or twenty years ago, when you first looked. There is life in Him still!

If your experience should seem to you to have been a delusion and your faith to have been presumption, Christ is a Savior still! He came into the world to save sinners—and if you are not a saint—you are a sinner! Go to Him as such. Let us, my Brethren, begin again! Let us go to the starting point. Let us lay again the fundamentals. Let us sing—

***“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Your blood was shed for me,
And that You bid me come to You,
O Lamb of God, I come!”***

No matter how hard, how insensible, how dead we may have become—let us go again in all the rags and poverty and defilement of our natural condition and throw ourselves flat on our faces before His mighty Cross!

“With all my sin and all my hardness of heart,” let the Believer say, “I do believe that Jesus died for me.” Let him clasp that Cross! Let him look into those listless eyes! Let him bathe in that fountain filled with blood—this will bring back to him his first love! This will restore the ancient holiness of his faith and the former tenderness of his soul! To you who think that you never were converted and probably never were—who have grown very hard and fear you never could by any possibility melt in repentance—I give this exhortation, and O, may the Holy Spirit enable you to obey it:

Come to Jesus you vilest of men! Laboring ones, heavy laden ones, come to Jesus! Black, foul, filthy, hard-hearted ones, come to Jesus! He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. We are not in Hell yet! The iron door has not grated on its hinges! The dread bolt has not yet slid into its socket! There is hope—for there is life. There is hope—for there is a promise! There is hope for there hangs the Savior—there is hope for me, for you, for both of us—if we go humbly to the Mercy Seat and take Christ to be our All in All! God help us to do it for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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A PERSUASIVE TO STEADFASTNESS NO. 1042

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 29, 1872,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning
of our confidence steadfast unto the end.”
Hebrews 3:14.*

HOW is it possible for the preacher to say too much about faith, or to extol this Grace too highly! It is of vital importance, not at one stage of the Christian's history only, but throughout the whole of his career—from his setting out even till he reaches the goal where faith is turned to sight. By faith we begin the life of obedience to Christ, and by faith we continue to lead the life of holiness, for, “the just shall live by faith.” This is the point of honor and of safety with all the just—the justified ones. The whole compass of their well-being, though it takes in the sternest sense of duty and the highest grant of privilege, is to simply believe, to rely implicitly, and to confide cheerfully in their Covenant God.

The beginning of their confidence is a hopeful sign. Time will test its value. The result of that profession has yet to be shown. Therefore it is necessary that the beginning of their confidence should be held fast, steadfast even unto the end. When we begin in the Spirit we do not proceed with a hope to be made perfect in the flesh. We do not start with justification by faith and then look for perfection by works. We do not lean upon Christ when we are little children and then expect to run alone when we are men—we live by drawing all our stores from Him, while as yet we are naked, and poor, and miserable. When most enriched by His Grace, we still have to say and delight to say it, “all my springs are in You.” Faith at the beginning and faith at the close. Faith all the way through is the one important matter.

A failure in this, as we observed in our reading, shut Israel out of the promised land. “They could not enter in because of unbelief.” Unbelief is always the greatest mischief to the saints, hence they have need to watch earnestly against it. Faith is always the channel of innumerable blessings to them—they ought, therefore, most watchfully to maintain it. We shall have to show the value of faith while we try to open up the text before us, in which I see, first, a high privilege—“we are made partakers of Christ.” And secondly, by implication, a serious question—the question whether or not we have been made partakers of Christ. And then, in the third place, an unerring test—“We are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.”

I. First, then, here is A VERY HIGH PRIVILEGE. “We are made partakers of Christ.” Observe that the text does not say, “we are made partakers *with* Christ.” That would be true—a very precious Truth, too, for we are joint-heirs with Christ—and because all things are His, all things are

ours. Christ holds for us the entire heritage of the faithful as our Representative, and as we are made partakers with Him in the Father's favor and in the world's hatred—so we shall be partakers with Him in the Glory to be revealed, and in the bliss which endures forever and ever. But here we have to do with our being partakers *of* Christ, rather than our being partakers *with* Christ.

Neither does it say we are made partakers of rich spiritual benefits. That is a fact which we may greet with thorough trust and hearty welcome. But, dear Brothers and Sisters, there is more than that here. To be partakers of pardoning mercy. To be partakers of renewing Grace. To be partakers of the Adoption. To be partakers of Sanctification, preservation and of all the other Covenant blessings, is to possess an endowment of unspeakable value! But to be made “partakers *of* Christ,” is to have *all* in one! You have all the flowers in one posy, all the gems in one necklace, all the sweet spices in one delicious compound! “We are made partakers of Christ”—of Himself!

“It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell,” and we are made partakers with Him of all that He is ordained to be of God unto us—“wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” We are partakers of Him! This is a privilege that no tongue can ever utter, no thought of finite mortal can ever grasp! But ah, it would need more time than we can afford and far more spiritual teaching than we profess to have attained, to dive into this great and profound utterance, “We are made partakers of Christ.” Still, as we stand spell-bound on the margin, let us venture to sail out just a little upon the surface of this ocean of goodness and of grandeur.

We are made partakers of Christ, Beloved, when, first of all, by faith in Him we procure a share in His merits. Sinful and sad—covered with transgressions and conscious of our shame—we came to the fountain filled with His blood. We washed in it and were made white as snow. In that hour we became partakers of Christ! Christ is the Substitute for sin. He suffered the penalty due from the unjust, for whom He died, for the violated Law of God. When we believe in Him we become partakers of those sufferings, or rather of the blessed fruit of them. The fact of His having borne what we ought to have borne becomes manifest to us.

We present the memorial thereof at the altar of God, the throne of the heavenly Grace, in prayers and professions and in spiritual worship. The blood pleads our cause. The blood of Jesus, which speaks better things than that of Abel, intercedes for mercy, not for vengeance. By its rich virtue, its *real* value, its *vital* merit, it puts our sins forever to death and lays our fears forever to rest. Oh, how blessed to be a partaker of Christ, the sin-atonement Sacrifice—to stand before God as a sinner that deserves nothing but damnation in himself, and yet knows by precious faith that—

**“Covered is my unrighteousness,
From condemnation I am free.”**

—that I am a partaker of the meritorious Sacrifice of the great High Priest, who, having once offered one Sacrifice forever, now sits down, His work being done, at the right hand of God! What a privilege is this!

Moreover, we are partakers of Christ, inasmuch as His righteousness also becomes ours by imputation. We are not only freed from sin through His Atonement, but we are rendered acceptable to God through His obedience as our responsible Surety. We are “accepted in the Beloved.” We are justified through His righteousness. God sees us not marred in the likeness of the first Adam who sinned, but He sees us in Christ, the second Adam, remade, redeemed, restored, arrayed in garments of Glory and beauty, with the Savior’s vesture on, as holy as the Holy One. He sees “no sin in Jacob nor iniquity in Israel.” When Jacob learns to trust in the Messiah and Israel hides behind his Representative, the Lord our Righteousness, Jacob ceases to wrestle, for he prevails and Israel stands in honor, for he is a prince with God! Blessed, thrice blessed, are they who are partakers of Christ in His righteousness!

After we are thus saved from sin and righteousness is imputed to us by faith, we further become partakers of Christ by living upon Him, feeding on Him. The sacramental table represents our fellowship. Though it does no more than *represent* it, it represents it well. At that table we eat bread and we drink wine—and the body is thus fed, typifying that through meditation upon the Incarnate Christ our soul is sustained—and by remembering the passion of the Lord, as the wine cup sets forth His blood, our spirits are comforted and revived and our hearts are nourished. It is not that the bread is anything or the wine anything, but it is that Christ is *everything* to us.

He is our daily bread. His Atonement makes glad our heart—makes us “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” Brethren, you know what it is to feed upon Jesus and what satisfying food it is! When nothing else can give your soul rest and peace, remembering the Incarnate God will do it—a study of the suffering Savior will bring the refreshment and consolation you need! Jesus Christ, when He is our food, makes us to be partakers of Himself. But, is there not a doctrine concealed here of deeper significance? The union of Believers with Himself was among the latest of all the revelations which our blessed Lord, when on earth, made known to His disciples. With a parable He showed it, and without a parable He declared it plainly. Every true child of God is one with Christ.

This union is set forth in Scripture by several images to which we will just refer, but upon none of which can we just now enlarge. We are one with Christ and partakers of Him as the stone is cemented to the foundation. It is built upon it, rests upon it, and together with the foundation goes to make up the structure. So we are built into Christ by coherence and adhesion—joined to Him and made a spiritual house for the habitation of God by the Holy Spirit. We are made partakers with Christ by a union in which we lean and depend upon Him. This union is further set forth by the vine and the branches. The branches are participators with the stem, the sap of the stem is for the branches. It treasures it up only to distribute it to them. It has no sap for itself—all its store of sap is for the branch. In like manner we are vitally one with Christ, and the Grace that is in Him is for us. It was given to Him that He might distribute it to all His people.

Furthermore, it is as the union of the husband with the wife, they are participators the one with the other. All that belongs to the husband, the wife enjoys and shares with him. Meanwhile she shares himself, no, he is all her own. Thus it is with Christ. We are married to Him—betrothed unto Him forever in righteousness and in judgment, and all that He has is ours, and He, Himself, is ours! All His heart belongs to each one of us. And then, too, as the members of the body are one with the head—as they derive their guidance, their happiness, their existence from the head—so are we made partakers of Christ. Oh, matchless participation!

It is “a great mystery” says the Apostle. And, indeed, such a mystery it is as they only know who experience it! Even they cannot fully understand it—far less can they hope to set it forth so that carnal minds shall comprehend its spiritual meaning. The day comes when we shall be partakers of Christ to the highest and uttermost degree that symbols can suggest, prophecy foretell, faith anticipate, or actual accomplishment bring to pass! For, albeit, though of all that our Lord Jesus Christ is in Heaven we have a reversionary interest today by faith, we shall have a share in it by actual *participation* before long. Partakers of *Christ*! Yes, and therefore with Him partakers in destiny!

When He shall come His holy ones shall come with Him. That He has risen from the dead is the earnest of their resurrection. At the day of His appearing they shall rise and participate in the fruition of His mediatorial work. Then, in the judging of the world, in the destruction of all His spiritual foes, in the great marriage-day when the bride shall have made herself ready and He shall drink of the new wine in the kingdom of His Father, and in all else that is to come—too glorious to be described except by symbols like those of the Apocalypse—His people shall participate with Him, for this honor have all His saints! All right and all might, all that can extol or delight, all that forever and forever shall contribute to the glory of Christ shall be shared by all the faithful, for we are partakers not only with Him, but *of* Him—of Christ—therefore of all the surroundings of Glory and honor that shall belong to Him!

The language of the text reminds us that none of us have any title to this privilege by nature. “We are *made* partakers of Christ.” From our first parentage we derived a very different consequence. We all of woman born became partakers of the ruin of the first Adam—of the corruption of humanity—of the condemnation common to the entire race. Oh, to be *made* partakers! This is a work of Divine Grace, of Sovereign Omnipotent Grace—a work which a man cannot sufficiently admire—and for which he can never be sufficiently grateful. “We are made partakers of Christ.” This is the Holy Spirit’s work in us, to rend us away from the old wild olive and to graft us into the good olive—to dissolve the union between us and sin and to cement a union between our souls and Christ—to take us out of the Egyptian bondage and the Egyptian night in which we willingly sat, and to bring us into the liberty and the light wherewith Christ makes His people free and glad!

This is work as grand and godlike as to create a world! Let the Lord’s name be magnified by each one of us if, indeed, we have been made par-

takers of Christ. If—I say—and that, “if,” leads me to the second point I proposed to consider.

II. The privilege of which we have spoken suggests A SOLEMN SEARCHING QUESTION. Are we made partakers of Christ? O Beloved, many think they are who are not! There is nothing more to be dreaded than a supposititious righteousness, a counterfeit justification, a spurious hope. Better, I sometimes think, to have no religion than to have a false religion. I am quite certain that the man is much more likely to be saved who knows that he is naked, and poor, and miserable than the man who says, “I am rich and increased in goods.” It were infinitely better to take the road to Heaven *doubting* than to go in another direction *presuming*.

I am far better pleased with the soul that is always questioning, “Am I right?” than with him who has drunk the cup of arrogance till he is intoxicated with self-conceit and says, “I know my lot. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places—there is no need for self-examination in my case.” Brothers and Sisters, be assured of this—all men are not partakers of Christ! All baptized men are not partakers of Christ! All Churchmen are not partakers of Christ. All Dissenters are not made partakers of Christ! All members of this Church are not made partakers of Christ! All ministers, all elders, all bishops are not made partakers of Christ!

Yes, all Apostles were not made partakers of Christ! One of them, Christ’s familiar friend who kept the little purse which held all the Master’s earthly store, lifted up his heel against Him, betrayed Him with a tender treacherous kiss and became the son of perdition! He was a *companion* of Christ, not a *partaker* of Him! Am I made a partaker of Christ? Multiply the question till each individual among you makes it his own. In this congregation there are various classes. There are probably some here who are only hearers—hearers *about* Christ, not partakers *of* Christ. It is one thing to hear *about* a banquet—it is quite another thing to be fed at it. It is one thing in the wilderness to hear of rippling streams, and quite another to stoop down and drink the cooling draught—one thing for the prisoner by night to dream of liberty, or by day to read of roaming free through his native country—another thing to get rid of the chains!

It is one thing to hear of pardon, another thing to be pardoned. It is one thing to hear of Heaven, another thing to go there. O my dear Hearers! Some of you are as familiar with the Gospel as you are with the house you live in, yet though you live in the house, you never live in the Gospel and I fear you never will! You hear it, and hear it, that is all. God grant you may not have to hear of your hearing in another world where it shall be laid down among the chief of your sins that you were of those who, when they heard did provoke—provoke because they rejected what they ought to have received.

Others go farther than hearing. They become professors. May I remind you, and I would not judge anyone harshly—certainly no man more harshly than I would myself—it is one thing to *profess* to be a partaker of Christ and another thing to be *made* a partaker of Christ. I may profess that I am rich and be all the while a bankrupt, a dishonest bankrupt for having made the profession! I may protest that I am in health while a

deadly cancer may lurk within. I may declare that I am honest, but it will not clear me before the judge if I am proved a thief. I may avow that I am loyal, but it would not save my life if I were convicted of high treason.

Professions! Ah, I fear they are, in many cases, but a painted pageantry that makes the road to Hell attractive. Professions there are not infrequently upon which we may gaze with a vacant wonder and turn away with a cold shudder, as from the somber gaudiness of a funeral wherein prancing steeds, stately mutes, nodding plumes, and velvet palls adorn the funerals of the dead! God save us from a lifeless profession! May we never be like certain trees of which Bunyan said, that they were green outside, but inwardly they were so rotten that they were only fit to be tinder for the devil's tinder-box!

Many professors are too fair not to be false. They are too comely outside not to be loathsome inside—for there is an over-doing of the sepulcher's whitewash. You feel convinced that there would not be so much whitewashing outside if there were not a good deal of rottenness inside to be concealed. Essence of roses or of lavender is sweet, but much scent excites much suspicion. Oh, let us, each one who professes tonight, say to himself, "I was baptized on a profession of my faith, but was I ever baptized *into* Christ? When the sacred name of the Triune God was named on me, did I then enter into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit? I have come often to the communion table—but have I communed with Christ there? My name is on the Church roll but is it written in Heaven? I have said to others I am a Christian, but am I in very deed known unto Christ? Or will He say unto me in that day, 'I never knew you: depart from me you worker of iniquity?'"

These are solemn questions. Many persons are temporary followers of Christ, and outwardly, as far as the human eye can follow, they appear to be *real* followers of Christ. I believe in the Final Perseverance of the Saints but I do not know, nor can any man know, how near a man may approach to the likeness of a saint and yet, after all, apostatize. Nor is any one of us able to say of himself, or of his fellow members, "We never shall fall away." I remember one whose voice I, and many of you heard in prayer, and we enjoyed the exercise of his gifts. The man had been reclaimed from the lowest class of society and he distinguished himself by his devotion in such a way that he was accepted as a Church Officer among us. I remember, when the first charge of sin was brought against him, and of very grievous sin, one among us said, "If that man is not a child of God I am not a child of God."

The expression seemed to me too strong, but in my heart I almost joined in it. I was ready to pronounce him innocent before I investigated the charges. I felt certain that there could not be in such a man as that the impurity laid at his door. But it was there, it was *all* there—and worse than tongue can tell. He repented, and though not received into the Church because the profession of repentance did not seem to be all we could wish it to be, yet there was a turning aside from sin for awhile. But he went into it again and he wallowed in it. He died in it! As far as we could any of us judge, he perished in it. He went from bad to worse. I feel I

might say without uncharitableness, this man carried his iniquity as far as human judgment could track him.

Therefore, without prejudice to the doctrine of the Final Perseverance of the Saints, which I implicitly believe, I will not venture to say of any among you—much less will I venture to say it of *myself*, that I am sure I am so made a partaker of Christ that I shall hold fast my confidence to the end. I hope so. I rest in Christ, trusting in Him. The possibility is that I am deceiving myself. The possibility is that you may be self-deceivers. At any rate, it is so far a possibility that I would beseech you to have no confidence but such as the Holy Spirit gives you. Put no reliance as to the future anywhere but in the eternal arms—have no assurance but that assurance which is based upon the Word of God and the witness of the Spirit within your soul. That can give you infallible assurance! Apart from that, I repeat it again—I will say neither of you nor of myself that I can be sure with all the profession that is made, that you are partakers of Christ.

Some go even farther than being temporary followers of Christ, and yet, after all, perish. They maintain a consistent profession before the eyes of men throughout the whole of their lives—as vessels that navigate the whole of the sea and go down in the harbor. There are soldiers that have held out and fought valiantly up to the very moment of victory, and then have run away. And there are professors that have been unexceptional in their lives—whose character has been apparently without a blemish, and even those who knew them in private could not detect any serious flaw in their conduct—yet, for all that, there was a worm at the root. There was a fly in the pot of ointment—a failure as to the sincerity of their Grace. They had not, after all, the true faith which hangs upon Christ and they did not persevere in *heart*, though they appeared to persevere in life.

The difference between the Christian and the professor is sometimes such as only God can discern. There is a path which the eagle's eye has not seen and the lion's whelp has not traversed—a path of life into which God can bring us, and of which it may be said that He knows all who are in it. But there is a something like it—a way which seems right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death. There is a *counterfeit* of the true metal of Grace so well manufactured that only Omniscience itself can tell which is the reprobate silver and which is the pure shekel of the sanctuary. Grave reason have we, then, for raising the question as to whether we are made partakers of Christ or not.

III. Now we come to THE UNERRING TEST. Patience comes to the aid of faith here. Evidences accumulate till the issue is conclusive. “We are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.” This passage may be read in two ways, neither of which violates the literal meaning of the original—either of which may express to us the mind of the Spirit—as we have it in our version, “the beginning of our confidence,” or, as I would rather translate it, “the *foundation* of our confidence,” the basis on which our confidence rests.

Take your choice. We will expound and vindicate both. That man is a partaker of Christ who holds fast what he had at first, having received it, not as an education, but as an intuition of his spirit life—not as an argu-

ment, but as an axiom he could not challenge, or rather as an oracle he received joyfully and bowed to submissively. The confidence which is based upon the true foundation, even Christ Jesus, is simple and clear as one's own consciousness. It asks no proof because it admits no doubt. In vain the skeptic comes to me, now, and says, "Sir, you are asleep and dreaming." I answer, "No, Sir, I am speaking to these thousands and they are listening to me."

Even so, when I first believed the Gospel story it was with a childlike feeling that it was so and I knew it. The man who is not a partaker of Christ hears the Gospel, professes to believe it and in some measure acts accordingly. But he perishes because this pure, unwavering faith does not abide in him. He has not the faith of God's elect which never can be destroyed. He has only a *notion*, a creed of his own making and not a faith of the Spirit's giving. Now, Beloved, what was the beginning of our confidence? Well, the beginning of *my* confidence was, "I am a sinner. Christ is a Savior. And I rest on Him to save me."

Long before I began with Christ He had begun with me! But when I began with Him it was, as the Law writers say, "In forma pauperis," after the style of a wretched mendicant—a pauper who had nothing of his own and looked to Christ for everything. I know, when I first cast my eyes to His dear Cross and rested in Him, I had not any merit of my own—it was all demerit. I was not deserving, except that I felt I was Hell-deserving! I had not even a shade of virtue that I could confide in. It was all over with me. I had come to an extremity. I could not have found a farthing's worth of goodness in myself if I had been melted down. I seemed to be all rottenness—a dunghill of corruption, nothing better—but something a great deal worse!

I could truly join with Paul, at that time, and say that my own righteousnesses were dung. A strong expression he used, but I do not suppose he felt it to be strong enough. He says, "I count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him." Well, that is how we all began with Christ! We were nothing at all, and Jesus Christ was All in All. Now, Brothers and Sisters, we are not made partakers of Christ unless we hold this fast to the end. Have you got beyond that? Are you something *credit-able* in your own estimation? I am afraid for you! Are you richer now in yourselves that you were then? I am afraid for you, Brethren! Do you remember the place you used to stand in? You dared not lift your eyes to Heaven, but cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Now in *Christ* you have a far nobler place than that, for you are made to sit with Him in the heavenly places. But, I ask you, apart from Christ have you any different place from that of deep self-abasement? If you have, you have not held the beginning of your confidence fast even until now. Begin to suspect yourself! This is the position always to take—"having nothing and yet possessing all things."—

***"I the chief of sinners am
But Jesus died for me."***

Such is the beginning of our confidence.

Brothers and Sisters, where else was the beginning of your confidence? May we not say of it that it was only and wholly, entirely and exclusively, in the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ? In the beginning of your confidence you did not rely upon any ceremonies, nor upon priests, nor upon your Bible readings, nor upon your prayers, nor upon your feelings, nor your experiences, nor your orthodoxy, nor your knowledge of doctrine, nor upon your works, nor your preaching, your sanctifications or your mortifications. No, in the beginning of your confidence the *one* foundation was Jesus, only! Nothing save Jesus would I know! Oh, if on that day, I had met with a man who had any trust in his own righteousness, I know I should have quarreled with him!

If he had told me that he hoped that Jesus Christ would help him to save *himself* I could have wept over him to think he should be such a fool! Why, Christ is all or nothing! He must save us from top to bottom or we never shall be saved at all! If our foundation is partly on the rock of His finished work and partly on the sand of our own unworthy doing—the whole house totters and it must come down! Well, Brethren, is there any correspondence between the beginning of your confidence and your present situation? Had you anything except Christ to depend upon in the hour you first believed? Is there anything now added to that one foundation that God has laid, or has your trust been supplemented by any fresh conceit of your own?

Are you faithless? God is faithful. With you, it may be yes and no—with Him it is yes and amen! Some of the Israelites, when they came out of Egypt, depended upon God. They saw that He had divided the Red Sea, and rained down the manna and refreshed them with streams in the desert, and so they believed—but their faith did not hold out. While they could see miracles of mercy, they relied on God with nothing else to rely on. But when they got into a little difficulty they did not hold fast the beginning of their confidence unto the end, for they began to lose faith in Moses, or to confide in a golden calf. So there are some that begin, in a time of weakness, calamity, or despondence, by saying, “I trust in Christ, as a sinner.”

They get beyond that when they recover from their temporary depression. Then they qualify their confessions after their altered circumstances, and elect their religion after their own deliberate choice. But the God of Israel will not allow it. He will not have us put any trust but in His dear Son! We must be stripped naked of everything but that which Christ spins. We must have all our bread moldy until we cast it out because we loathe it, and we must feed on nothing but the Bread of Heaven. If we get beyond that and feed on anything else, we are not made partakers of Him, for we have not held fast the beginning of our confidence.

Let me call back your thoughts again, Beloved, to the love of your espousals, when you acknowledged the Lord and went after Him in the wilderness. Did you not, then, have confidence in Christ of a very humble character? Oh, at that time you did not need to be among the first of God’s people to play the part of Diotrefes! When you were at the foot of the Cross and looked up as a poor sinner you had no notion about being a

distinguished man in the Church. I know it did not come into my head that day that I should be a leader in God's Israel. Ah no, if I might but sit in the corner of His House, or be a door keeper it had been enough for me! If, like the dog under the table, I might get a crumb of His mercy, were it but flavored by His hand, because *He* had broken it off, that is all I wanted!

That is just how we ought *always* to live—lowly, humbly, gentle, broken-spirited, and ready to be anything so that Christ may be glorified. It shows the risings of the old nature when we get to be such consequential people that if anybody should say a hard word, we wonder—or if anybody slanders us, instead of saying, “Ah, if he knew us he could say something a good deal worse”—we are in a high and mighty temper because our brilliant character is injured! Verily, I think that when I was first converted to God if the Lord had said, “I have taken you into My House, and I am going to make use of you, and you shall be a door-mat for the saints to wipe their feet on,” I should have said, “Ah, happy shall I be if I but take the filth off their blessed feet, for I love God's people! And if I may minister to them in the slightest degree, it shall be my delight.”

But when we get away from that position we are in danger. If we are made partakers of Christ, the proof will be in our continuing to be of a meek and lowly spirit—willing to serve Him in any capacity—in our becoming like little children, for, “except we become as little children, we shall in no wise enter the kingdom of Heaven.” Little children we were in the beginning of our confidence—little children we must continue to be—or else we may gravely question whether we have been made partakers of Christ.

When we were first made partakers of Christ, we received Him very gratefully. How thankful we were for one look from Jesus' eyes! Half a promise seemed precious in those days. The sermon, though it was perhaps uncouth, if full of Christ, fed us to the full! Now, alas, how many professors despise precious Truth of God if it does not happen to be clothed in the most polished phrases? They run here and there where there is no food for them—not hungering and thirsting after righteousness as before—they admire the banquet spread out with all flowers and no fruit! They look after gaudy periods where pure silver and polished sham sparkle, though there is no food for the soul to feed on. If they held fast the beginning of their confidence they would prize the Truth and *love* the Truth and account that if it were but the Truth of God it did not matter in what shape it came to them, so long as they could get hold of a promise, have a smile from Christ's face or enjoy one ray of the blessed Spirit's consolation in their souls.

But now the starving beggars have become dainty epicures—those who once were glad enough to come and feast on broken crusts from the Master's table have now become connoisseurs of their Master's food—their soul “loathes this light bread,” though it is the bread of angels, and drops from the granaries of God! We should suspect ourselves when we get into that squeamish condition! Such a proud captious state of heart does not evidence that we have been made partakers of Christ at all!

When we first received our confidence, we were obedient in word and deed. I wish all disciples of Christ had the like scrupulous conscience. I speak of my own experience. The first week after I was converted to God I felt afraid to put one foot before another for fear I should do wrong. When I thought over the day, if there had been a failure in my temper, or if there had been a frothy word spoken, or something done amiss, I did chasten myself sorely. And had I known at that time anything to be my Lord's will, I think I should not have hesitated to do it—to me it would not have mattered whether it was a fashionable thing or an unfashionable thing if it were according to His Word. Oh, to do His will! To follow Him where ever He would have me go! Why, then it seemed as though I should never, never, never be slack in keeping His Commandments!

Dear Brothers and Sisters, have you held fast the beginning of your confidence? I strike upon my own breast when I remember that, in that respect, I have not held fast the beginning of my confidence! To the Cross again! Beloved, if any of you have doubts aroused in your mind by such bitter reflections upon yourselves, do not dispute with your doubts—go to the Cross again! Never dispute with the devil. He can always beat you. Go straight to the Cross! If he says, “You are no saint,” say, then, “Very likely I am not, but there is one thing even you cannot deny. You cannot say I am *not* a sinner. A sinner I am! Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and if I never trusted Him before, I will begin now! If I never yet did know the life of God, I will look to His death now! Oh, if I never was healed of the disease of sin, there is healing in those dear wounds, and I, by faith, will have it while yet it is called today.” Jesus, I trust You! I trust You wholly, and You alone!

I have heard that some years ago there was a coal-pit in work, the shaft of which by some means got blocked up, and the men could not get out of it. They were very nearly perishing. One of them had heard that there was an old working which led to another mine, and though he was afraid it might be blocked up, yet the best thing they could do would be to go along, if, perhaps, they might come to the mouth of another shaft. This old working had not been traversed for some time and it was never very lofty. They had to go along on their hands and knees and generally needed to crawl lying flat on the ground. At length they came to the mouth of that old shaft—and they gladly found their way to the upper air again.

Perhaps some of you have been living, up to now, by frames and feelings—that experience has been the shaft by which you have been coming and going—and this shaft has been blocked up tonight. Well, I am not sorry for it. Come, now, Brothers and Sisters, let us all go along on our hands and knees where the sinners go! Let us crawl to the old shaft! Let us prostrate ourselves, confessing, “Lord, I am vile, conceived in sin. Lord, I am unworthy. Lord, I am earthly, selfish, devilish. Lord, I am a mass of wounds and a mass of loathsomeness. I am unworthy of Your favor and Your love.” Let us just creep along in that fashion till we come to Christ, and say—

***“Just as I am, without one plea,
Save that Your blood was shed for me,***

***And that you bid me come to You.
O Lamb of God, I come.”***

You will find that old shaft is not shut up. There is light. Look up! There is the Cross above you! Jesus is still willing to receive sinners, still able to save sinners, for He is “exalted” on high “to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins.”

O come to Him just that way! And, Brothers and Sisters, when you get back to Christ in that way by which you went years ago, the advice of the text, with which I will sum up, is keep on coming to Him in that same way always! Keep on coming always! Keep on coming always! Perhaps you have been on the top of a mountain such as the Rigi or as Snowden. You know these mountains do not move. They are good solid rock under your feet. But people erect platforms on the top of them to see the sun rise a little sooner, or something of that sort. From the top of one of those platforms a man may come down with a crash and break his limbs.

That is something like our erections which we put up over our simple faith in Christ. Our beautiful frames and feelings and experiences—they will come down with a crash someday for they are rotten stuff! But, when a man stands upon this—“Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and I am resting upon Him. He is all my salvation and all my desire. His precious blood is all my confidence. The love of His heart, the power of His arm, the merit of His plea—here I rest myself.” O Beloved, there is no fear of *that* confidence ever giving way beneath your feet! There may you stand and serenely rejoice when worlds shall melt and the pillars of the earth shall reel!

God bless you and keep you ever holding the beginning of your confidence steadfast unto the end. So shall it be proved beyond question that you are partakers of Christ. Amen.

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FEARFUL OF COMING SHORT

NO. 1177

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 7, 1874,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.”
Hebrews 4:1, 2.

THE general strain of the Apostle Paul is confident and even jubilant. Where in the whole compass of Revelation do you meet with bolder writing than that which comes from his pen? “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.” Paul is the great doctor of faith and teacher of full assurance. You meet with nothing in his writings which would encourage doubts and fears, or lead the saints into bondage to anxiety and suspicion.

Yet, in the text before us, Paul does not speak of faith so much as of *fear*, and does not so much exhort us to boldness as to a reverent trembling, lest by any means we should come short of the rest which God has promised. Before we have concluded this morning’s discourse, we shall be able to show that such caution is quite consistent with the Apostle’s usual teaching and is, indeed, an essential part of it. He would have us cautious, that we may thereby lay a solid foundation for confidence. He who has been careful to build his house well and to found it upon a rock, is the man who can fitly be at peace in the day of storm. The holy fear of to-day brings forth the full assurance of days to come.

It was important that the Apostle’s teaching should be of a complete and balanced nature. Only unwise persons allow any one quality of their character to destroy another—a moral balance must be aimed at and maintained. The teacher of full assurance must also inculcate watchfulness or he will be a one-sided instructor. Boldness and confidence are all the more likely to be preserved in their integrity if seasoned with the salt of holy fear, without which faith may become carelessness and full assurance degenerate into presumption. The Apostle, here, exhorts us to fear upon a subject of the utmost importance. He had such a value for the rest which God has laid up for His people, that he trembled lest any one of His brethren should miss it, or seem to miss it.

I do not marvel that a man so strong in faith as he was, and so full of holy expectancy of the promised rest, should feel a jealous alarm lest any of those committed to him should fail to reach the desired end. Is not every loving father fearful that his child may not succeed in life? Love never thinks of a beloved one tossed upon the sea without a measure of anxiety, nor can we see our friends crossing the ocean of life without a tender fear for them. That fear makes us beg them to be cautious and watchful. My earnest love to your souls compels me to dwell upon such sacred warnings as that of my text. Heedless and Too-Bold are never wise—in watchfulness is our safety. To this subject I shall address myself with all my heart, trusting that the Spirit of God may also arouse your hearts to give it the consideration which it deserves.

I. We shall first answer the inquiry, WITH WHAT DOES THE FEAR ENJOINED IN THE TEXT MAINLY CONCERN ITSELF? “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” Now, the Apostle cannot mean that we are to fear lest we should come short of Heaven for lack of merit! Why, my Brothers and Sisters, there is not a man living, nor has one ever lived, nor *shall* one ever live, who will *not* come short of Heaven if he tries that road! Human merit is *not* the way to Heaven! Since the hour in which our first parent broke the Law for us, the perfect keeping of the Law has been impossible!

Neither is the keeping of the Law set before us in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as the way of acceptance with God. “By the works of the Law there shall no flesh living be justified; for by the Law is the knowledge of sin.” The just shall live by faith and it is in the matter of *faith* that we are cautioned against coming short. The Apostle would, with indignation, have spurned the idea that the Gospel race is to be run at the foot of Sinai—and that its prize would be a reward for good works! Over and over again he has plainly declared, “it is not of works, lest any man should boast,” but by Divine Grace, as the pure gift of the good pleasure and mercy of God. We must not, therefore, twist his words into a legal injunction, for they were never intended to bear such a meaning.

The great point which we are to be concerned about is lest we come short of the heavenly rest by failing in the faith which will give us the rest. Notice the second verse of the text, for that makes it clear enough—“For unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with *faith* in them that heard it.” To this, therefore, we must give earnest heed. We must see to it that *faith* is mixed with our hearing of the Word. The way to Heaven is by *faith*—we are to fear lest we have a false faith, a faltering faith, or a temporary faith—and so come short of the heavenly rest.

Note, then, that it becomes us to be peculiarly anxious that we do not come short of fully realizing *the spirituality* of faith. The Jews in the wilderness saw the sacrifices, but they did not look to the grand Sacrifice. They saw the blood poured out at the altar, but their eyes did not look to the blood which would, in the fullness of time, be shed for many for the

remission of sins. They looked at the washings and the different cleansings, but they did not see that their spirit needed to be renewed and their nature changed. They were content with the *outward* rituals and missed the *inner* meaning—they did not recognize that faith in the living God is the grand essential.

I fear that many religionists of all denominations fall short in this. They are satisfied because they have attended to their sacraments and their ceremonies, or they are quite content because they have taken their place at a simple, unadorned service. But the mysterious power of the Holy Spirit is not felt, nor is His absence lamented by them. The outward things being done, they conceive that *everything* is done. Some read a chapter of the Scriptures and repeat a prayer daily—with the full conviction that the practice will be sure to do them good—though they do not meditate on what they read, or pour out their hearts in their prayers.

As the Papist rests in his crucifix and does not, in soul, come to Jesus, so may the Protestant rest in his Bible, or his form of prayer and come short of real communion with God. Many are content with the shells of religion, whereas it is the kernel, only, which can feed the soul. The bended knee is nothing! The prostrate heart is everything! The uplifted eyes are nothing—the glance of the *soul* towards God is acceptable. The hearing of good words and the repeating of them in prayer or in song will amount to very little—if the heart is absent the whole thing will be as dead as a stone. We must be born again! Baptism avails nothing apart from that. We must live spiritually upon the slain Redeemer—the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper avail nothing if we do not feed upon Jesus.

“With the heart man believes unto righteousness.” The inner nature, the soul, must be quickened, for “God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” I exhort you, Brethren, to fear lest any of you come short of this, for if you do, you will come short of the rest which remains for the people of God. “Rend your hearts and not your garments.” Draw near unto God with your hearts, for if not, your lips insult Him. It will not matter how orthodox you may be in creed, nor how attentive to the rites, even, of the Church of Christ, itself. Unless your spirit, your inner self, is reconciled to God, pardoned through Jesus Christ and you have access to the Father in the power of the Spirit through Jesus—your religion is in vain. This exhortation is to be repeated in every street of our city! The great majority of professing Christians need to be admonished concerning it, for everywhere the religion of *show* is set up and the religion of the heart is neglected. The outside of religion is garnished with fine churches, organs, altars and enriched with learning and eloquence—but the vitality of godliness and careful conscientious discipleship are utterly despised.

The exhortation of our text leads us to say, next, that we must take heed *lest we fail to discern the fact that the whole way of salvation is of faith*. Many have not even learned this elementary Gospel Truth! They suppose religion to be a matter of attendances upon religious exercises, observances of moral precepts and the like. They think as long as their life

is regular and their habits are respectable, they may remain peaceful in the conviction that things are pretty right—or at any rate will right themselves, one of these days—but they scarcely know how! Whoever reads this Bible attentively will discover that the way of salvation runs in quite another direction, lies, in fact, here—“He that believes in the Son has everlasting life, but he that believes not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” “It is of faith that it might be by Grace.” “By Grace are you saved through faith.”

The commission which our Lord gave to the Apostles on the Mount of Olives ran thus, “Go you into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that *believes* and is baptized shall be saved; he that *believes not* shall be damned.” He did not say, “To him whose life is orderly, faith is unimportant,” but He made faith an absolute essential! Let us not stop short of this or be at peace till we can claim the promise, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Faith is essential, and we must have it. In a word, we must put our trust in the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must give up all other confidences and cast ourselves entirely upon Him. Otherwise we shall certainly never enter into the rest which is reserved for Believers.

Here let us examine ourselves with great anxiety, for on many points we may come short. As for instance, we may fail in reference to *the Object of our faith*. A man may say, “I have faith,” but another question arises, “What have you faith in?” “Well, I have faith in what I have felt.” Then get rid of it! What you have *felt* is not an object of faith, nor to be trusted in at all. “I have faith,” says another, “in the doctrines which I have been taught.” I am glad you believe them, but remember, doctrines are not the Savior. A man may believe all the doctrines of the Truth of God and yet he may be lost. A creed cannot save, neither can a dogma redeem. What is the object of faith, then? It is a Person. It is a living, Divine, appointed Person. And who is that Person? He is none other than Jesus, the Nazarene, who is the Son of God, God over all, blessed forever, and yet the son of Mary, born into this world for our sakes!

No faith will save a man which does not rest upon Jesus Christ as God. We must depend upon a whole Christ or else our faith is not the faith of God’s elect. We must believe in His proper humanity and rejoice in the sufferings which He endured. We must believe in His assured Deity and rejoice in the merit which that Deity imparted to His suffering. We must believe in Christ as a Substitute for us, suffering that we might not suffer, making Atonement on our behalf to the broken Law of God, so that God can be just and yet the Justifier of him that believes. If we do not fix our faith upon this basis our faith is not the work of the Holy Spirit, for His work always tends to glorify Christ.

Brothers and Sisters, let us be very careful here, for if our faith is strong, but rests upon a weak foundation, it will be like a builder who should lay a course of granite upon a foundation of sand. It will be of no service, whatever, to have a firm faith unless that faith has a substantial basis. If mistake is made about the Person of Christ, it is fatal, for it de-

stroys the foundation. If the very foundation is a false one, then all the building will only hasten the ultimate fall. Build safely, therefore, on the solid rock of God in human flesh, redeeming us by the Sacrifice of Himself. “Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid.” “There is none other name given under Heaven among men whereby we must be saved.” Rest, therefore, on His blessed Person and His finished work, or you will surely come short of His rest.

Here let us remark that *the quality of our faith* must be one object of our anxious care, and for its qualities I would mention, first, that it must be simple. To rely upon Christ in *part* is deadly—our faith must be altogether unmixed. If I depend in part upon the righteousness of Christ, in part upon the occult influences conveyed by a priest, in part upon sacraments, in part upon my own repentance, in part upon my overt faith, in part upon *anything*, I am lost forever! Jesus will be a whole Savior or no Savior. I must throw my whole weight upon His bosom and cling to Him, alone, for no other can bear me up from destruction. Look well to the simplicity of your confidence, my Brothers and Sisters, and beware of mixing self-confidence with your faith—all that is of Nature’s spinning must be unraveled—every thread of it must be destroyed.

You think you can help Christ? Would you yoke an ant with a seraph? If you did, they would be a far more equal pair than Christ and *you!* Loathe, abhor, detest *everything* like confidence in yourself, or in your fellow men, or in sacraments or in creeds, or in anything whatever, except Jesus Christ your Lord—

**“On Christ the solid Rock I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.”**

This faith must be as *real* as it is simple. It will not avail you to merely say, “I believe in Jesus.” You must *really* do so. So often have men told us, “Only believe in Jesus and you shall be saved”—that persons have conceived faith to be a trifle and have imagined that to *think* they believe will be quite enough. But to think you believe and actually to have faith are very different things. To rely alone upon Jesus is no small matter. “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.” May your faith be not only real, but intense and *hearty*, earnest and living! Let your trust be a whole-hearted one, for, “With the heart man believes unto righteousness.”

You know with what heart soldiers have trusted their commanders. They have gone into the fight and been outnumbered, but they have felt that their leader was so skillful in war—and so sure to win that they have remained undaunted under terrible attacks—and their battalions have stood firm as iron walls amid a sleet of deadly missiles. With unstaggering faith they have rested in the prowess of their leader and have earned the victory! Such must be our confidence in Christ. Whatever may discourage our hope, whatever may contradict the promise—ours it is to repose in Jesus with all our soul and strength—for such faith unites to the Lamb and brings salvation through His name. Beware of a notional faith, an historical faith, a faith which deals with statements, theories and opinions. Get

an enthusiastic confidence which flings itself at the pierced feet and lies there, or only rises up to march forward at the bidding of Him who said, "It is finished," when He bowed His head and gave up the ghost. Oh, may we never even *seem* to come short of such a faith as this!

But we must also take care that we do not come short as to *the inner working of faith* upon our nature. True faith walks hand in hand with *repentance*. A faith that never wept is a faith that never lived. Faith without repentance is dead. Hatred of sin always accompanies a sense of pardon. Faith is the inseparable attendant upon regeneration, even as light attends the sunrise. When faith comes into the soul, the heart is *changed*, the man becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus—he receives new life and with it new faculties, new hopes, new dreads, new loves, new hates, new pleasures and new pains. "Behold I make all things new," is the voice of Christ when He comes into the heart by faith.

Now, Beloved, are you really, radically and totally changed? If not, it is not for me to flinch from stating the Truth of God to you—however reformed and however devout you may seem to be, you come short of the Divine rest, for, "you must be born again." There must be the new birth in your spirit, or else you are not numbered among the chosen of God and among the saved ones you can never sit in Heaven. Search yourselves, lest you are deceived—

***"Vain are your fancies, airy flights,
If faith is cold and dead.
None but a living power unites
To Christ the living Head.
Grace, like an uncorrupted seed,
Abides and reigns within.
Immortal principles forbid
The sons of God to sin."***

Faith must also be judged of by *its power upon the character*. The man who *really* believes in Jesus becomes a man of prayer. Never had a man faith and yet despised the Mercy Seat. "Behold, he prays," is a declaration akin to, "Behold, he believes." How about your private prayers, then, my dear Friends? Are they neglected? Are they performed in a slovenly manner? I will not inquire so much as to your formal prayers, as to the *spirit* of prayer—does your heart, all the day long, go up to God in silent cries and secret groans? Do you speak to God out of your inmost soul by snatches while at your work? Do you say, "My God, my Father, help me," when none could tell that your lips are moving? If you have not the spirit of prayer, you are destitute of one of the surest signs of spiritual life—and you may conclude that your faith is dead and that you come short of God's rest.

True faith works upon us by leading us to *obedience*. When we believe in Jesus, we desire to do all that Jesus tells us. Many Christians fall short here. They want to do as little as they can and yet keep a quiet conscience. They do not read some parts of the Bible for fear they should discover duties which would be inconvenient to attend to. Shutting the eyes to heavenly light is dangerous work! Do not knowingly neglect the small-

est command of our Lord Jesus Christ, for an act of willful disobedience upon a point which may seem to be non-essential may sufficiently prove that your profession is rotten at the core because you do not delight in the Law of the Lord—

***“Faith must obey her Father’s will,
As well as trust His Grace.
A pardoning God is jealous, still,
For His own holiness.
When from the curse He sets us free,
He makes our natures clean.
Nor would He send His Son to be
The minister of sin.”***

Faith works in us separation from sinners. Those who believe in Jesus cannot enter into the pleasures of the ungodly. They have higher joys. Like the eagle, they disdain the carrion upon which the world’s vultures feed. Shall an angel be seen rioting with the unclean and the profane, enjoying their fooleries and laughing at their excesses? Yet the heir of Heaven is akin to angels—and it were a shame for him to stoop to that which charms only the baser part of mankind. “Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” is the great Apostle and High Priest of our profession—and His true disciples imitate Him.

What do you say as to your faith, my Brothers and Sisters? Is it of that kind which separates you from the world? Does it inspire you to fight against temptation? Does it lead you to conquer sin? Does it impel you to walk with God? Does it put you into the light where God dwells? Remember that text, half of which is often quoted and the rest willfully forgotten, “If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” Mark well that the *cleansing by blood* is joined to the *walking in the light*—why is this so seldom mentioned? Walk with God, Brothers and Sisters, then you are cleansed! But if there is no walking with God, you may well fear that your faith is not of that kind which brings the saints to their everlasting rest.

I would gladly speak with many tears and sorrowful entreaties at this time, so as to press these solemn thoughts upon your minds. For, my Brethren, there is reason to fear lest a promise being left of entering into this rest, some of us will come short of it! Do not refuse to examine yourselves, for there is urgent need of it! I dare do no less than implore you to attend to the matter at once.

II. Pursuing the same subject, our second point is this—WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES MAY SUGGEST THE NECESSITY FOR THIS FEAR? The first is this. It is certain that many professors *apostatize*. We sang truly just now—

***“When any turn from Zion’s way,
Alas, what numbers do!”***

Apostates throng the gates of Hell! True faith is, in every case, *immortal*, and cannot be destroyed! If men have really entered into God’s rest by living faith, they will never depart from it for, “the gifts and calling of God

are without repentance.” He who has begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. They who come short of entering into this rest may have *thought* they believed, but they never did. They may have had a sincere belief that they were children of God, but they were not. They deceived themselves and mistook the *name* of life for life itself.

Now, if others apostatize, may we not also? If we have really believed we shall not apostatize, perhaps our faith is not real. Our candle may have been lit by our own flame and, if so, it will surely go out. Nothing but the work of the Holy Spirit will endure to the end. Note, again, that we ourselves know others who are, we fear, much deceived and fall short of true salvation. We are not to judge—God forbid we should—but we cannot help suspecting, from the actions of some of our fellow professors, that their profession covers a good deal that is unsound. They could not act as they do if they were truly converted.

We would with the utmost charity hope the best, but we cannot conceal from ourselves with fear and trembling that a large mass of professors are so worldly, so fond of every trifling amusement, so given up to self and so negligent of anything like zealous service of God, that they cannot be Christians, though they profess to be such. Well, if we think so of others, may it not happen that somebody or other is thinking so of us? And what is much worse—for it is of very little importance what people think of us—it may be true that it is so! Though we have very much that is morally excellent, it may be that we are destitute of the real work of Divine Grace and so come short of the rest which is given to faith. I suggest it to you all—I suggest it to myself most of all—and am prepared to abide the necessary tests.

Yet, more, remember there are some professors who know that they are not at rest. “We that have believed do enter into rest,” but you know you do *not* rest. Am I not addressing some who claim to have faith and yet they have no peace? You dare not sit down and cast up your spiritual accounts. You dare not to put yourself through an examination because you more than half suspect that you are spiritually insolvent. You do not like too searching a sermon because you are conscious that there is something rotten in the state of Denmark, something amiss within your heart. You know it is so, for when you have a little sickness, or fear of death, you tremble dreadfully!

Now, if you have run with the footmen and they have wearied you, what will you do when you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, in which you have trusted, they have wearied you, what will you do in the swelling of the Jordan? If you cannot bear a little shaking by the Truth of God when I, your feeble fellow man, am preaching, how will you bear the dread shaking of the last skeleton orator, who shall say, “This night your soul is required of you”? How will you endure the thundering voice of the great Judge of All? I put to you another question—are there not professors here who are not, even now, content with Jesus?

You take your Savior’s yoke as a necessity, but not as a delight! And when you need to enjoy yourself you run off to the world—is not this a

sure index of where your *heart* is? If you cannot find your richest joy in Christ—if He is not your chief delight—then it is clear you are already short of the rest, for to a true saint there is no music like His charming name, and there is no delight like fellowship with Jesus. Now, if you already fail to discover the sweetness of religion, may you not fear that you not a possessor of it at all? O Sirs, I beseech you to fear lest you come short of the living faith which will give you rest, for are not some of you listless and indifferent? Do not many professors go to their places of worship without heart?

Are they not mere formalists, bowing their heads as if they were moved by machinery, but destitute of heart worship? They do not care whether Christ's Church prospers or not! It never costs them a sleepless night whether Jesus' kingdom comes or Antichrist triumphs! They show far more concern about the rise and fall of Console, or a change in the Cabinet, or the state of the crops, than they do about the kingdom of God and the things which make for the Glory of the Most High! Now, where there is this listlessness and carelessness, does it not seem as if you are coming short of the sacred rest? Some professors are quite destitute of energy or zeal—they serve God as if they were in a dream—they go about every godly work as if they had taken a tincture of opium or soothing syrup. Indeed, they look at religion as if it were a kind of cordial, given them on purpose to quiet them.

Now, if the kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, do not such people *seem* to come short of it? We know others who are awake enough, but they are captious, critical, snarling. They *seem* to come short of the spirit of Christ, do they not? I am not going to judge them, but what can we say of them? They do not look very much like their Master. The attribute of love is not very apparent. We know some who do *nothing* for Jesus! Ragged schools? They have no interest in them. The preaching of the Gospel? Of course they never attempt *that*, though they can speak well enough at a political meeting. Could they visit the sick? Oh, no! They have not the time. Could they teach in the Sunday school? No, they cannot stand children! Could they open a cottage meeting? No, it is not a thing they at all approve of. Lions are in the way. There is nothing they can do—rather, nothing they *will* do.

Many, also, of those who profess to belong to Christ give Him of their substance the bare odds and ends, the small crumbs from under their table and cheese-parings which they never miss. Now, I do not say that such misers are not Christians, but I do say let us not be like they are lest we should *seem* to come short! When I read the lives of martyrs giving themselves to burn for Christ—and see the worldliness of these Christians who cannot bear even a word of ridicule—I am sure they *seem* to come short of it. When we see men at the very first brush of battle ready to run, what judgment can we form of them? Are these the soldiers of the Cross? Will these be more than conquerors? They leave the pure worship of God because it is not respectable and they get away to the reputable religion of the world! Where is the blood of your sires, if sires you had worth men-

tioning, if you are ashamed to bear the reproach of Christ? Surely you *seem* to come short of what Jesus deserves. When I see the self-indulgence of many professors, the utter absence of any sacrifice for Christ, the lack of anything like ardor and zeal for the propagation of the Truth of God, or prayer for the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom—am I too severe if I say that many do *seem* to come short of it?

Here, then, are arguments for holy anxiety. Brothers and Sisters, it may be that even now I am addressing some who are anxious to avoid the offense of the Cross, who cut and trim in order to please their neighbors, who reckon the reputation of the world to be greater riches than all the treasures of Jesus, who make provision for the flesh and think fashion, credit and respectability to be everything. These are the men whose god is the world and who mind earthly things. May God have mercy upon such and have mercy upon us by never allowing us to fall into such evil ways.

III. Thirdly, WHAT SOLEMN TRUTHS DEMAND THE FEAR SUGGESTED IN THE TEXT? If we should really come short of Heaven we shall have lost all its bliss and glory forever—for us no vision of the Crucified! No sight of the King in His beauty! And we shall have lost Heaven with this aggravation, that we did begin to build, but were not able to finish. We shall be eternally covered with shame. The damned in Hell will laugh at us because we professed to be different from them and came short, after all. If I must be lost, let me not be lost as a *pretender* to religion, for the inner dungeon of the infernal prison is for those who played the Judas, who sold their Lord for pieces of silver, or came short by some other means.

To have gone a little way towards Heaven and then to miss it will render the loss of it the more intolerable. What if you should drink of the sacramental cup and then forever drink of the cup of devils? It must be wretchedness, itself, to remember, when lost, “I used to hear the Gospel and I professed to believe it. I sat with the saints of God and sang their hymns. I bowed my head and joined ostensibly in their prayers—and now I am forever banished from the God of Love—instead of Sabbath rest I feel infinite misery. And instead of the songs of the saints I hear the howling of lost spirits forever!” O my Brothers and Sisters, fear lest you come short of it! No, begin sooner, fear lest you *seem* to come short of it, for he that is afraid of the *seeming* will be delivered from the *reality*.

IV. And now to close, HOW DOES OUR FEAR EXERCISE ITSELF? I must dwell on this a moment to prevent mistakes. Our fear of coming short of the rest must not lead us to unbelief, because in that case it would make us come short at once. As I have already shown you, the way is by *faith*. I am not, therefore, to fear believing, but rather to fear distrust and unbelief. I must not doubt the promise, or I shall at once come short of rest. The translators, by inserting the word, “us,” into the text, have clouded the meaning.

There is no promise to us which we can ever come short of—every promise is sure. The text speaks of a promise which is left, left to Believers, and so left that some must enter in. Do you belong to that *some*? That

is the question. You do if you are a true, real, genuine believer in the Lord Jesus—if the Word of God which you hear is mixed with faith, according to the second verse of my text. But if the Word you hear is *not* mixed with faith, there is no promise made to you that you shall enter into God's rest—and you must come short of that which is promised to *faith* because you have *no faith*. The promise is made to the believer in Christ! I will, therefore, fear to doubt my Lord, fear to distrust Him, fear to suspect His veracity. I will believe that He came into the world to save sinners. I will believe that He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. I will not hesitate to trust Him, for I fear to doubt the God who cannot lie, lest it be said of me, "He could not enter in because of unbelief."

Next, the Apostle does not mean to have us always stand in doubt whether we are saved or not, for that would be to come short of the rest. A man cannot rest while he is in doubt about his own salvation and, indeed, many texts teach the doctrine of Assurance! We are told that, "The Spirit, Himself, bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." Now, Paul would not run contrary, nor have *us* run contrary, to the testimony of the Holy Spirit within us! If I have, indeed, believed in Jesus Christ, then I am saved and I must not doubt but what I am saved. I am bound to believe it and so to enter into rest. I am to fear lest I should not fully realize my own personal salvation when I profess to trust my whole soul with Christ.

What the Apostle would have us do, I gather from the chapter in which my text stands. We are to hold fast our profession. If you have believed in Jesus, cleave to Him! If His Cross, indeed, is your support, hold on to it as for dear life, never let it go! And when you are tempted by new-fangled notions, or by pretended old religions, say to them all—

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

"Christ for me, Christ for me, and none but Christ." Hold to that and then you will not come short.

Next, submit yourselves to the whole Word of God, for it is living and powerful. It will search your inmost soul even to the joints and marrow—habitually let it do so. Never be afraid of your Bibles. If there is a text of Scripture you dare not read, humble yourself till you can. If your creed and Scripture do not agree, cut your creed to pieces and make it agree with this Book. If there is anything in the Church to which you belong which is contrary to the Inspired Word of God, leave that Church! To the Law and to the Testimony—there is the Infallible chart of faith—follow it closely and if you do, you need have no fear of coming short, for this Book cannot lead you astray! Follow it to the letter and be precise about it, even though men shall laugh at you for being too particular. Keep to every jot and tittle—and to the living spirit of it—and you will not come short.

Then, come boldly to the Throne of Grace. So the chapter concludes. There you will obtain mercy and find Grace to help in time of need. Cling to the Mercy Seat as Joab to the horns of the altar. Pray much, pray always. Cry to God for help. Your help comes from the eternal hills and as you become more and more prevalent in prayer, you will feel that you do not come short, for God hears you and He would not hear you and answer you from day to day if you were, after all, short of the faith which brings the soul into rest. In a word, believe fully! If we have been half-and-half Christians, let us *now* be *whole* Christians. If we have given up to God a little of our time, a little of our substance, a little of ourselves, let us be baptized into the Lord Jesus Christ! Let us be buried with Him, given up to Him totally—no longer sprinkled with a little Grace which may suffice to spatter us with enough godliness to make us decent—but forever dead unto the world and alive unto God in newness of life!

Is it worth it? O you that are bought with blood, is Jesus worthy of your entire selves? You profess to be Christians! So I charge you by that profession to answer my question! Is the faith of God and the kingdom of God worth your whole selves? I know what your answer is if you are sincere. You will say—

***“Had I ten thousand thousand tongues,
Not one should silent be.
Had I ten thousand thousand hearts,
I’d give them all to Thee!”***

O Brethren, we have not done enough for God because we have not loved God enough! We are not powerful because we are not intense. If we were on fire with love, we should be very different. But we are cold, carnal, worldly, half-hearted—and we shall come short if we do not alter.

May God in infinite mercy cause the faith which is in us to grow till it affects our entire nature and the zeal, thereof, consumes us! Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Hebrews 3:12-19; 4.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—906, 668, 666.***

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PROFITABLE MIXTURE

NO. 2089

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, JUNE 9, 1889,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.”
Hebrews 4:2.***

THE people that came out of Egypt were an interesting company, if we think of what God had done on their behalf and of what he proposed to do for them. They had been lifted up from a state of slavery into one of freedom and they were on their way to a country where they were to be settled, each one upon his own portion of land, therein to become priests and kings unto Jehovah. What an unhappy circumstance that the high ideal set before them was never realized by any of them save two lone men—Joshua and Caleb!

You hear them singing at the Red Sea, in exultant joy, and they are on their way to Canaan, the land that flows with milk and honey—loud are their songs and high are their hopes. But mark those lines of graves—those innumerable hillocks which were formed wherever the camp was pitched in the desert! That is the end of the generation which came out of Egypt—“Their carcasses fell in the wilderness.” Instead of reaching Canaan and settling, every man under his own vine and fig tree, they lie in dishonored graves outside of the land of promise. Ah me, so lofty a destiny before them and so sad a missing of it.

Let us not follow in their tracks. We are far too much inclined to do so. They were men and we are no better than they by nature. Oh, for Divine Grace to walk after a higher rule! Let a holy dread seize upon us at this time, such as that which Paul expresses in the following words—“Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” Let us not find a tomb when we might gain a throne. Let us not go down into the pit when before us lies the way to Heaven and multitudes are beckoning us there.

May great Grace be given that we may win where a whole nation failed! It will be Divine Grace, indeed, if Gentiles shall excel the seed of Abraham. May heavenly power create within our bosoms a holy caution, lest by any means we come short of the Grace of God! Let rebellious Israel be our beacon. From the graves of their lusting let us hear a voice of warning, lest we also tempt the Lord and constrain Him to shut us out of His rest.

First, I shall invite you to consider Israel's hearing of the Gospel—“Unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them.” They heard good news from Moses, which was, at any rate, a Gospel. But to me it seems that they also heard the Gospel which we hear. Secondly, let us notice Israel's

failure to profit thereby—"The word preached did not profit them." They heard but heard in vain. Thirdly, let us put our finger upon the fatal cause of failure, so plainly indicated here by the words, "not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." The hearing was alone and without the mixture of *faith*. It answered no practical purpose. May the Spirit of God prepare our hearts for this meditation and may we so consider the lamentable failure of Israel that we may not fall after the same example of unbelief!

I. First, then, let us think of ISRAEL'S HEARING OF THE GOSPEL. Whether you take it as our translators have put it in the Authorized Version, "Unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them," or accept the Revised rendering, "Indeed, we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they," it comes to much the same meaning. For the message of Moses and the reports of the faithful spies were both typical of the Gospel which was brought to us by our Lord and His Apostles. Our Gospel is more clear than theirs. Yet they had the Gospel also, in all the essential truths of it and had they fully believed it, it would have been a saving Gospel to them.

We shall notice, first, that the good news brought to Israel was a Gospel of rest for slaves, a promise of deliverance for men who cried by reason of sore bondage. This was a fit emblem of that news which comes to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Listen to the words of Moses in the sixth of Exodus—"Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians and I will rid you out of their bondage and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments. And I will take you to Me for a people and I will be to you a God. And you shall know that I am the Lord your God, which brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. And I will give it you for an heritage. I am the Lord."

This was exceedingly glad news to the bond slaves in Egypt. These men were made to labor to exhaustion. They had to work in making bricks and, as you well remember, they were denied the straw so necessary to their manufacture. And yet the count of their bricks was not diminished. They had no rest from toil by day or night. And if they did not supply the full number of bricks, they were cruelly beaten by their taskmasters. Truly the tribes of Israel were in a very evil case. They groaned by reason of their bitter bondage and that promise was a wonderful Gospel to them—"I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."

This is the kind of Gospel which is preached to us today. Does not Jesus say, "Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me and you shall find rest unto your souls"? Spiritual rest is even more precious than bodily rest. The great promise of the Gospel is rest from the burden of guilt, the pressure of fear, the bondage of habit, the slavery of sin, the scourging of conscience and the dread of wrath to come. Jesus promises

rest for the heart, the intellect, the desires, the fears, the hopes, the conscience of the man.

There is perfect rest to be had, rest from all the burdens which the cruel Pharaoh of Hell has heaped upon you. It is yours if you will but have it. What a happy people we ought to be to have Christ among us as Himself the rest of our souls! We ought to leap toward this blessing with intensity of spirit and say, "Lord, suffer me to enter at once into Your rest! Deliver me from the slavery of sin and I will serve You all my days with gladness and delight. Lay what burden of holy service You shall please upon me, only ease me of my guilt, and deliver me from the wrath which lies hard upon me."

The Gospel of rest is preached to you, my Hearers, even as it was preached to Israel in Egypt. Have you understood it? Have you received it in your hearts? Have you so mixed faith with the glad news that you have accepted it and made it true in your own proper persons? Can you sing—

***"My heart is resting, O my God,
I will give thanks and sing.
My heart is at the secret source
Of every precious thing"?***

Note next, that the good tidings to Israel was a Gospel of redemption in order to their entering into the promised rest. They were slaves to Pharaoh—how could they become dwellers in Canaan? They might truthfully say, "We cannot break our bonds." The power of Egypt would hold Israel as with an iron hand. But with a high hand and an outstretched arm, Jehovah, their God, determined to bring them out. And bring them out He did. Connected with that power of arm there was the price of sacrifice. For they were redeemed typically by the blood of the Passover Lamb. That blood, sprinkled on the lintel and on the two side posts, preserved their houses when the destroying angel passed through the land of Egypt with his death sword.

They stood about their family tables and feasted joyfully while there was wailing in every house of Egypt—from Pharaoh's palace down to the lowly chamber of his maidservant. This day I also preach to you rest through the Divine omnipotence of the Holy Spirit and through the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Lamb of God. A full atonement has been made, a sufficient ransom has been presented—by this are men set free.

Christ Jesus is the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. He died in the Believer's place that he might rest lawfully and have no fear of being brought under bondage through the demands of justice. By the death of our Lord Jesus Christ the Law has been magnified and the requirements of Divine Justice have been met. God is, in Christ Jesus, reconciling the world unto Himself. Blessed are the lips that tell you this good news! I never feel so happy as when I am talking of redemption through the blood of the Lamb.

I gladly proclaim perfect redemption, efficacious redemption—I joy to testify that every Believer is justly set free and comes righteously from

under the curse of God, since “He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin. That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Beloved, the Gospel preached to Israel is the Gospel which is preached to us—only we have it more plainly and see it in substance rather than in shadow.

You have heard the word of reconciliation and you know its meaning. Have you rested in it? Have you come to Jesus? Have His wounds become your resting place? Is His blood your covering? Are you sheltered beneath the crimson canopy of His finished sacrifice? There is the point. And in this respect “unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them.”

Furthermore, it was a Gospel of separation. When you read the words of the Lord to His chosen ones, you are compelled to see that He means them to be a people set apart for His own purposes. He no sooner began with them than the first summons was to Pharaoh, “Let My people go, that they may serve Me.” Israel was in Egypt—but Israel was not a part of Egypt. No Israelite could become an Egyptian. As a distinct people they came into the land of Ham and as a distinct people they went out of the land. Too much was Israel defiled by the customs of that heathen nation—it was not absorbed in Egypt, nor did it cease to be a peculiar race.

The Lord has of old separated to Himself, in His eternal purposes, a people who are His. And His they shall still be, even till that day in which He shall make up His jewels. These chosen ones He gave to His Son, and Jesus claims the gift when He speaks of, “as many as You have given Me.” These belong to the Lord Jesus in a special way. These have a destiny before them, even in this world, of separation from the rest of mankind. For Jesus says, “they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” “Lo, the people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations.” “You are a peculiar people.”

We are the Lord’s portion, the lot of His inheritance. It is by means of this separation that we find rest. There is no rest for us in Egypt, for it is polluted. Our rest lies where God has prepared it and He cries, “Arise you, and depart. For this is not your rest.” Here we have no abiding city. Here we are “strangers and foreigners, as all our fathers were.” So even here the Church is distinct from the world and cannot be made one with it. The eternal choice has made a difference. And by a heavenly calling and a Divine life working in us, we are set apart unto the Lord Himself.

The eternal decree of separation is fulfilled in an actual separation in the thoughts and habits and ways and lives of the chosen. We are not now what we were, nor what others are. For John says, “You are of God, little children, and the whole world lies in the wicked one.” This is the Gospel of separation which leads on to rest. Until separated there is no rest for us. Thus is it written, “Come you out from among them and be you separate. And I will be a Father unto you and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

Thus you see that ours is a Gospel of rest, a Gospel of sacrifice and a Gospel of separation from the rest of mankind. Hear it with more earnest heed than Israel gave to it—“For unto us is the Gospel preached, as well

as unto them.” Dear Hearers, do you know what this separation means? Have you been called out? Have you quit your former haunts and ways? Do you cleave unto the Lord with purpose of heart though others turn aside? Do you follow the footsteps of the Crucified? Judge yourselves, that you be not judged.

Still further, the Gospel preached to the Israelites told them of a glorious heritage which was provided for them. It was described as, “a land that flows with milk and honey”—a land of wheat and barley and figs and olive oil, a land which was not irrigated by labor but was watered by the rain of Heaven. A land of rivers, a land which the Lord thought upon, a land out of whose heart they might dig brass and iron. It was the fairest of all countries, an epitome of the whole world. And it was to be theirs as a freehold forever!

Each tribe was to have its portion, each family its lot. This was good news to them. And all the more so because within the outward and temporal good news there was a *spiritual* Gospel. Even so are you told that there is a heritage, even a heavenly one, to which God brings His believing people and of which He gives them an earnest even now, in the possession of His Holy Spirit. This heritage is, in a measure, ours even in this life. But into the fullness of its delight we shall enter when the Lord shall come and receive us unto Himself. Beloved, our hearts ought to burn within us when we think of the good things of the Covenant, the fat things full of marrow and the wines on the lees well-refined.

On these Sabbath days, especially, we should look to enjoy a foretaste of that heavenly feast to which there will be no end. We enter into the rest already in a measure—we shall come into the fullness of it very soon. The snows upon the heads of many of you prophesy that the year of your wilderness life is drawing to a close and the endless years of your glory life are hastening on. O my Hearers, you have all heard this Gospel of glory—have you all accepted it? Are you anticipating the world to come, whereof this Gospel speaks? Have you already entered into the life eternal? Is there within you a well of water springing up unto everlasting life? If so, you are thrice happy. But whether or not, to you has this Gospel been preached, even as unto Israel of old. They had also preached to them the Gospel of a Divine calling. For they were informed that they were not to enter into this land to be idlers in it, but they were to be a nation of priests. In that holy land they were to be a holy people. There would they present sacrifices to God, while others worshipped Baal and Ashtaroth. There would the sacred oracle speak to them, while the rest of the world followed lying vanities. There would the glory of the Lord shine out of the midst of His temple and Israel would rejoice in the light thereof.

They were to preserve the lamp of truth until the day should come when it would shine on all mankind. Truly, the Israelites who came out of Egypt had a splendid heritage before them if they could but have believed God and so have grasped it. To them it would have been true—“strangers shall stand and feed your flocks and the sons of the alien shall be your

plowmen and your vinedressers. But you shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God." Happy people!

This, even this, is the Gospel that is preached unto *you*. We are called to believe in Jesus. And then, in Him, to become priests and kings unto our God and in His holy service to spend our happy days. God grant that we may receive this Gospel indeed and of a truth! Count not yourselves unworthy of this high honor. Put it not from you, lest the Lord should swear in His wrath, "They shall not enter into My rest."

Once more—they had a Gospel which promised them help to obtain all this. It is a poor Gospel which sets Heaven before us but does not help us to enter it. To these Israelites, journeying mercies and conquering aids were promised. The Lord said to them, "I will send My fear before you and will destroy all the people to whom you shall come and I will make all your enemies turn their backs unto you. And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite and the Hittite from before you."

The like help for the attainment of heavenly blessedness is provided in the Gospel which we preach. All helps for the winning of the fadeless crown are waiting for them that believe. "The Spirit helps our infirmities." The Lord "will subdue our iniquities." "God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." "Thanks be unto God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." When we are weak then are we strong. We can do all things through Christ that strengthens us. This Gospel is preached to *us*. The Lord, All-sufficient, will be the help of His people.

He says, "My grace is sufficient for you." Therefore I may gladly sing, "The Lord is my strength and my song, He also has become my salvation." We are encouraged to go forward and take possession of the promises, for the Lord has said, "Certainly I will be with you." My dear Hearer, do you embrace this Gospel? Do you find in it strength for the journey of life? See to it that you miss not the blessing.

Enough of this. You will find it an interesting exercise to observe in how many ways the Gospel preached to Israel runs parallel with the Gospel preached to us. The true Gospel is no new Gospel—it is that old wine which is better than the new with all its fermentation and froth—it is the Gospel of the eternal God, which changes not.

II. But now, secondly, I have the painful business of setting briefly before you ISRAEL'S FAILURE TO PROFIT BY THE GOSPEL WHICH THEY HEARD. Though they heard it from many, they clung to Egypt. One would think they would have abhorred the land of the iron furnace and the brick kiln. But no. At the beginning they said, "Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians." The signs and wonders that God worked in the field of Zoan were almost as much needed to separate Israel from Egypt as to loosen the cruel grasp of Pharaoh.

The nation had not long been quit of the land before they cried out to Moses, "Why have you dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." Again and again they sighed for the leeks and the garlic

and the onions of Egypt, whining for the coarse food of their bondage and despising the bread from Heaven. They talked as if the Lord had done them a great injury by setting them free from their taskmasters. Ah me, the Gospel which they heard did not profit them. For in their hearts they still tarried in the house of bondage.

Worse still, they provoked the Lord. By their murmurings, but chiefly by their idolatry, they vexed His Holy Spirit. Could you have believed it? After all the gods of Egypt had been smitten in detail by the plagues of Jehovah, yet the people remembered the idol god, the ox of Egypt, and they set up for their own worship what the Lord derisively called a "calf." They said, "These be your gods, O Israel." Yes, the chosen people of Jehovah ate and drank in honor of the image of a bullock which has horns and hoofs and afterwards they rose up to play the lascivious games which attended such idolatrous worship. They thus made themselves naked to their shame and the anger of the Lord was kindled against them. Truly the word preached had not profited them.

Moreover, they were always mistrustful. They could not endure a little thirst without fear that they would die of it. Whatever trial happened to them they were frightened and began to complain and were ready to rebel. The days of their provoking God were many. Their lusting after the flesh greatly grieved the Lord—when He had prepared them the best of diet, and "men did eat angels' food," they declared that the soul abhorred this light bread. When they had flesh they ate till they were sick of it. They were ever full of distrust and carnality. A stiff-necked generation.

They went so far as to despise the promised land—they said, "It is a land that eats up the inhabitants thereof." They would gladly go back to Egypt rather than advance upon a scene of such great danger. They dared to speak as if death in Egypt had been preferable to the wilderness, for they would never be able to conquer the land. Ten of the spies whom they sent to spy out the land flattered their humor and defamed the country. They could not deny that it flowed with milk and honey, for the fruits were before them and the clusters of Eshcol were convincing evidence of its fertility. But they said it ate up its inhabitants, implying that it was a deadly place to dwell in. Thus they set at nothing Heaven's highest gift.

When the time came when they might have advanced against the foe, they were afraid to go up. When for this the Lord withdrew from them, then they resolved that they would go up and in consequence they were smitten by the Canaanites. They feared lest the giants would destroy them—they felt like grasshoppers in their sight. They dared not hope to win the country—they turned back in the day of battle.

The end of it was they died in the wilderness. Ah me, the whole generation died in the wilderness—these very men that stood by the Red Sea and said, "I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously. You shall bring them in and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance." They sang, "Sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestine. All the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away." But, on the borders of the land they trembled, turned back into the wilderness and

died. To them the inspiring Gospel of the promised rest was altogether unprofitable.

O my Hearers, fear and tremble lest it be the same with you! Let me go over this story once more with a personal application. Do you still cling to sin? Do you still love it? Would you be willing to go to Heaven but are you unwilling to part with sin? Is the flavor of the onion of sinful pleasure still pleasant to your palate? Are you provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are you setting up idols? Are you loving self and sin and error and the world? Do you distrust the Lord? Am I speaking to any Gospel hearers who are still doubters, still refusing to believe that Jesus Christ can save? Are any still refusing to trust yourselves with Him who died upon the Cross?

It is sad that it should be so. Do you despise the goodly land? Do you say in your heart, "Heaven and heavenly things are too visionary for me. I have too much to do to earn my daily bread"? Are you sighing after flesh, after worldly wealth and honor and pleasure? Do you loathe the manna of holy joy, fellowship, bliss and life in Christ? Is it so? And are you fearing today that you never can do what you should do and that you can never conquer your evil propensities?

Do you sit down supinely, judging your passions to be too strong to be subdued, your habits too firmly fixed to be changed? Are the giants too strong for you to slay them? Have you no trust in God and in His boundless grace? If so, O Sirs, I fear your carcasses will fall in the wilderness, your dying hour will come and you will have no hope. The howling wilderness will be all around you in the hour of your departure out of this life and you will pass from it to a state still worse and find that you have missed glory and honor and immortality.

God grant it be not so. Yet I fear it will be so with many of you who abide in unbelief. A whole nation missed the rest of God—it will not be a wonder if you and I miss it, who are but one or two, unless we take earnest heed and are filled with fear—"lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it."

III. So now, thirdly, I am going to put my finger upon THE FATAL CAUSE OF THIS DIREFUL CALAMITY. Why was it the Gospel that they heard did not profit them?

Assuredly it was not the fault of the Gospel which they heard. In itself it is calculated to profit all who receive it. It promised liberty and this should have made them gratefully obedient. It promised an inheritance and added to it a high and holy calling, and this should have aroused their loftiest aspiration. It promised every help to the getting of the promised blessings and what could they have more?

Concerning the Gospel which I have preached to you, I can truly say that if you miss blessedness, it is not because you are straitened in the Gospel, or are discouraged by the narrowness of the Lord's Grace—

***"What more can He say,
Than to you He has said?"***

What larger provision, what greater promise can God give to guilty man than this—"He that believes in Him has everlasting life"? Pardon of sin,

justification of your persons, salvation of your souls and everlasting bliss—what more can be set before you? If this does not touch you, what will?

In their case it was not the fault of the preacher. For Moses spoke God's Word with great meekness and gentleness. He set before them the Truth of God with all fidelity. With all my imperfection, I hope I can say, also, that if you die in the wilderness I am clear of your blood. For I have warned you to escape and I have bid you seek, first, the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Neither was it the fault of a lack of confirming signs from God. No default of Divine working hindered Israel's faith. God worked with His Gospel in those days very mightily.

The daily manna and the water leaping from the rock, with other signs and wonders, went to prove the Word of the Lord. If men do not believe the Gospel of Christ, it is not because it does not work wonders still. You have seen others converted. You have seen others die in perfect peace. You have seen what the Lord can do for His believing people. And if you believe not, you will die in your sins. I have heard much of "honest doubt." But I honestly believe that much of doubt is the most dishonest thing out of perdition. Take heed that you are not hardened by the deceitfulness of this sin. It will ruin you if you indulge in it. "Believe and live," is the Gospel. "Doubt and die," is the alternative.

Neither was it for lack of the Holy Spirit that these people made the Gospel a failure to them. For we read that the Holy Spirit spoke to them and they rebelled and vexed the Holy Spirit. It was the Holy Spirit who spoke to them and said, "Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." That same Holy Spirit is with the Gospel still. Oftentimes He stirs your hearts and moves you even to tears—He makes deep impressions and causes you to long after better things. Quench not the Spirit. Grieve not the Spirit of God. If He leaves you, you are lost forever. And He may do so. God grant this may not be the case!

Well, then, what was the cause? We put our finger on it at once—"Not being mixed with *faith* in them that heard it." Where there is no faith in the Gospel, no good consequence can possibly come of it. If it were preached to you by angels—yes, if one arose from the dead and proclaimed it to you—if you believed it not, what could be the beneficial effect of hearing it?

Men, why do you hear it, if you do not mean to believe it? If you will be damned, why do you throng this place to hear about salvation? If you are resolved that you will not have the promise of God, why come and listen to His servant, who has nothing else to tell you? Are we set up to be as marionettes, or dancing dolls, for you to stare at? God forbid that we should ever accept the calling of actors in a play. If we do not win your hearts for Christ and so save you, we have labored in vain and spent our strength for nothing.

See the effect of absence of faith and lament it. Where there is no faith, men remain slaves to the present. If they did not believe in the milk and honey of Canaan, you see why they hankered for the cucumbers of Egypt.

An onion is nothing comparable to an estate beyond Jordan. Yet as they think they cannot get the estate, they pine for the onions. When men do not believe in eternal life, they naturally enough cry, "Give me bread and cheese. Let me have a fortune here." They keep their nose to the grindstone, always thinking about this passing life, because they do not heartily believe in Heaven and its glories. They are as "dumb driven cattle" that see not into another state—this life seems real to them but the next life they suspect to be a dream. As long as there is no faith, this world is all and the world to come is nothing at all.

If a man hears and has no faith, he learns nothing. What would be the use of your listening to lectures upon science if you disbelieved what the professor set forth? You are no pupil, you are a critic. And you cannot learn. Many professors have no faith and, consequently, whoever may teach them, they will never come to a knowledge of the Truth of God. Israel never saw through the almost transparent veil of the types because they did not believe. If they had believed, they would have discovered under every symbol a world of wondrous meaning, instructing them in the things of God. Want of faith means want of eye and want of perception.

The Truth of God's Word did not affect the hearts of Israel, as it does not affect any man's heart till he has believed it. If there is a goodly heritage and I believe it, then I long for it, then I strive for it. But if it is to me as an idle tale, it does not affect me one whit. If there is liberty for the captive, I desire it and I cry to God to give it to me. But if I do not believe that escape is possible, I shall sit down in despair. If I believe the Gospel, it affects my life, it changes my character—it takes me down from false hope and it lifts me up to a surer confidence.

Only that which is believed can operate upon our spiritual nature. As light is of no use if we cannot see, so is the Gospel of no service if we have no eye of faith. The Gospel plays on a man like some mighty minstrel upon his harp. It touches every string of our soul. The Master sometimes stays His hand to tune each string, that it may yield the right note. And this once done, what angel voices sing amid those strings! A man's soul touched by the finger of the Gospel resounds the music of God! If the Gospel is not believed, those fingers touch mute strings and no response is heard.

A man that has no faith in what he hears does not appropriate it. One cries, "There is gold! Let me go and get it." Unbelief restrains him, as it whispers, "There is no gold, or it is beyond reach." He does not go to get it, for he does not believe. A hungry man passes by where there is entertainment for needy travelers. Believing that there is food for his hunger, he tarries at the door. But if unbelief mutters, "There is a bare table within, you might as soon break your neck as break your fast in that place," then the traveler hurries on.

Unbelief palsies the hand and it appropriates nothing. That which is not appropriated can be of no use to you. Look at your food. How is it that it builds up your body? Because you take it into the mouth and it descends into the stomach and there it is mixed with certain fluids and is

digested and ultimately is taken up into the system and becomes a life-sustaining force. Being properly mixed, it is taken up and assimilated. And so it is with the heavenly Truth of God—if it is taken into the heart and then mixed with *faith*, it is digested and becomes food to every part of the spiritual nature. Without faith the Gospel passes through the soul undigested and rather feeds disease than promotes life. O my Hearers, what a dreadful lack is the lack of faith!

Lastly, these people could not enter in because they had no faith. They could go to the border of the land but they must die even there. They could send their spies into the country. But they could not see the fertile valleys themselves. Without faith they could not enter Canaan. Shall it be so with us, that, for want of faith, we shall hear the Gospel, know something about its power and yet miss its glories and never enter into possession of the life eternal which it reveals? Here is the point—“They could not enter in because of unbelief.”

With two practical points I will conclude. One is this—see the great value of *hearing* the Gospel. Do hear it as often as you can. Do not get into the sluggish habit of those who are content with one spiritual meal for the whole week. Once on the Sabbath is enough for many nowadays. Hear as often as you can. On the weeknights come out to hear the Word. I may not long be able to preach it, nor you to hear it. Hear it often, for one of these days it may be blessed to your soul, if it has not been so as yet.

What a mercy to have your hearing! Dear Friends, who used to hear me preach and are now very old, come to me in the vestry with sad faces and say, “I cannot hear even you now.” When the eyesight also begins to fail, as it does in some cases and thus they are deprived of reading as well as of hearing, it is a double trial. You will miss the Gospel if ever it comes to that with you, as it may in old age. Be sure that you hear and read while you can and thus store up God’s Word in your mind.

Also, pray our Lord to raise up more preachers of the Gospel—they are few enough. “Pray you the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.” Pray much for those who preach the Gospel faithfully, that they may be kept true to the Bible and honest to souls. The Gospel is getting more and more adulterated. One of these days you will want a microscope to find a grain of evangelical doctrine in a dozen sermons. Indeed, the small proportion of Gospel to a sea of words is often like one homeopathic globule in the Atlantic ocean. There is so little of it. God grant that we may have the Gospel preserved to us and be enabled to hear it!

But still, the great necessity is *faith*. Instead of speaking upon that subject, let me beg you to try and do a little mixing at once. Don’t mix philosophy with the Gospel—by the help of God’s Spirit mix *faith* with it. Before us is the glorious Word made flesh, in the eternal Son of God in our nature! He lives for men. He dies to make atonement for sin. Even He cannot save you unless you now mix faith with all those truths about Him which the Scriptures teach you.

Now mix faith with what you know concerning the Savior and say, "Lord, I believe that You are the Son of God. I believe that You did live a perfect life, which is our righteousness. I believe that You did die a painful death, which brings us pardon. I believe that You ever live to intercede. I trust my soul in Your hands." That is mixing faith with the Gospel and you will in this fashion richly profit by the Gospel. You will go your way a saved man.

There is proclaimed in the Gospel the pardon of sin. The Lord blots out the sins of His believing people like a cloud. Mix faith with that doctrine and say, "Lord, I believe that You can put away all my sins through Jesus Christ. You can wash away my crimson stains and scarlet spots and make me whiter than snow. Lord, I trust You to do this. I rely upon You for the forgiveness of my transgressions!" By this act of faith you will be profited by the promise and pardon, for you are pardoned the moment you believe in Him who is exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins.

Try what you can do with eternal life itself. Say, "Lord, I believe that there is a spiritual life which You do breathe into Believers. I believe that this grows from Divine Grace to Glory. You give to Believers eternal life even here—death cannot kill it and so they live on and on and on, throughout eternity, forever blessed in Christ. I believe in the new creation. I appropriate it. I trust in Jesus for it. This heritage is mine! By faith I take it to myself." God will never take away what you can grasp by faith. Accept it and the acceptance makes it yours—for the Lord Himself made it yours long ago in His eternal purpose and, therefore, He has given you faith as a token that He ordained Heaven and perfection to be yours.

Mix faith with every promise. Henceforth continue to practice the holy art of mixing faith with the revelations of Scripture. Compound them as the dispensers do. Here is a choice drug but it wants mixing with its proper affinity. The promise must be mixed with faith if it is to be life-giving to the soul. Mix it, then, with faith and be profited immediately and eternally. Be united to the Truth of God and it will save you. Let it come into union with you and you will never perish. The Lord help you to be joined unto His Truth by faith, for Christ's sake! Amen.

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A DELICIOUS EXPERIENCE

NO. 2090

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, JUNE 16, 1889,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For we which have believed do enter into rest, as He said, As I have sworn in My wrath, if they shall enter into My rest.”
Hebrews 4:3.***

LAST Sabbath we meditated upon the fact that those who came out of Egypt did not enter into the rest of God. “They could not enter in because of unbelief.” Today I shall not seek so much to warn as to encourage, while we look at the way by which we can enter into the true rest. The faithful minister of God should be like the parent birds, who, when their young are old enough for flight, sometimes drive them from the nest to make them fly. And, at other times, go before them, twittering and stretching out their wings, to tempt their callow offspring to try the air.

Thus, at times, we endeavor to *drive* you to and at others we try to *draw* you to the flight of faith. Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade—knowing the joys of true religion, we entreat. By all means we would induce men to quit the nest of their old trust and fly to Christ by faith. If God will bless the Word, so that you put your trust in Christ, we shall be content. No, more—our cup will run over with gratitude for your salvation.

In the text, we have a declaration of experience, “We which have believed do enter into rest,” to which is very singularly added, “As he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest.” The happy declaration is supported by the tremendous oath of judgment, which shut out the unbelieving race. There is usually a promise embedded in a threat, like gold in quartz—just as there is generally a threat as the reverse of the golden coin of promise. When we read, in the opening chapters of the Bible, “In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die,” it was implied, was it not, that if they did not eat they should live?

Though that promise was not stated in words, it was implied in the threat. So here, when we read, “I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into My rest,” while we are taught that some could not enter in because of unbelief, it is implied in it that Believers would enter in. Those who have faith in the Divine promise shall enter in. If unbelief shuts men out, then faith is the door of entrance to those who have it. I beg you to grasp the kernel of promise which lies whole and safe within the shell of the threat.

God swore of those unbelieving Jews that they should not enter in but He had declared that some should enter in. Therefore a promise is left which will be fulfilled in those who have faith and so are the true seed of

faithful Abraham. These shall enter in. And certain of them in the text declare that they have done so—"We which have believed do enter into rest." I venture to say that the threat in this case even gives a touch of rose color to the promise, for it runs thus, "If they shall enter into My rest." Whereas the declaration only says, "rest"—"we which have believed do enter into rest," the word, "My" is added. That little word is like a bright gleam amidst the blackness of the tempest. Oh, the glory of that which God calls "My rest"!

There is such a thing as the rest of God and there is such a thing as our entering into it. I call your attention to the fact that the two typical rests of the Old Testament were rests of God. And yet they were rests into which God's people were to enter. The first rest was the rest of creation. When God had finished all His work upon this habitable globe He rested. But what follows? "He rested on the seventh day and hallowed it." To what end? That we might rest also. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor and do all your work—but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God."

And therefore, because it is His Sabbath, He would have us share in it. "In it you shall not do any work." It was a day sacred to holy rest. God will not rest alone. He will have His people in fellowship with Him. "There remains a rest to the people of God"—because God has His Sabbath. The other rest was the promised land, of which Mount Zion was chosen to be the center. We read in Psalm 132, "For the Lord has chosen Zion. He has desired it for His habitation. This is My rest forever: here will I dwell. For I have desired it." Where the Lord rested, there He gave His people rest. For He adds, "I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread."

Thus God and His Church are associated in happy fellowship. Neither the day nor the land is used as a type of rest with reference to God alone. He will have His people enter into His rest.

The true rest of God lies higher than times and places. The Lord God rests in the Person of Jesus—in Him He is well pleased. The Lord speaks of Him as, "My Elect, in whom My soul delights." In the Person of His Son, the heart of the Father finds perpetual joy—"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." But we also behold His Glory—"The glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." By faith we see that in Him which gives rest to our heart. Therefore was Jesus given—"This man shall be the peace." The Lord Jesus is our true Noah, in whom we find safety and rest. He was both given in birth and given up in death to be the rest of weary souls.

Beloved, this morning I earnestly pray that you may be able to join in the declaration of the Apostle Paul in the words before us. Though nearly nineteen hundred years have passed away, it is still true of those who believe, that they enter into rest. Some of us are now resting where the Lord rests and our rest is daily deepening, so that before long it will only need a moment's change and we shall rest with God in Glory.

May the Holy Spirit direct us, while we shall, first, notice the people to whom this experience is confined—"They which have believed do enter into rest." Secondly, the experience itself—"We do enter into rest." And thirdly, the personal assertion of this experience—we declare, without hesitation, that having believed we do enter into rest!

I. Follow me in meditation and may the Spirit of God bless it to our souls, while we consider THE PEOPLE TO WHOM THIS EXPERIENCE IS CONFINED. They rest and no one else—they rest, because they have believed. As surely as unbelief shuts out, so surely does faith shut in.

What is to believe? To believe is, first of all, to accept as true, the Revelation of God. To give unfeigned assent and consent to all that God has made known in His Word and especially to believe that He was, "in Christ Jesus, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." We cannot take the further step of trust unless, first, we give credence to the testimony of God. In reference to the work of our Lord Jesus, we must, first, accept the facts concerning Him and the witness of God about Him or we cannot go further. What God says is true and to us it is true because God says it. We set to our seal that God Himself is true. We bow our judgments, our questionings, our consciences, our faith, before the Throne of the Lord God of Truth. This is an essential groundwork for saving faith.

The operative point of faith is the next one—we trust ourselves with Him who is revealed—thus we carry our belief of Truth of God to its practical conclusion. We come—just as we are—to the Savior who bids us come. We rely for our salvation and acceptance with God upon the Lord Jesus Christ as the Father reveals Him. We see in Him God's appointed Messenger of Divine Grace. We perceive Him to be our Covenant Head and representative and we rejoice to stand or fall with Him. Chiefly do we receive Him as our Substitute and, in consequence, our Sacrifice. We believe in Him as bearing our sins in His own body on the tree—as made sin for us, though He knew no sin—that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

It is of the essence of faith that we trust ourselves with the Lord Jesus, because of His finished work on our behalf. We trust Jesus in the faithfulness of God to the promises made to us in Christ Jesus. We lean upon the sure Word of God and work of Jesus. He has not the faith which will bring him to Heaven who does not wholly trust himself with God in Christ Jesus. Out of this trust must come action agreeable thereunto. He that trusts Christ appropriates to himself the blessings contained in Him and henceforth they become his heart's treasure. And this changes the whole tone of his life.

He that trusts in Christ becomes obedient to his Savior's Word—just as the sailor who trusts his pilot yields to him the steering of the ship. He that has real faith in the unseen is willing to forego the pleasure and the profit of that which is seen and temporal, so far as it comes in conflict with that kingdom of God. He sees all that he needs in Jesus and sets great store by Him. For he believes that, "it pleased the Father that in Him

should all fullness dwell. And of His fullness have all we received and grace for grace.” Faith is an eye to see with and a hand to grasp with.

Faith joyfully accepts all that Jesus brings her and for His sake she quits all other confidences. To be married to Christ, she forsakes all other trusts and delights. This leads the Believer to flee from sin—he sees that no good can come thereby but only deadly evil. Moved by gratitude, he reckons himself dead to the world, because Jesus died—and alive unto God, because the life of Christ has quickened him. This leads to a daily rejoicing in Christ. For in proportion as we trust the Lord and are governed by that trust, we become happy in the Lord. When we can say, “He is all my salvation and all my desire,” we shall not be afraid even on our death bed. So far as I am trusting, I am resting.

According to the statement of the writer of this Epistle, faith, wherever it exists, brings with it rest. Let me sketch three or four cases in proof, such as I have seen myself. Yonder is a man who has come to a right idea of his guilt before God. He went on merrily enough for years, till the Holy Spirit shone into his soul and caused him to see the evil of his life. He began to think. Looking back upon his past conduct, he became uneasy. He felt that he had lived without God and therefore he had lived an unprofitable life towards his best Friend. He became greatly disturbed in spirit, not only by day but even by night—his dreams were tinged with fear. He felt that he was all wrong and he feared he could never be set right.

In such a condition rest is out of the question! What is to be done? In eager desire he goes from one place of worship to another and he reads the Scriptures and godly books. But he finds no rest and he will find none until he begins to see Jesus. How often have I seen the enlightenment which comes of faith, when a man sees that God is full of love towards him, that He is willing to receive him guilty as he is and to blot out all his sin for Jesus’ sake. When a convicted sinner realizes that Christ on the tree bore the penalty of his transgressions—then, I say, an enlightenment comes over his soul!

I have seen the countenance transfigured as the Divine witness has shone into the mind. It has been to the man as when the sun arises and the shadows flee. When his heart has said, “Christ for me,” then has He led His captivity captive. An overpowering delight has filled the soul, has flashed from the eyes, shone forth in every feature and overflowed at the lips. Oh, the joy of knowing by faith that Christ has saved me, that in him I am reconciled to God! Nothing else will give us this rest but confidence in God in Christ Jesus.

Observe another case. This person was once a Christian professor, leading the way in public service. But he declined gradually and at last he fell into grievous open sin. He has been cut off from the visible Church. And necessarily so, for he has wandered into sinful habits and mixed with evil associates. He is ill at ease. Like an unquiet spirit, he is seeking rest and finding none. If there had been nothing of Divine Grace in his heart, he might have been satisfied with the husks of the world. But he has enough Grace remaining in him to make him miserable.

His foot finds no resting place. He is not willing, as yet, to go back to the Church. And yet he cannot be content away from the fold. He is as a bird which has wandered from its nest, or a dog which has lost its master. It is only as that man beholds again the vision of the Crucified Lover of his soul that he will see a hope of rest. He must again see his God, clothed in human flesh, bleeding and dying for him. In that sight, alone, will he find a window opened in Heaven through which a backslider's prayer may enter. It is the eye of Jesus which makes Peter repent and the voice of Jesus which makes Peter confess his love.

I invite any who are in a backsliding condition to come with weeping to the pardoning Savior. Do not distrust Him because of your sin but trust Him because of His merit. Come back, come back to your first Husband. For it was better with you then than now! Say, "Return unto your rest, O my Soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you." Turn to the way of faith, for this is the homeward path.

I have seen the like result of faith in another case, which is very different from the last. A Christian man endowed with large power of thought, in an evil hour, quitted his moorings and drifted out into the deep. He saw others sailing on the great and wide sea and he thought it a brave thing to imitate them. Today he has lost his compass and does not believe in his chart. He neither knows what he *does* believe, nor what he *should* believe—his intellect is like a carousel—his belief twists about like a weathervane. All around him is a haze and all beneath him is quicksand. He fears that before long there will remain in his mind no capacity to separate fact from fiction. He fears that there is no truth. All doctrine has become to him as the baseless fabric of a vision. Only one thing he knows—he is not happy and he views with regret the restfulness of former days. My distracted Brother, your only hope of intellectual rest lies in believing your God. Oh, that you would subject your intellect to the Holy Spirit! Come, cast away your pride and sit at the feet of Jesus. Become a little child, that you may enter the kingdom.

Have you not had enough of this plague of the period—the thing which betrays its character by calling itself "honest doubt"? While you are your own guide, you will go astray. But when you will place your hand in that Hand which bears the nail print, you shall be safe and happy. Then will you sing, "He leads me beside the still waters." There is sound intellectual rest to be had by him who will submit himself to the infallible teaching of God and will wait from day to day upon the Holy Spirit for light upon his path. "We which have believed do enter into rest," and the rest is not that of ignorance and agnosticism but of clear knowledge, for we know and have believed the love which God has towards us.

Our standing is on the rock of a revelation which has been made over again in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. While those who rely on their culture are as boats driven upon the rocks, we stand on safe ground and are not shaken.

Let me give you one more picture. Tread softly, for the shadow of death is over yonder bed! Weakness will scarce bear the sound of your footfall.

His pulse is faint and few, the man is dying! Look at how his tender wife wipes the death sweat from his brow! Come here, you philosophers and cheer his last hours with the joys of evolution! Come, you advocates of a new theology and cheer him with your criticisms! Poor Heart, he sees no consolation in all that you can set before him. He turns himself to the Lord Jesus and cries—"Hold Your Cross before my closing eyes. Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies. Heavens' morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee—in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me."

If he can but see "the sacred Head once wounded," he will have rest. How sweet! How deep! How perfect that rest will be! Men die not when they breathe their last with the living Savior near them. In unruffled calm the spirit takes its flight from earth and that Word is fulfilled, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors." Behold, how they bathe their souls in seas of heavenly rest. They have obtained joy and gladness—and sorrow and sighing have fled away. In ten thousand thousand instances they that have believed have, even in their mortal agony, entered into rest. Blessed be the Lord for this!

Thus have I set before you who these people are. They are not those who merely *talk* of religion but they have true faith in God. They do not hesitate and delay but they have once and for all believed and are now walking by faith. They are not questioners—they believe God with a simple, child-like confidence. These are they that enter into rest and nobody else will ever do so. I wish some of you would take this decisive step and end this wretched pretense of wisdom, this self-conceited trust in "culture"—for it will be your greatest gain in life to trust your God and enter into rest.

II. Our second point is THE EXPERIENCE ITSELF—"We which have believed do enter into rest." I shall now speak of what I know of a surety and of what many of you know, also. We will propound no theory and indulge no imagination but keep to matters of fact.

Wherein do we rest? Brethren, we rest where God rests—that is in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a wondrous Personality we see in Him! As God, He is the infinite delight of the Father. As personified Wisdom, our Lord Jesus says, "I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." We cannot tell how much the Father loves Him and how perfectly He rests in Him. When God looked upon fallen man He could not rest in *him*, for it repented Him that He had made man upon the face of the earth. There was one Man, only, upon whom the Father's eye rested with pleasure. And even in the foresight of His birth and death He took pleasure in Him.

When Noah presented the sacrifice which symbolized the atonement, we read that the Lord smelled a sweet savor of rest. The Father takes an intense delight in the glorious Person of the Lord Jesus. He cannot rest in the creation which is made subject to vanity. He cannot rest in fallen man but He rests in One that is near akin to Him and at the same time near akin to us. Jesus counts it not robbery to be equal with God and yet

counts it not beneath Him to be made like ourselves. To the Father and to us He is the place of our common rest. How happy are we to find rest in a Person! This is warm and substantial comfort. You cannot rest in the words of a doctrine as you can in the bosom of a person.

Take a poor child that is lost in the street. Talk to it upon cheering themes. These ought to comfort it. But the little one goes on crying. Sing to it and reason with it. It is all in vain. Run, fetch its mother! See how it smiles! It nestles in her bosom and is at rest. A person yields to heart comfort. So it is with our Lord Jesus Christ. In life, in death—it is a delightful thought that our salvation rests in the hands of a living, loving Personality. We depend upon a Divine and human Person, an accessible Helper, to whom we may come at all times. Oh, yes, “we which have believed do enter into rest” in the Person of the Well-beloved!

Next, we rest in His work. That work I can only roughly outline to you. It was a life of perfect obedience, completed by a death of shame and agony. The life and the death were all for us—in our place He obeyed and suffered. “It pleased the Father to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief.” And because of that bruising and grief, it is written, “The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake. He will magnify the Law and make it honorable.” Sinners are reconciled to God and all offense is removed. Such rest does the Father find in the life and death of His well-beloved Son that He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. God rests in the work of Christ. And so do we.

Beloved, when you get a faith’s view of the work of the Redeemer, do you not feel that all your fears and forebodings are sweetly laid to rest? The full Atonement, the perfect Righteousness, the glorious Victory, are not these quiet resting places? The Covenant of Grace and all the blessings it contains—are not these a joy forever? Can you not say of the Word of the Lord—

***“My faith can on this promise live,
Can on this promise die”?***

I scarcely need to mention, as a separate item, the perpetual *life* of Christ. We have not a dead Savior. I heard one speaking about the blood of Christ as a dead thing. But indeed that in which we trust has a living efficacy. Beloved, the blood of Christ is the blood of a *living* Christ. He died but not as a bullock dies at the altar. For He died to live again, which the bullock could not do. We trust in Him who lives and was dead and is alive forevermore. Because He lives we shall live, also. Lift up your eyes and see your Lord upon the Throne! Behold Him risen from the dead and know that He is coming soon, in all His Glory, to receive you unto Himself. I ask you if you cannot find perfect rest in the thought that He ever lives and is therefore able to save to the uttermost?

Yes, preach Christ to the soul—He is true balm for its wounds. The love of Jesus is a pillow for every aching head. Let our Lord be near and, like John, we find rest upon His bosom. Do you ask me what is comprehended in this rest? I answer—all things. Here we lay every burden down. Personally I do at this moment rest in Jesus as to all the past. Whatever there

has been of sin to grieve over, whatever of mistakes, folly, or wrong—all this is no more my load, for it was laid on Jesus as my Scapegoat and He carried it away into the wilderness of forgetfulness. He has finished transgression and made an end of sin.

I also rest in Him in reference to the present. Whatever there may be of evil currently, or of need pressing, or of danger secret, or of slander foul, I leave all with Him in whom my soul reposes, who says to me, "Let not your heart be troubled." They say there is a skeleton in every closet. I know of none in mine—yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil. We are set free from present fret and worry by that dear hand which rules all things and causes all things to work together for good. Concerning today we enter into rest.

But there is the future. We foolishly try to look through the veil which hides the morrow from our view. But it is all in vain. Why should we wish to know what God conceals? It is known to our Father in Heaven. And that is enough for our faith. We can leave the future where we leave the past. He that believes thus enters into rest as to the past, the present and the future. We cast all our care on our Lord, for He cares for us. The poor commits himself unto God. And when he has so done, he is quiet and his soul is even as a weaned child. I see no cloud in my sky—Jesus fills it all. How can the children of the bride-chamber mourn while the Bridegroom is with them? Let us rest and rejoice.

What are the excellencies of this rest which comes by believing? I answer, they are very many. It brings us honor. "Unto you that believe, He is an honor." It is a glorious thing to rest where God rests. Many people would give their eyes to be invited to stay with the Queen. But, oh, to dwell where God dwells, and to rejoice where God rejoices! Every Believer has this dignity.

This rest is also a wonderful source of strength. When the tree strikes deep root it gets vigor for fruitage. No man has any great power to work successfully while he is worried. The fulcrum must rest, or the lever will not work. Fret creates a great leakage in a man and his force runs away uselessly. But when care is ended and he enters into rest with Christ, then all the force and energy of his being turns to holy service for God and man. Rest in Christ Jesus also gives an incentive to diligence. For we feel that since we have such sweet rest ourselves, we would wish others to have it. We tell the news which gladdens us. We cannot hide from the multitudes around us the glad tidings which have charmed away our griefs.

This rest also brightens life. When you enter into rest, life is not a dull and dreary round, such as the blind horse finds at the mill. Life is not a chain, which we must drag behind us—but wings on which we soar into the joyous blue and hold converse with the choristers of Heaven. I know not how to express my thankfulness that ever I had a being, seeing it is crowned with well-being in Christ Jesus. I could not say, "It is something better not to be." No, No, life is a favor now that I know my Lord. This rest in Christ is a fair foretaste of Heaven. We eat from the tables of celestials.

“Men did eat angels’ food” in the wilderness. And so do we today. We drink from the chalices of the glorified. When you rest in Christ you know what Heaven’s repose must be like and your heart is glad.

What are the limits of this rest? We may place them where we will—“According to your faith, so be it unto you.” “We which have believed do enter into rest.” It is an entrance and no more as yet. But when an Israelite had an entrance into Canaan, it was his own fault if he did not penetrate the interior and traverse the land from Dan to Beersheba. “Ask, and you shall receive.” “All things are possible to him that believes.” If you are not perfectly restful, it is not the fault of the rest. If you are not as restful in heart as saints in Heaven, you have only yourself to blame.

You have the same ground for rest as they have and the same Lord by His Presence and power to work repose in your spirit—

**“How sweetly rest Your saints above,
Which in Your bosom lie!
The Church below does rest in hope
Of that felicity.”**

There is not a joy in the Covenant of Grace but what you may have, if you have faith enough to lay hold upon it. There is an unlimited range of bliss before you—arise and take possession in the name of God. For it is all yours.

But still, for the most part here below all that we can get is an *entrance*—and we are happy if it is administered to us abundantly. We cross the threshold of our Father’s house and take the first chair in the first room we come to—this is a great privilege. But let us go further in and press into His Presence-chamber. Anyhow, let us say, “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

III. Under the third head I must draw your attention to THE PERSONAL ASSERTION OF THIS EXPERIENCE—“We which have believed do enter into rest.” I like the plain and positive speech of the Apostle for himself and his friends. If the Apostle had belonged to the same school as some of our good but weak Brethren, he would have said, “We that have believed hope that we may some day know a little of what the rest of faith means. We sometimes hope but more often fear. We are afraid to believe too certainly, lest it should be presumption. We sometimes indulge a faint hope that ultimately we may find rest.”

This is very weak milk-and-water, and no one will ever get much joy out of it. Let us attain to something better than this. Paul did not talk so. He said, “We which have believed do enter into rest”—and he said no more than is true. Some dog barks at me. I know what its bark means. My opponent cries, “You are too dogmatic and too positive.” To which I reply, “I cannot help being dogmatic when I say that I see what I know I have seen, and I declare that I feel what I know I am feeling.” Would you have me doubt my own consciousness? I know whether I am at rest or not.

I do not invite any of you to say that faith gives you peace unless it does so. It must be a matter of fact. We want no empty profession. I remember hearing of a pious minister who was asked to speak one day upon the

subject of joy in God. He stood up and said, "I am sorry that I have been requested to speak upon this topic. For the fact is, I am not walking in the light but I am crying, 'Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation.' I have grieved my heavenly Father and I am in the dark." He sat down and sobbed. And so did all his Brethren.

This honest confession did far more good than if he had patched up a tale and told of some stale experience years before. If you have not entered into rest, do not say that you have. Fictitious experience is dangerous to the forger of it. Experience borrowed from other people is like the borrowed axe, sure to fall into the ditch and make its user cry, "Alas,"

"Well," cries one, "we do not rest, we are hard at work for our Lord." And so am I. But this is rest to me, now that I am at peace with God. The labor of love for Christ is only another word for rest. He says, "Take My yoke upon you: and you shall find rest unto your souls." Carry Christ's burden and your shoulders shall have rest. We do not mean sleep or idleness when we speak of rest—that is not rest but *rust*. Our rest is found in the *service* of God.

"Oh," says one, "I have such a world of trouble!" Do you think you are the only one? Some time ago I met with a certain younger brother who has been made to suffer through taking the right side in the Down-Grade controversy. He wrote to me of his sore trials. I sympathized with him. But I reminded him that he was not alone in them. When Montezuma was being roasted alive by the Spaniards, one of his nobles, who was being tortured with him, cried out in his agonies. The king bade him be quiet, adding, "Do you think that I am on a bed of roses?" No, my Friend, you are by no means alone.

Tribulation is no strange thing to the favorites of Heaven. Is it, therefore, impossible to rest? By no means. Does not our Lord say, "In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." The holy children enjoy their greatest peace in the seven-times heated furnace. Our greatest joys swim on the crests of the huge billows of trouble. Through much tribulation we come to the kingdom and even in the midst of that tribulation, we glory, since we enter into rest.

"Oh," says one, "I find a conflict going on within me." Do you? So do I. Who does not feel a struggle while pressing forward towards perfection? Can there be rest where there is conflict? I answer, Assuredly. He that is at rest in his heart is the man to fight. While he cries, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" he is able at once to add, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed." Our confidence in Christ is not shaken, though all confidence in ourselves is gone. The more we see of our wretchedness and vileness by nature, the more we rest in Jesus.

"Oh," cries one, "sometimes my rest is broken." So it may be and yet you may have it still. Put the pieces together again and have them well riveted. Every now and then a child of God may fail as to the *strength* of his faith and then he loses rest for a while. But as the *Object* of his faith does not fail—since Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for-

ever—his rest soon comes back. Take down your harp. Your peace is like a river and it flows with fresh waters. We have peace and we must bear witness to it. For it is with many of us a matter of fact that by believing we enter into rest.

This declaration, that we have rest, should always be made with a holy purpose. We must not go about boasting of our peace. That is what little children do who know no better—they say, “Look at my new shoes.” There are many silly children nowadays who cry, “Look, how perfect I am!” Dear Child, it will be better for you to be seen and not heard. When you bear witness to your own enjoyment of the rest of faith, let it be your purpose, first, to glorify God who has given you this rest. And next, that you may convince others that such a rest is possible. How can we hope to convince others that there is the rest of faith, unless we enjoy it ourselves?

Not long ago, one of our ministers was preaching upon salvation and the work of the Spirit in the heart, when one of the congregation rose and asked him respectfully, “Sir, do you know all this by the report of others, or has this taken place in your own experience?” The preacher was by no means put about by the question but rather rejoiced in it. For he could honestly reply, “I have trusted Christ. I am saved and I know and feel the peace which results therefrom.” If he could not have made that solemn statement, he would have had no influence over the person who had put the question.

If we show by our daily lives that we rest in Christ, we shall be more likely to draw troubled ones to Jesus. The man who was born blind, when his eyes were opened, did not hesitate to say, “One thing I know: whereas I was blind, now I see.” This was a powerful argument to prove the power and Godhead of Him who had opened his eyes.

Brethren, if you can say as much as this—“By believing I have entered into rest,” be thankful. For this privilege is a *gift of love*. It is a wonderful instance of Sovereign Grace that such unworthy ones as we are should enter into God’s rest. But if you cannot say it, do not despair. Make it a point of question with yourself, “Why cannot I thus speak? Why have I not entered into rest? Is it because I have not believed?” Perhaps some fault of character may prevent your enjoying perfect rest. See where that flaw is. Are you living in any sin? If so, the sun may have risen, but if there is a bandage over your eyes, you will still be in the dark. Get rid of that which blinds the eye.

Or, are you trusting *yourself* as well as trusting in Christ? Are you relying on your *experience*? Then I do not wonder if you miss the rest of faith. Get rid of all that spoils the simplicity of your faith. Come to the Lord anew this morning. Possibly you are sickly in body and this may cause you discomfort for which you cannot otherwise account. Never mind, you may come just as you are, with all your sickness, weakness, or family trouble, and you may now rest in the Lord. Tell your grief to Jesus and He will breathe on you and say, “Peace be unto you.”

We ought to be at rest—we err when we are not. A child of God should not leave his bedroom in the morning without being on good terms with

his God. We should not dare to go into the world and feel, "I am out of harmony with my Lord. All is not right between God and my soul." A husband, if perhaps he has had a difference with his wife, will not feel happy in going to business while that little cloud remains. In domestic life we are wise if we square all such matters before we separate. Let us part with a kiss.

This method of unbroken fellowship should be carefully maintained towards God. Be at perfect rest with Him. "Acquaint yourself with Him and be at peace, for thereby good shall come unto you." Set all straight today so that you can say, "We which have believed do enter into rest." And when that is done, if anything should again happen to break the golden chain, renew it by faith. For by faith alone we stand. Destroy, by the power of God's Spirit, everything which weakens faith. For this will disturb your rest in God.

Oh, that all the way between here and Heaven we may journey on with restful hearts, led beside the still waters! I have seen, in an old book, a portrait of Mr. Sibbs, the famous Puritan, and it says at the bottom of the likeness, "Heaven was in him before he was in Heaven." Now, that must be so with us—for nobody gets into Heaven who does not get Heaven into himself first. Oh, to get Heaven into us this morning and keep it there forever!

"Alas," cries one, "I wish I had the rest you speak of but I cannot find it, though I study much and work hard." Harken to a parable—A little bird of the air found itself in a Church. It was anxious to find its way into the open air and so it flew aloft among the great timbers of the roof, where it was half buried and almost blinded, by the dust which lay thick upon the beams. There were no seeds, nor fruits, nor waters in that dry and thirsty height. It then made a dash at a window, glorious with many colors. But it found no way of escape. It tried again and again and at last dropped stunned upon the pavement of the aisle.

When it recovered itself a little, it did not again fly aloft. But seeing the door open upon the level of the floor, it joyfully flew through it into the open country. You are that bird. Your pride makes you deal with high things up there in the roof. You are blinding yourself among the lofty mysteries—there is no escape for you there, nor rest, nor even life. You seek a way through the glory of your own painted righteousness. But this will be death to you, if you persevere.

Drop down upon the floor of honest confession and lowly penitence. Come to the ground by self-humiliation. When you get lower ideas of yourself you will see before you the open door—Christ Jesus. As soon as you see Him, use the wings of a simple faith and you are at liberty and no more a captive doomed to die. May God bring you down, that He may exalt you in due time, for Christ's sake! Amen.

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THE BELIEVER'S PRESENT REST

NO. 3169

A SERMON
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ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JULY 6, 1873.

*"We who have believed do enter into rest."
Hebrews 4:3.*

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text are Sermons #866, Volume 15—REST and #2090, Volume 35—A DELICIOUS EXPERIENCE—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

THE text does not say that we who have believed *shall* enter into rest. That is a very great Truth, but it is not *the* Truth that is taught here. We "*do* enter into rest," even in this present life! All who are Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are already enjoying rest of heart and, in proportion as faith possesses their souls, in that proportion they enjoy perfect rest. It is not a future privilege—it is a matter of present enjoyment. And I pray my Brothers and Sisters in Christ not to impoverish themselves by making the text apply to the future, but to seek for the spiritual enrichment which God has given them by accepting the text just as the Apostle wrote it and so realizing that "we who have believed *do* enter into rest."

It appears from the connection in which these words appear that the type and pattern of all true rest for men was the rest of God at the end of the six days of Creation. After He had worked so wondrously and finished all His creative work, we read that the Lord "rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made." It is not easy for us to understand how the rest of God could ever have been broken, yet there must have been a deeper kind of rest for Him on that seventh day than during the previous six days, for it is expressly said that God did rest then. Into that great mysterious deep we will not try to plunge, but we know that the Lord was pleased, then, to institute the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His own rest and that Sabbath was to be observed by all men—and especially by all the Lord's own people in perpetuity, as if, I think, He would not only commemorate His own rest, but would also indicate that He intended men to be partakers of it.

God's grand ideal of man's happiness was that he could not only work, but that he should also rest. What a wonderful restfulness there seems to be in every part of Creation into which man does not come! Go into any part of the country where man is and there you find the plow cutting into the earth and the ox and the donkey and the horse toiling—and you meet with men and women in sickness and poverty and need. But get away into the woods, traverse the wilds of Nature and see how restful

everything is there! Note how the birds seem to have little else to do but to sing God's praises. Mark how the very brooks warble as they flow and how all Creation that is untouched by man appears to delight in a deep profound calm and peace! Had there been no Fall, the world would have been all restful—there would have been no thorns or thistles to vex and wound and add to man's labor—and no need for us to be always asking for fresh water power and steam power with which to alleviate the burden of the toil of man. Sweat from a weary brow, or the throbbing of a tired brain would have been altogether unknown! Earth would have kept her Sabbath even as God kept His. But sin has come into the world and from that blessed state of rest, man has fallen! Yet God is bringing us back to a rest similar to that—and all who have believed in Jesus have been brought into it. The Sabbath is to them the Divine memorial of God's rest, the type of their own and also a continual reminder of the spiritual rest which they have found in Christ!

There is another type of rest given us in the Word, namely that of the children of Israel entering into the promised land. "If Jesus (that is, Joshua), had given them rest," says the Apostle, "then would he not afterward have spoken of another day." All the while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they were constantly moving to and fro, dwelling in tents and enjoying but little comfort. Notwithstanding all the blessings with which God enriched them in the wilderness, it *was* a wilderness, and Moses truly called it, "the waste howling wilderness." They had no rest there and they were always looking forward to the land flowing with milk and honey to where they were journeying. Their eager longing was for a land where they could settle down, build houses, plant vineyards and dwell in quiet resting places. Canaan is, therefore, the type of the rest which God intends to give His people *here*. It is not the type of Heaven, except very imperfectly, for in Canaan there were Canaanites to be fought and to be gradually driven out. And there were some that were never driven out. But we thank God that there are no Canaanites to trouble the saints in Heaven. Canaan is the true pattern and type of the Believer's condition *upon the earth*. We who have believed in Jesus have crossed the Jordan. He has divided it for us and we have entered into rest. It is true that the Canaanites are still in the land, but the Lord also is in the land and, by His Grace, we shall surely drive them all out. We ought not to say that we hope to reach Canaan's peaceful shore, by-and-by—we are on it now! If we have truly believed in Jesus, our condition is rightly typified by the Israelites in Canaan who had obtained their inheritance, for Jesus has obtained His inheritance and God "has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

I. The gist of what I have been endeavoring to say to you is that there is a rest which belongs to all Believers *now*! And if they are living as they should live, they are in the enjoyment of it. I shall try, first, to DESCRIBE THIS REST FROM THE FAMOUS TYPE WHICH IS GIVEN OF THE REST OF GOD.

That rest of God, at the end of the six days of Creation, was like the rest which the Believer enjoys, for it spoke of *a work that was finished*. I need not refresh your memory with the familiar story of the Creation—how the darkness had been divided from the light, how the waters above the firmament had been separated from the waters below the firmament, how the living creatures had begun to swarm in the deeps and how, with rapid wing, the fowls of Heaven were cleaving the air. I need not detail to you the springing up of the herb yielding seed after its kind, of the tree yielding fruit after its kind, the creation of cattle, of creeping things, of the beasts of the earth and of man, the masterpiece of God. And you know that when the sun set on the sixth day, God had finished all His work—there remained nothing to be completed. He had placed in the world all the creatures that were necessary to make up the complete circle of existence! There was no deficiency in any one, neither was there a lack of any one. The whole work of Creation was finished and, therefore, God rested—He had other work to do—but from that particular work He rested and kept the Sabbath.

Now, can a Christian ever come to that condition? Yes, that is the true condition of every Christian. He sees the work of his own salvation complete—has he done it himself? Oh, no! If he had attempted to do it, he would have failed, and if any part of it had depended upon him, it would never have been accomplished. But the moment a sinner believes in Jesus, if he has been rightly instructed, he hears ringing from the Cross of Calvary that gladsome sentence, “It is finished!” And he knows that the Atonement is perfect, that the necessary justifying righteousness is completed, that every Covenant blessing is secured and guaranteed to him—and that all that was needed in order to lift the sinner from the very gates of Hell up to the Throne of God has been already worked out and brought in by the great Redeemer, the Incarnate Word of God! The worlds were framed by the Word of God and by that same Word of God men are saved. By that Word the darkness fled and life came and light—and by that same Word the darkness of our ruin has been dispelled and the light and life of our salvation have come to us! Beloved Believer, remember that you are not *partly* saved, but you are wholly saved! The robe you wear today does not reach part of the way to cover you, but covers you from head to foot! The washing which the Savior has given you has not washed away a part of your spots, but you are clean every whit! And looking upon the work of your salvation as you receive it from the hands of Jesus, you may rest as God rested and keep a long and blessed Sabbath just as God has kept it! He rested because His creative work was finished—and you may rest because the work of your salvation is also finished!

Another reason why God rested on the seventh day was that not only was the work finished, but *all that was finished was good*. We read that at the conclusion of His six days work, “God saw everything that He had made and, behold, it was very good.” And, therefore, He rested. And oh,

what rest a Believer gets when he looks on the finished work of Jesus Christ! And after examining every part of it, he is able to say of it all, "It is very good." To see Christ's work of covering sin and to note how His substitutionary Sacrifice has covered it so completely that even God Himself cannot see it, is indeed, "very good." To realize that Christ has sunk our sins into oblivion and made them cease to be—this also is, "very good." To look at Christ's justifying righteousness and to mark how perfect it is—not a thread missing, no part of the goodly texture having a flaw in it—this, too, is, "very good." To see Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King. To view Him in all His relationships and offices—this, too, is, "very good." Yes, Beloved, this is the way to get the *Sabbatismos*—the true rest which remains for the people of God! If we examine the work of Christ, both in its completeness and in all its details, as God the Father looked at His works and praised them all—if we let our judgment feel what a strong Rock we have on which to build our eternal peace—then, like the ever-blessed Jehovah, Himself, we shall rest and enter into His rest. Oh, that God would, by His Grace, enable us to do so!

But, on further thinking this subject over, you will remember that God's great rest was not only connected with a work that was finished and a work that was in all respects good, but that *it was also very closely connected with His holiness*, for "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." And He has said to us, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." I speak with the utmost reverence and trembling before the Divine Majesty, yet I can truly say that there could have been no real rest even to God, Himself, if it had been conceivable that He could have been unholy. Perfect restfulness necessitates perfect holiness! Sin, which is inconceivable in connection with God, is inconceivable in connection with real rest. Hence, Beloved, to make a true Sabbath, there must be a sanctifying of the day—it must be a holy day if it is to be a restful day! It is no use for men to say that they can get a rest by spending the Sabbath in amusement—they never will. There is no perfect rest to our entire manhood except in holiness and holy exercises, alone, can give complete rest to our whole being. Let us always remember this and pant after holiness. Heaven and holiness are twin sisters. As God makes you holy, He will make you happy—and when He has made you perfectly holy, you shall be perfectly happy! No waves of sorrow will ever come where there are no waves of sin. When you have done with sinning, you shall have done with sorrowing—

"There is sweet rest in Heaven; there is sweet rest in Heaven"—

but it is because there is a blessed absence of all the sin which must forever mar our peace and restfulness!

II. Now, secondly, I am going to DESCRIBE THIS REST FROM MY OWN EXPERIENCE AND FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE GENERALLY. "We who have believed do enter into rest."

First, *we enter into rest concerning all dread of God and all terror on account of past sin*. It is but a little while ago that our sins greatly alarmed us. We knew that God must punish us for them and, therefore, we could

not rest. But those sins, which then disturbed us, have been forgiven—we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son—and now, we who have believed, have no dread of punishment, no fear of the wrath to come, for we have entered into rest! I can truly say that this is my condition. Is it not yours, also, my beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ? If you really believe in Jesus, it must be!

Next, *we enter into rest concerning all fears as to the future*. As to any trouble we may have in this life, we know that God will overrule it for our good. As to the pangs of death, we know that the Lord will be with us and will sustain us in the valley of death-shade and we have no fear of anything that may follow after death, for what can hurt or disturb those of whom Christ has said, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory”? We are delivered from all fear of judgment, for who shall condemn those whom God has justified, and whom He will glorify? All dread as to our past sin is gone from us forever! Concerning past sin, our soul is even as a newborn child—we are cleansed from it by the precious blood of Jesus! And as for the future, we have no more dread about it than the angels in Heaven have! They know that nothing can ever harm them, for they are God's own chosen ones—and so are we if we are Believers in Jesus Christ.

We also now have rest from all our former sinful works. Once we were the slaves of our own evil passions and we were hurried here and there to degrading service by Satan and the lusts of the flesh. But now that the Son of God has made us free, we are free indeed! We find a joyous liberty in the ways of holiness and it is our constant delight to do the will of God. Thrice happy are we who have broken the bonds of sin and are no longer the servants of iniquity. And we are equally free from all servile works for self-salvation. Oh, I pity those poor people who are working to save themselves—those who go to church or chapel and who are kept from this offense, or urged to that other apparent excellence simply because they hope for a reward thereby! Sons of Hagar, Ishmaelite children of the bondwoman, you can never be inheritors of the rest which is the birthright of Isaac and all the children of the freewoman! You must be cast out even as Hagar's son was. But the man who believes in Jesus knows that he is saved, so he has no need to try to save himself. That work is done and done forever! And now we work *from* life, not *for* life! Now we work because *we are saved*, not in order *to be saved*! Now we feel that we have not to win any merit by anything that we do, but that the Infinite Merit of Christ has already procured for us full acceptance with God. And what we have to do now is to prove our gratitude to God for the Divine work that is already completed. What a blessed thing it is to rest both from the sinful service of Satan and from the servile service of the Law!

I trust that many Believers here can say that they have now come to *rest from all ambitious, discontented works*. The worldly man is never sa-

tisfied—he always wants to be greater, wiser, richer and more highly esteemed than he is. But he who truly believes in Jesus feels that God may do as He likes with him. If I am little, I thank God that He has many little ones whom He greatly loves. And if He makes me great, I thank Him because He will give me Grace to bear my greatness with becoming humility. If I am poor, I will bless the Lord that He has promised that at least bread and water shall be given to those who trust Him. If He makes me rich, I will ask Him to give me the Grace to use my substance for His Glory. It is a blessed thing to come to such a pass as this about all worldly things and leave the disposal of all of them with God.

Some people are always fretting and fuming. They appear to have been born in stormy weather and to be perpetually agitated in mind so that they cannot rest. Only the other day, a gardener I knew of was complaining greatly of the heavy rain which had done some damage to the garden where he was working. A Quaker, who stood by, said to him, “Friend, you ought not to complain of the rain, for if it has not done this garden any good, it has done good to the fields of many of your neighbors. Therefore you ought to be glad on their account and to thank God.” And then the good man very wisely added, “I do not think that, after all, we would have the weather any better managed by you than it is by God, if it could be put into your hands.” That is the right way to look at all things—they are far better ordered by God than by any man! Christian, you could not order them better if you had the ordering of them, so be perfectly content and say, “Not my will, Lord, but Yours be done.” The more faith grows, the more rest grows. But when our faith begins to forget the Lord and we commence to worry and to fret, then our rest goes at once. It is glorious to live exempt from care by the blessed power of prayer—to be able to take every trouble to God and leave it with Him. I know what it means to do so for I have sometimes had a church trouble or a household trouble and I have done my best with it—but bad has been my best and, at last, I have taken it to my God and I have said to Him—“Lord, I will not worry myself about that trouble anymore. I leave it with You—do what You please with it.” And I have always found that the tangle has been unraveled when I have done that with it! There would always be a way found for us out of every trouble if we would trust wholly in God and not rely upon ourselves or our fellows!

“We who have believed do enter into rest.” I have already incidentally shown you that *the rest of the Christian depends upon his believing*, but I want just now to emphasize that fact. It is not as a doer that you will get rest, but as a Believer! It is not as a professor, it is not as anything else except as a Believer that you will obtain rest of heart. My Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I beseech you to hold fast your faith. There are many things that will tempt you to live by your experience, to live by your feelings and to live by your graces and your attainments—but remember that sentence that is again and again repeated in Scripture, “The just shall live by faith.” Be like poor Jack the Huckster, whose one saying was—

***"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my All-in-All."***

Do not go an inch beyond that declaration—

***"I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me."***

The moment you go beyond that, you may get some temporary excitement, as they do who profess to be perfect and who, in these modern days, are reviving old-fashioned heresies by professing that they are perfectly sanctified, which I venture to say they are not! You may get a delirious joy for a time, but it will evaporate before long. But keeping close to the Cross is the thing for me! I remember an old countryman saying to me, long ago, "Depend upon it, my Brother, if you or I get one inch above the ground, we get just that inch too high." And I believe it is so. Flat on our faces before the Cross of Christ is the place for us—realizing that we are nothing and that Jesus Christ is everything!

"We who have *believed* do enter into rest." Not we who have *felt* this or that. Not we who *think* we are somebodies. But we who know that we are nobodies and hang alone upon Christ! I suppose there never was a more restful period to any of us than when we lay in our mother's bosom and just drank in our life's nourishment from her. And there is never such a restful period to any child of God as when he is just a little babe, hanging on the bosom of his God and drinking in all he needs from the eternal fountains of Divine Love and Life! Oh, to be always such a blessed babe as that, relying upon my God for all the strength I need! Then may I utter Paul's paradox, "When I am weak, then am I strong." Though I am a fool, God is my Wisdom! Though I am nothing at all, God is my All-in-All. This is the way to enter into rest through believing!

Now, lastly, let me remind you, Beloved, that *this rest is perfectly consistent with labor*. In verse 11 the Apostle says, "Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest." It is an extraordinary injunction, but I think he means, let us labor not to labor. Our tendency is to try to *do something* in order to save ourselves. But we must beat that tendency down and look away from self to Christ. Labor to get away from your own labors! Labor to be clean rid of all self-reliance! Labor in your prayers never to depend upon your prayers! Labor in your repentance never to rest upon your repentance and labor in your faith not to trust to your faith, but to trust only to Jesus! When you begin to rest upon your repentance and forget the Savior, away with your repentance! And when you begin to pray and you depend upon your prayers and forget the Lord Jesus, away with your prayers! When you think you are beginning to grow in Grace and you feel, "Now I am somebody," away with such spurious growth as that, for you are only being puffed up with pride and not really growing at all! Labor not to labor. Labor to keep down your natural self-righteousness and self-reliance. Labor to continue where the publican was and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Labor to get where Mary was, sitting at the Master's feet and learning of Him. Labor not to grow upward in self-esteem, but to grow downward in humiliation—growing

continually less and less, and less in your own estimation—and always crowning Christ Lord of All!

Labor also to show your gratitude to God for what He has done for you, and then labor to show your love to men. You must not suppose that when we enter into rest, it means that we are idle. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "My Father works up to now, and I work." God rests, yet He works. Heaven is a place of rest, but it is not a place of idleness—there is still holy service to be done there, so you Christian people who are perfectly saved, devote all your strength to the winning of others for Christ! Show your love to Jesus by trying to find some of His lost sheep for Him. Awaken yourselves, my Brothers and Sisters who have entered into rest, and prove to mankind that the grand old Calvinistic Doctrine of a finished salvation does not breed sluggishness! Rise, I pray you, and show that the children of the freewoman are not slothful, but that the motive of gratitude to God is a higher and more potent one than the selfish motive of seeking to save yourselves! Let those who want to save themselves go and work for themselves, but as for you who are saved, go and work for Jesus! And let your deeds of holy heroism prove that you are constrained by love to Him to do all that you can to bring others to trust in Him! Now, as some of you are coming to this Communion Table, may it prove to be a feast of rest to your souls! Sitting, as you will be, in the posture of rest, eating the bread and drinking the wine which are the tokens of the finished work of Christ, may you have real rest in Him! And oh, that some poor sinner who has never believed in Jesus, may do so now, for thus shall he find rest unto his soul! The Lord grant it, for Jesus sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: 2 CORINTHIANS 4.

Verse 1. *Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not.* It is a very high privilege to be called to the work of the Christian ministry. And when the minister remembers what great mercy he has, himself, received, what sins have been forgiven, what favors have been bestowed—he has the very best incentives in all the world to pursue his ministry with diligence and with zeal. "We faint not," says the Apostle. We do not hang our harps upon the willows. We do not pray to be allowed to retire from the battle and give up the strife, but feeling how great has been the mercy of God to our own souls, we are stirred up to press forward with holy zeal to win the victory! We long that others may taste of the same good things on which we have feasted.

2. *But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the Truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.* There have, alas, been many preachers who have handled the Word of God in the manner described by the Apostle. They have cut and trimmed the Truth in order to please their generation—they have kept

back *this*, or have made unduly prominent *that*, instead of giving all the Truth of God its proper and proportionate prominence in their ministry. But such men have not, after all, won the respect of their hearers. There is an old story told of King John of England that when he was closely pressed by the barons, he wrote to the Emperor of Morocco and offered to turn Muslim and take an oath of allegiance to him if he would send an army to help him. And it is said that ever after the Emperor of Morocco abhorred and detested the very name of John, for he said he must be an abominable miscreant to be willing to change his religion for the sake of gain! Ah, my Brothers, we never gain any respect, even from the world, by seeking after it in this fashion! Be thoroughly honest, especially you who are in the Christian ministry. Be outspoken, blunt and plain—and then, even if men's prejudices condemn you, their consciences will commend you for speaking what you believe to be the Truth of God.

3, 4. *But if our Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.* [The following Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon parts of these two verses, are #2304, Volume 39—BLINDED BY SATAN; #2077, Volume 35—THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST and #1663, Volume 28—THE TRUE GOSPEL IS NO HIDDEN GOSPEL—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Without light from above, no man can perceive the beauties either of the Gospel or of Christ Himself. Until God the Holy Spirit sheds a spiritual light upon the Person, offices and work of Christ, men grope in the dark as blind men do. They see not the Truth of God. They are not persuaded of its excellence. Our ministry is to them a veiled ministry, they do not comprehend it. Let those who receive not the Gospel see what a miserable state theirs is—they are blinded by “the god of this world.” He has such supremacy over their intellects that he has utterly perverted and ruined them!

5. *For we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.* Hence we learn that anything like priestcraft is altogether foreign to the Bible. The “priest” preaches up himself, the extraordinary value of his ordination, the occult influences which flow from his touch, the mysterious power which dwells in baptismal water and in “consecrated” wafers and poured-out wine. This is preaching themselves with a vengeance! But Christ's Apostles preached not themselves—they preached up Christ and Him crucified. Paul wrote, “God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” And this was the constant theme of all the Apostles. If they mentioned themselves at all, they simply said, as Paul does here, “Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.”

6. *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* [See Sermon #1493, Volume 25—THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] There is the very Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, for He is, “very God of very God,” and he who will but think of the

wondrous mystery of the Incarnate Deity and the simple but marvelous plan of salvation through Christ's atoning Sacrifice will see infinitely more Glory, there, than in all God's works in Creation or Providence. Well does Watts say—

***“The spacious earth and spreading flood
Proclaim the wise and powerful God!
And Your rich glories from afar
Sparkle in every rolling star.
But in Christ's looks a Glory stands,
The noblest labor of Your hands,
The pleasing luster of His eyes
Outshines the wonders of the skies.”***

7. *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.* The original might very fairly be rendered, “We have this treasure in oyster shells,” for, just as pearls are found in the shells of oysters, so God gives to those who preach the Word, the treasure of the Gospel, yet they are themselves nothing but the oyster shells, nothing but the earthen vessel in which God pleases to place His priceless treasures. If you have done anything in the service of God, my Brother, remember that you are nothing but the oyster shell—it is God's Truth that is the pearl in you! So while you are thankful for the honor that He puts upon you, mind that you give Him all the glory. It is well to take the right view of our own imperfections and infirmities, as Paul did when he wrote, “Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” The infirmity of the creature leaves more room for the display of the greatness of the Creator, for if God can work such wondrous results by using such poor tools as we are, how great must be His power and skill!

8, 9. *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed. We are perplexed but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.* “We are troubled on every side.” There seems to be an allusion here to the Greek wrestling games. Sometimes in wrestling, a man would be gripped by his adversary so that he could scarcely move hand or foot, yet bravely says the Apostle, “We are not distressed,” or, as the original seems to suggest, “We still have a plan of overcoming our adversaries. Though they seem to have got us entirely in their power, there is still something that we can do to obtain our release.” And he goes even further than that, for he says, “We are perplexed”—it seemed as if there was nothing that he could do, yet he added, “but not in despair”—“not altogether without help,” as the marginal reading renders it—for when he could do nothing, God could do everything! The death of creature-strength is the birth of Omnipotent Might!

“Persecuted, but not forsaken”—having no man's face to smile upon him, but still rejoicing in the light of God's Countenance. “Cast down”—as if his antagonist had thrown him and he had fallen heavily upon the ground. Yet he says, as he springs up again, “Cast down, but not destroyed.” Many a time the Christian wrestler is thrown by his foe, but he never has a final fall. As Paul, when he was stoned at Lystra and left for

dead, rose up again, and soon went on with his work, so the Christian, when he has been cast down by trouble, often seems to gain new life and vigor—and to go on to serve his Master even better than he did before!

10. *Always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.* The Apostles were always ready to die for Christ and, therefore, they were enabled to live so much like Christ—imitating His life and being prepared to follow Him even to the death whenever He called them to do so.

11-14. *For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death works in us, but life in you. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and, therefore, have I spoken; we also believe and, therefore, speak knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.* There is no possibility of serving God well, especially under great trials and persecutions, without a deeply-rooted confidence in the Truth of His Gospel. Once have a doubt concerning that and the strong sinews of our spiritual manhood are cut! Once begin to question the evidences of our holy religion and you cannot henceforth serve God as you did before! Oh, to be strengthened every day with might in the inner man—to feel that in our own experience we have continually fresh proofs of the Truth of the Gospel and that, whether we have trials or delights, we are thereby the more firmly rooted in faith, even as the trees are rooted both by the March winds and the April showers—and so rooted in faith that we grow into it and cannot be separated from it because it has become a part of ourselves! Religion is nothing to any of you unless it is woven into the very warp and woof of your being—it must go right into your very soul and become a vital part of you, or else you have never received it in Truth!

15, 16. *For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant Grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perishes, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.* The sickness that crumbles away the body of a Christian often confirms his soul in the faith that he received when he was strong and well. Some of the healthiest hours that God's people ever have are the hours of their sorest sicknesses. God often sends His people fevers to make them well. He sends them losses to make them rich. He takes away their earthly friends to bring them closer to their Best Friend and He brings them to their wits' end that they may begin to be truly wise! Often, when God strips us of all our worldly possessions, it is the most soul-enriching season we have ever known! But, on the other hand, the day of temporal prosperity has often been a day of spiritual poverty. Adversity has many a time been an angel in disguise, but prosperity has been the devil in a mask! Let us take care that we cleave closely to Christ under both experiences, for then both of them shall be sanctified to us.

17. *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Notice the antithesis here. “Light affliction”—a “weight of glory.” “Affliction” is not set in contrast with peace, or freedom from affliction, but with “glory.” The “light affliction” is “for a moment”—the “weight of glory” is “eternal.” And then, as if this were not enough, the Apostle has to exhaust all ordinary powers of speech in order to adequately express the contrast between the, “light affliction” and the, “weight of glory.” It is “far more exceeding”—not only a soul brim-full of bliss and overflowing, but far more than that if there can be such a thing—“a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

18. *While we look not at the things which are seen.* Alas for us if we did!

18. *But at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal.* Temporal and temporary! See how they melt away, one after another!

18. *But the things which are not seen are eternal.* [See Sermon #1380, Volume 23—VANITIES AND VERITIES—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] The substance is beyond the river. The shadows are here. God help us to look for the substance and to claim it as our own—and let none of us try to grasp the shadows which would be worthless if we could ever hold them in our hands!

—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.**

REST

NO. 866

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 18, 1869,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For we who have believed do enter into rest.”
Hebrews 4:3.***

REST! A dainty word, indeed! Too rich a syllable for this unstable earth! Is it not a stray word from the language of the celestials? REST! Is it obtainable? Is it possible? Can there ever be rest for the race who were driven out of Paradise to till the ground from where they were taken and to eat bread in the sweat of their face? Rest! Is it possible for a soul polluted with sin, tossed to and fro with lusts and agitated with outward temptations? Is not man like the dove sent forth from the ark, when towards evening, it longed for a rest for the sole of its feet, but found none? Is it not the fate of man's soul to use her wings as long as they will last her—forever flitting to and fro in vain pursuit of rest—seeing far and wide mocking wastes of disappointments, but never reaching a place of repose for her flagging pinions?

How apt was the simile of the old Saxon chieftain when he compared the unenlightened soul to the bird which flew in at the open windows of the banquet hall, was scared by the uproarious shouts of boisterous warriors around the fire and passed out again by another window into the cold and the darkness! Our spirit, attracted by the tempting glare, darts into the halls of pleasure, but soon is frightened and alarmed by the rough voice of conscience and the demands of insatiable passions and away it flies from the momentary gleam of pleasure and dream of happiness into the thick darkness of discontent and the snow storm of remorse.

Man, without God, is like the mariner in the story, condemned to sail on forever and never to find a haven. He is the real wandering Jew, immortal in his restlessness. Like the evil spirit, man by nature walks through dry places, seeking rest and finding none. Of our race, by nature, it might almost be said as of our Redeemer, varying but a little His words, “Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the *soul of man* has not where to lay *its* head.” I speak to many this morning to whom this has been exceedingly true from their childhood onward. They have been vainly hoping for enduring contentment and striving after solid satisfaction. Piloted first in one direction and soon in the opposite, they have compassed the whole world and investigated all pursuits, but as yet in vain.

I see you today weary and disquieted, like galley-slaves chained to the oar and I mark the fears which reveal themselves in your countenances, for the whip of the taskmaster is sounding in your ears. Long have you tugged the oar of ambition, or of the lust of pleasure, or of avarice, or of care. Rest but a moment, I pray you, and listen to the witness of those who declare to you that escape from bondage is possible and that rest is

to be found even now! As your galley floats along on the stream of the Sabbath and your toil is a little while suspended, hear the sweet song of those redeemed by the blood of Jesus—for they sing of rest, even of rest this side the grave!

Listen for awhile and perhaps you will discover how they found their rest and learn how you may find it, too. What if your chains should be broken today and your labors should be ended and you should enter into perfect peace! If so, it will be the best Sabbath that your soul ever knew! And others shall share in the gladness, for we who may be privileged to help you, shall participate in your joy and even spirits before the Throne of God shall rejoice when they hear that another weary one has found rest in Christ Jesus!

In handling our text, we shall first try to describe *the rest of the Christian*. We shall, secondly, mention *how he obtained it*. Thirdly, we shall enumerate *the grounds upon which that rest is settled*, and then we shall say a few words by way of practical reflection.

I. First, it appears from the text that even now persons of a certain character enjoy rest. Of the NATURE OF THIS REST we are to speak. It is not a rest merely to hear of, to speak of and to desire—but a rest into which Believers have *entered*. They have passed into it and are in actual enjoyment of it today. “We who have believed do enter into rest.” That rest is pictured in some degree by *its types*. *Canaan* was a representation of the rest of Believers. By some it has been thought to picture Heaven and it may be so used without violence. But remember that in Heaven there are no Hivites or Jebusites to be driven out, while in the rest which God gives to His people here on earth, there yet remain struggles with inbred sins and uprising corruptions which must be dethroned and destroyed.

Canaan is a fair type of the rest which belongs to the Believer this side the grave. Now what a sweet rest Canaan must have been to the tribes after 40 years’ pilgrimage! In the howling wilderness they wandered in a solitary way amid discomforts which only desert wanderers can imagine. Forever were they on the move. The tents which were pitched but yesterday must be struck today, for the trumpets are sounding and the cloudy pillar is leading the way. What packing and unpacking! What harnessing and unharnessing! What marches through clouds of dust and over unyielding beds of sand! What variations of temperature, from the heat of the burning desert by day to its chilliness at night! What discomforts of constant travel and frequent warfare!

In those 40 years, with all the mercy which sustained them, with all the manna which dropped from Heaven and the crystal stream which followed them from the struck Rock, they were men of weary feet and they must have longed for green fields and cities which have foundations. They must have pined for the time when they could, every man, sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree and possess his lot in the land flowing with milk and honey. Such is the Christian’s rest. He was led out by Moses, the Law—out of the Egypt of sin into the wilderness of conviction and seeking after God. And now Jesus, the true Joshua, has led him into perfect acceptance and peace! And since the discomforts of conviction and the troubles of unpardoned sin are over, he sits down under the vine and fig tree of the gracious promise and rejoices in Christ Jesus.

Think, then, of Canaan as a type of the peace which God's people at this present time by faith enjoy. So also is *the Sabbath*. That is a blessed standing ordinance, reminding Believers of their delightful privileges. Work during the six days, for it is your duty—"six days shall you labor"—but on the Sabbath enjoy perfect rest, both in body and in soul. Yet look to the higher meaning of the Sabbath and learn to cease from your own works. If you were to be saved by works, you must work without a moment's pause, for you could never complete the toil since absolute perfection would be demanded.

But when you come to Christ your works are finished! There is no hewing of wood nor drawing of water. There is no keeping of commandments with a view to merit, no toilsome tugging at ceremonies and ordinances with a view to acceptance. "It is finished" is the silver bell that rings your soul into a marriage of peace and joy in Christ Jesus. Take care, Believer, that you live in a perpetual Sabbath of rest in the finished work of your ascended Lord. Remember that your *legal* righteousness is complete—you have ceased from your own works as God did from His—and let none provoke you to go back to the old bondage of the Law! Stand fast in the blessed liberty of Divine Grace, rejoicing in the perfect work of your Substitute and Surety.

What a wonderful type of the Christian's rest *the Sabbatic year* would have been if the Jews had possessed faith enough to keep it! Once in seven years they were not to plow the ground nor prune the vines, nor do anything of agricultural labor. They were to eat during the whole year that which grew of itself, and I suppose there would have been such an abundance in the sixth year that they would have been able to live on the seventh without toil. We have heard, but only heard, of a peaceful period in store for us in which we are to be untaxed by our Government. May we live to see it! But here was a period in which men were to live without toil during a whole 12 months and so would be able to consecrate their entire time to the worship of their gracious God with joy and thankfulness.

That year was the type of the Christian's life in the matter of his salvation. So he ought to live rejoicing in his God, resting from all servile labors—his soul fed upon the spontaneous bounty of Heaven and his heart rejoicing in the fullness which is treasured up in Christ Jesus. If the types may help us to a guess at the peace of the Christian, we may, perhaps, come at it a little more clearly and practically by remembering *the oppositions to peace which are removed in the Believer*. Can there ever be rest to a heart which has sinned? Answer, yes! The Believer rests from the guilt of sin because he has seen his sins laid upon Christ, his Scapegoat, and knowing well that nothing can be in two places at one time, he concludes that if sin were laid on Christ, it is not on him!

And thus he rejoices in his own deliverance from sin, through its having been imputed to his glorious Substitute. The Believer in Christ Jesus sees sin effectually punished in Christ Jesus and knowing that Justice can never demand two penalties for the same crime, or two payments for the same debt, he rests perfectly at peace with regard to his past sins. He has, in the Person of his Surety, endured the Hell that was due on the account of transgressions. Christ, by suffering in his place, has answered all the demands of Justice, and the Believer's heart is perfectly at rest. How

does he deal with his *inbred sins* and tendencies to evil? Can a man rest while those are within him? Yes! He rests even though those are struggling within him for the mastery, because there is a new life within him which holds them by the throat and keeps them under foot.

Though his corruptions strive and wrestle, yet while the saint firmly believes in Christ, he knows that the struggles of his sins are but a gasp for life and that the weapons of victorious Grace will slay them all and end the strife forever. He is assured that Christ has broken the dragon's head and that sin was crucified with Christ and, therefore, he regards his inward lusts as being dying malefactors. And though they may show some threatening signs of strength, yet he sees the nails in their hands and in their feet and knows that before long death will follow upon crucifixion. But has the Christian no *care*? Other men are sorely beset with perplexing anxieties—have Believers none of these? The rich find cares in their wealth—how shall they increase it? How shall they retain it? The poor have cares in their scant and poverty—how shall they make ends meet and provide things honest in the sight of men?

Yes, but in this matter the Believer has learned to cast his care on Him who cares for him. He has heard the voice which says, "Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication make known your requests unto God." "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Oh, but what rest it gives to the soul when it feels that God appoints everything and that Providence is not for us to arrange but is all settled and determined by Infinite Wisdom!

I thank God that I am not the pilot of my own destiny, called to peer anxiously into the storm and murky darkness and to thread with awful fear the narrow channel between rocks and quicksand! I have taken a Pilot on board whose infallible wisdom forbids any error! Let my soul go sweetly to her rest in full assurance that all is ordered rightly where God commands all things. But has not the Christian his *troubles and temptations*? Is he not sometimes vexed with bodily pain? Does he not resort to the grave with many tears over departed ones? Has he not a checkered life like others? Ah, yes, he has no exemption from the war of sorrow! But he knows that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose! He sees no Divine anger in his losses and fears no wrath from God in his chastisements.

He believes that mercy mixes all his cups. That goodness and truth, like a silver thread, run through the texture of his outer life. It is while he believes that he thus rests—and, mark you, it is *only* while he believes and in *proportion* as he believes, that he enters into rest. If his faith is strong enough, not a wave of trouble shall roll across his spirit, though all God's waves and billows may go over his head. "Still," says one, "has not the Christian *service* to perform? How then can it be said that he has rest?" I know that he has service, but in this service he does rest, like birds of which I have heard that sleep upon the wing. It is *rest to labor* for the Lord Jesus! A believing soul is never more at ease than when she is putting forth her full strength in the service of God!

I suppose it is no toil to larks to sing as they mount and certainly it is no trouble to Christians to pour forth a holy life, which is their soul's song. Christian service is the outflow of the Believer's inner nature—the spontaneous outburst of indwelling Grace—that though it may be toil to the lip and toil to the brain, it is perfect rest to the spirit. This I know—there is no unrest I feel more heavily than that of *not* being at work for my Lord! And if I am made to stay at home by sickness, or any other cause and may not serve my Master, it is no rest to me. I gather, then, that it is possible to be still but *not* to rest—and certainly possible to be indefatigable in service and to be resting all the while.

“Still,” adds one, “does the Christian who believes ever rest in the matter of the approach of *death*? He must die as other men, however favored of Heaven!” Yes, and this is one of the points in which his rest is exceedingly complete, for he comes to look at death not only as no enemy, but as a *friend* and he counts on his departure even as a thing to be desired! What is there, here, that should cause him to wait? What is there upon earth that should detain an immortal spirit? To depart and to be with Christ, is, to him, far better! Do not the groans and dying strife, the breaking up of the bodily system and the pains and anguish which generally precede death—do not these break the Christian's rest? I tell you, no!

When faith is steadfast, he looks at these discomforts connected with the removal of his earthly tabernacle as being appointed of his Father and he resigns himself to them, expecting to receive, with the increase of his bodily pain, an increase of inward consolation. He reckons that if he loses the silver of bodily strength and gets the gold of heavenly experience, he shall be a great gainer! Boldly he laughs at death and rejoices in the thought of departure, that he may be with Christ eternally! In a word, Brothers and Sisters, the rest of the Believer, while his faith is sustained by the Spirit of God, is such a one as no stranger intermeddles with—such as the sinner can hear of with the ear, but cannot imagine in his heart.

Sinner, you have had wealth lavished on you. You have enjoyed growing prosperity. You have been young and merry. You have mixed with company who laugh by day and dance far into the night, but you do not know—you cannot even *guess*—what our rest is who have taken Jesus Christ to be our Savior! We have *God* to be our Father and the Holy Spirit to be our Comforter. I wish you did know, for I believe that if you once understood the rest of the Believer's life, you would give up all that this world calls good and great without one lingering look for the sake of the solid joy and lasting treasure which only Zion's children know!

Still, to give you a complete idea, as far as possible, of the rest which belongs to Believers I would notice that some conception of this rest may be gathered from *the Graces which a true faith begets* and fosters in the Christian mind. After all, a man makes his own condition. It is not the dungeon or the palace that can make misery or happiness. We carry palaces and dungeons within ourselves, according to the constitution of our natures. Now, faith makes a man *heavenly in mind*. It makes him care more for the world *to come* than for that which now is. It makes the invisible precious to him and the visible comparatively contemptible. Do you

not see, therefore, what rest a true faith gives us, amidst the distresses of this mortal life?

You are very poor, but if you set small store by riches, poverty will not distress you. If you have learned to consider *spiritual* things as the better part, you will not pine because the waters of the nether springs are scant. Have you ever heard of the Persian King who gave his various counselors different gifts? To one he gave a golden goblet, but to another a kiss—whereupon all the counselors of the court were envious of the man who had the kiss and they counted the goblets of gold and jewels and caskets of silver to be less than nothing as compared with that familiar token of royal favor. O poor but favored saints, you will never envy those who drink golden cups of fortune if you obtain the kiss from Jesus' mouth! You know that His love is better than all the world beside and the enjoyment of it will yield you the richest rest. How can you feel the miseries of envy when you possess in Christ the best of all portions? Who wants cisterns by the river? Who cries for pebbles when he possesses pearls?

The Grace of faith, moreover, works in us *resignation*. He who fully trusts his God becomes perfectly resigned to His Father's will. He knows that all God's dealings must be right, since the Lord is much too wise to err and much too full of loving kindness to deal harshly with His people. This resignation is another source of rest to the spirit. The habit of resignation is the root of peace. A godly child had a ring given him by his mother and he greatly prized it, but on a sudden he unhappily lost his ring and he cried bitterly.

Recomposing himself, he stepped aside and prayed—after which his sister laughingly said to him, "Brother, what is the good of praying about a ring? Will praying bring back your ring?" "No," he said, "Sister, perhaps not, but praying has done this for me—it has made me quite willing to do without the ring if it is God's will—and is not that almost as good as having it?" Thus faith quiets us by resignation, as a babe is hushed in his mother's bosom. Faith makes us quite willing to do without the mercy which once we prized. And when the heart is content to be without the outward blessing, it is as happy as it would be with it, for it is at rest.

Besides, faith works humility. Dependence upon the merit of Christ and a sense of pardoned sin work in us a low esteem of our own merits and rights. Then we do not strive after mastery. If others think ill of us, it does not break our heart, for we say, "If they knew me, they might think still worse of me." If some do not respect us as we deserve, we make small account of that, for we think it a little matter for such poor worms as we are to be respected, or the reverse. And if there are some who speak evilly of us, we take it joyfully because we never thought ourselves worthy to be exempted from reproach. Surely we were sent here on purpose that we might take part with the great Head of the Church by suffering for the promotion of the Divine purposes! A humble heart is fitted to be filled with rest.

Faith furthermore promotes *unselfishness* by kindling worthier affections. So much is this for our peace, that it is most true that were a man perfectly unselfish it would be impossible for him to be disturbed with discontent. All our unrest lies at the root of *self*. If a man could be perfectly content to be anything that God would have him be and have no de-

sires except for God's Glory, he could never be banished, for all places would be alike to him! He could never be poor, for in every condition he would have what his heart desired. Brothers and Sisters, I cannot continue this long catalog, but wherever faith rules, it brings with it a refining fire which, as it burns up our corruptions, also stops the raging of our passions and creates a peace of God which passes all understanding.

It creates a peace warranting the Apostle's declaration that, "we who have believed do enter into rest." Faith tones us down into little children. It casts our heart in a fresh mold. It brings us into harmony with the universe and we who were out of tune with God and Nature are once more reconciled to the Divine One, His purposes and Providences. All goes well with the man who trusts in God—the beasts of the field are at peace with him and the stones of the field have made a league with him! All must be right when the heart is right, and the heart is right when faith rejoicingly reconciles the soul to God through the death of Jesus Christ. Thus I have, as best I am able, described the Christian's rest. I only hope—to use John Bunyan's language—that many of your mouths are watering to get a personal share in this rest.

II. The second point to consider is, HOW DOES THE CHRISTIAN OBTAIN THIS REST?—"We *who have believed*." Notice this—that the way in which the Believer comes to his rest is entirely through *belief* or *trust*. How I love to think of this word! If the Apostle had said, "We who have been eminently consecrated do enter into rest," I could have wept over the text with shame and dismay. If he had said, "We that have been mightily useful and earnest and indefatigable in service—we do enter into rest," I should have looked at it very wistfully, and have said, "I am afraid I shall never reach it."

But, "we who have *believed*." Why, that will suit thousands here! It will suit some of you who have been mourning all week because you cannot be what you want to be—because you cannot serve God as you would like to do. "We who have believed." So, then, the gate of the fold of rest, the pearly doorway into the New Jerusalem is simply *belief* in the Lord Jesus! What? Nothing else but *believing*? I see nothing else in the text—nothing but believing. And what is this believing? Why it is a simple *trust*—it is a trusting upon Christ as God's appointed Savior! It is trusting the Father and believing in His infinite love to us! It is trusting the Holy Spirit and giving up ourselves to the sway of His Divine indwelling!

Trusting brings rest. This is a simple Truth of God, and yet it is a Truth we need to remember, consider and be assured upon! Peace does not come to the Believer through his works. He ought to *have* works—he *must* have them if he has the life of Divine Grace within his heart. He should attend to Baptism, to the Lord's Supper and to all Christian ordinances, but he does not get rest through these. The rest comes through his *faith*, not through the ordinances. "Means of Divine Grace," men call those ordinances and some have gone to great lengths as to what comes to us through sacraments—but I say most boldly that the Apostle goes to *greater* lengths in *another* direction, namely, in neglecting to say *anything* in such a case as this about Baptism or the Lord's Supper and in laying *all* our rest at the door of *believing*!

“We who have believed.” He is of the same mind as our Lord Himself, when He declares that whoever believes on the Son has everlasting life—as if the only *essential* thing were this *believing* and where this is, all the privileges of the Covenant were to be enjoyed. Dearly Beloved, we ought to pant after sanctification! It should be the ambition of our spirits to be useful—we ought to be crying and sighing everyday after conformity to Christ! But, remember, it is neither in our *sanctification*, nor in our *usefulness*, nor in our *conformity* that we find our rest—our rest comes to us through *believing in Jesus Christ*. The Apostle indirectly tells us in these words, that those who believe in Christ Jesus enter into rest, notwithstanding anything and everything beside.

“We who have believed,” he says, “do enter into rest.” What? Paul, have you no corruptions? “Alas,” he cries, “Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?” Yet he entered into rest. What? Paul, have you no doubts? Hear him—“I keep under my body and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means when I had preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” Had he no vexing troubles? He answers, “Without were fights and within were fears.” And yet, O Apostle, did you enter into rest? Yes, by believing! But had you no sins, Paul? Yes, verily, he confesses himself the chief of sinners, but, *believing* made him enter into rest!

Mark the variations of the Apostle’s experience were far greater than ours. As his mind was more capacious than ours and his outward experience more varied, his trials were more and heavier than ordinary. A night and a day had he been in the deep, yet, believing, he did enter into rest. With his feet fast in the stocks in the jail of Phillipi—stoned by infuriated mobs and before Nero the lion at Rome—in all kinds of dangers and difficulties, surrounded by imminent perils by night and by day he was ever in afflictions and yet he declares that, having believed, he did enter into rest, a rest which no outward circumstances could disturb!

Oh, blessed lesson! My Soul, ask for Grace to learn by experience the blessed fact that faith, altogether by itself, and it alone can give you rest! When the pillars of Heaven tremble and the cornerstone of the earth is removed, faith can make the soul steadfast and keep it confident! The Apostle seems to intimate in the words before us, that the entering into rest, while it depends on nothing else but believing, does depend on that. It is, “we who have believed do enter into rest.” Then why do not some professed Christians have rest? Why do not we, ourselves have rest at all times? Answer—because faith is not always in vigorous exercise, and though the possession of a weak, but genuine faith brings to a Christian unfailing and unchanging *security*, yet it brings not to him an abiding rest.

Our faith must take God at His Word, or it cannot taste the sweetness of His abounding peace. The child that cannot trust its parent cannot expect to have the freedom from care which is childhood’s dear inheritance. But the more fully we can rest upon our Father’s promises, the more we can feel that it is not for us to inquire how He can do this, nor how He can do that—nor when He will deliver us—but can altogether leave everything with Him and lean on Him alone without a second helper. Then it is that our rest becomes profound and undisturbed.

O you who are in the Church and yet cannot rest as you would wish, ask the Lord to increase your faith! O you who trust Him, but are often staggered, go again to the foot of the Cross and look to Him who suffered there! Look again to the precious sin-atonement blood! Look up once more into the great Father's face who accepts those that trust in Jesus and you shall yet have the perfect rest which God gives only to Believers! I cannot readily tear myself away from this point. My soul hovers about it and lingers lovingly on it because I am so anxious that you all should win this rest and enjoy it today!

I know that some of you are complaining of what you do or do not *feel*—but this is not to the point. My message, as contained in the text, proclaims no blessing on *feeling*, but on BELIEVING! Oh, can you not trust the Son of God to save you? Can you not believe the promise which is so freely given to all who will but trust in Him? Have done, I pray you, with raking the kennel of your heart in search of golden consolations! Go to Christ—you shall get all your soul needs, in Him. Oh, it may be you are saying, “I have not the rest I used to have. I will read the Bible more and I will pray more and I will go to a place of worship more often,” and so on. All which is right, but none of these things will bring you rest! Rest for a soul is found in Jesus! The dove never found rest till she came to the ark—nor will you till you come back to Christ!

O dear Heart, all the sacraments in the world cannot give you rest! Nor can all the preachers that ever spoke give rest to your weary spirit. Come now with nothing to trust in of your own! Come to the infinite mercy of God as treasured up in the once-pierced heart of the Well-Beloved and He will give you rest! O come, poor fluttered Dove, fly into Jesus' bosom because you cannot help it. Driven by stress of weather, put in to this port of peace. Believe me, Jesus cannot reject you! It is impossible! Believe me, if you trust Him you shall have rest *today*—you shall have the same rest as those who have been 50 years His servants! You shall have rest through the blood of the Atonement, “which speaks better things than that of Abel.”

III. So now the last point, which is this—what is THE GROUND AND REASON OF A CHRISTIAN'S REST? It is a dreadful thing to be at rest in extreme peril, lulled by false security. It is perilous to sleep in a house built on a foundation of sand when the floods are rampant and the winds are about to sweep all away! It is horrible to be at peace in a condemned cell, when already the scaffold has been put up and the hour of execution is hastening on! Such peace may God preserve us from!

But the Believer has good reason for being at peace and why? He has these reasons, among others. He trusts to be saved by a way which God has appointed. It is God's ordinance that Jesus Christ should be the Propitiation for sin and He has solemnly declared that whoever believes in Him shall not perish. Now, whether or not a soul believing in Christ can perish, if the devil tells me he can, I am prepared to risk it, for God's way of appointment, if I accept it, takes all responsibility off of *me*. If I perish, God's honor is injured as well as my soul. But I know that God will stand to His appointment. He gave Christ for my salvation—I feel there is no risk in my resting on Him—I do rest on Him and if God is true, my soul is safe—therefore I am perfectly at rest.

Next, the Believer rests in the Person of Jesus. “Why,” he says, “He that I commend my soul unto is no other than God Himself and though born of a virgin, as to His Manhood, yet is He very God of very God, most certainly Divine. Therefore—

***‘I know that safe with Him remains,
Protected by His power,
What I’ve committed to His hands
Till the decisive hour.’ ”***

Here is a firm rock to rest on. What better Person can we depend upon than Jesus, the Son of God? The Believer, moreover, knows that all things which were necessary to save him and all the elect are already performed. The debts which were due on our account have been paid by our Surety. The Believer is not afraid, then, of being sued in the Court of King’s Bench and cast into prison to pay the uttermost farthing because every penny has been paid.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ was God’s receipt for the sin which had been laid on the Surety. “He rose again for our justification.” And the Christian says, “Though my sins are as the sands on the seashore, yet all that was due for sin was laid on Christ and, therefore, no penalty can be laid on me.” This is good ground for peace, is it not? Then, moreover, the Believer says, “He who died for me ever lives. He rose again. The great One who undertook my cause is not dead and buried. I have not lost my Friend. He lives at the right hand of God and makes intercession for me! Strong to deliver and mighty to save, He is ever ready to manifest His power towards His people. Why, then, should I be disturbed? Since Christ lives, I must live also.”

The Believer, moreover, knows that the Lord has entered into an Everlasting Covenant with him and he rests upon the veracity and faithfulness of God that every Covenant promise shall be fulfilled. Surely God’s Truth is good ground for a soul to rest on! There can be no fear when here is our mainstay and refuge. Though the pillars of the earth are removed and all the wheels of Nature break, there can be no fear that the Eternal Himself should lie. If the foundations of Divine veracity were removed, indeed, the righteous would be lost! But no such calamity can happen. Believers do well to rest on a ground so safe as this.

“Ah, well,” says one, “shall I ever have such ground for comfort as that?” Poor Soul, you may have. But you can have no ground for comfort at all until you do comply with the Divine command to believe in Jesus. For you, as unbelievers, there is no rest! There cannot be any. You may be what you like and do what you choose and try what you please, but so long as you refuse the Divine way of salvation, rest is not possible for you. If you will today throw down your self-will and give up the obstinacy of your unbelief and trust in the Incarnate God who on the bloody tree poured out His heart’s blood, you shall have forgiveness and acceptance—and *then* the Holy Spirit shall come upon you and your peace shall be deep and profound—the beginning of the peace of Heaven! A peace which shall go on widening and deepening through this mortal life as you know more of Christ and become more like He is—a peace which shall expand into the ocean of eternal joy.

All through believing! All through trusting! Nothing is said of the sinnership of the truster! Nothing about the greatness or littleness of his sins! Nothing about the softness or tenderness of his heart! Nothing about his fitness or unfitness, but it is said only that he believes! “We who have believed,” whoever *we* may be, if we have but trusted—if we have taken God at His Word and rested on it—we do enter, we do *now* enter into and enjoy a most Divine and blessed rest!

In conclusion, there are three practical words. The first is to *the man who never has rested*. It is, *try God’s way of rest*. How I pity you who have not entered the rest of God! You are so morally good, so amiable, so truly loveable. You adorn the households in which you move. But for lack of one thing you are not happy and you never can be till you get that one thing. Oh, I wish you had it! I wish you had it today! I do remember well when I first found rest, I did not think it was so simple a matter. I could not believe it and I fear I should not have believed it till now if the Holy Spirit had not enlightened me. I could not believe that rest came simply by trusting. I used to say, “What? Only believe?” But now I have found out that only believing is one of the richest things in the world—for it brings 10,000 other things with it.

It brings with it seven other spirits as blessed as itself when it enters in and dwells in the human heart. This morning the Truth of God is certain—if you can believe, all things are possible to you. If you can now trust in Him who came to be a Man to save men and who suffered that men might not suffer—and who is risen and gone up to Heaven and is coming again a second time to judge the world—if you can put your soul into His hands, it will be quite safe! He cannot lose it and He will not. O that you would confide in Jesus this morning! Then you would become another witness to the rest which God’s people enjoy! O may it be so at once! We desire to see God’s kingdom come! We want Christ to see of the travail of His soul and we hope that you are one of those who shall forever illustrate His mighty love! Yield your heart now! Yield to the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit who is breathing upon you now. Trust and you shall rest!

The next word is *to those of you who once did rest, but do not now*. You Backslider, this is your word—*return unto your rest*. You never will find rest out of Christ—especially you. An ungodly man does, after a certain sort, rest in sin. For a time he is satisfied with its gaieties and its frivolities appear to delight him, as husks satisfy swine, but *you* cannot ever have such rest as this! If you are a child of God, you will never be easy in sin. As Rutherford would say, “If you have once eaten the white bread of Heaven, your mouth is out of taste for the brown bannocks of earth.” You cannot be content as a swine, after having once feasted with angels.

If Christ has given you heavenly emotions and desires, you must go back to Him to have them satisfied, for away from Him your state is present misery, and will wax worse and worse. Return, return, O Backslider, at once! O that I could make my voice a silver trumpet to you, this morning, and that you could hear it as the proclamation of jubilee, bidding you return to your inheritance! What fruit have you had in all your sins since you have wandered from your first Husband? What joy, what happiness have you known? Oh, it has been all disappointment, vexation, delusion!

Come back! Come back! Come back! The Mercy Seat is still open! The heart of Jesus beats lovingly towards you still! The Grace of God waits for you still. “Turn, O backsliding children, says the Lord; for I am married unto you.” “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for My anger is turned away from them.”

Lastly, to *you who are at rest now. Endeavor to keep it.* And the way to keep it is the way you first gained it. You obtained it by *believing*—keep it by believing. Believe in the promise of Divine Grace in the teeth of your sins and corruptions. It is little or no faith to trust Christ when you feel your Graces growing and your lusts weakening. But, oh, it is faith when you feel burdened and cast down with a sense of sin, still to say, “I know that Jesus came not to save the righteous but sinners. I know He came not to save men from some slight disease of sin, but He is a Physician able to grapple with the most virulent and mortal of diseases.

“I, therefore, confide in Him without a doubt and if I were a bigger sinner than I am, I would still trust Him! If my spots were more scarlet than they are, I would still believe that the crimson fount could make me white as snow. I will still come to Him—not with a staggering faith which would try to make sin little in order to believe it possible that He could take it away—but with a faith which knows sin to be great beyond conception and yet believes that the Savior is greater, still, and the merit of His blood more potent than the demerit of human transgression.”

O abide, Believer, always at the Cross and never go away from it! Let no advancements in Grace make you say, “Excelsior” to the Cross, for there is no higher than Calvary! Your wisdom is to remain a sinner washed with blood at the *foot* of the Cross, for you build wretched rubbish when you build *above* the Cross. If you have ever been on the top of Snowdon or the Righi, you will have seen little platforms and heaps piled up for tourists to stand on. Now these may be blown over, but it is not the *mountain* that moves—it is only those trumpety platforms.

So if you build up your little rickety experiences above the genuine work of Christ and they come tumbling down, do not wonder at it! On the contrary, be rather glad of it than not. To lie down on what Christ has done is safest and best—

***“I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.”***

“Having nothing, yet possessing all things.” Guilty in myself, but accepted in the Beloved! Naked, poor, miserable and wretched to the last degree, as I am in myself considered, yet in Christ Jesus I am dear to God, as dear as if I had never sinned! I am one with Jesus and heir with Him to all the inheritance of God! And shortly I shall be with Jesus where He is at His right hand, where there are pleasures forevermore. The Lord bless you with such a faith, for Jesus’ sake, Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
*Hebrews 3 and Psalm 62.***

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HEAVENLY REST

NO. 133

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 24, 1857,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.”
Hebrews 4:9.***

THE Apostle proved, in the former part of this and the latter part of the preceding Chapter, that there was a rest promised in Scripture called the rest of God. He proved that Israel did not attain that rest—for God swore in His wrath, saying, “They shall not enter into My rest.” He proved that this did not merely refer to the rest of the land of Canaan, for he says that after they were in Canaan and David, himself, speaks again in later ages concerning the rest of God as a thing which was yet to come. Again he proves that “seeing those to whom it was promised did not enter in because of unbelief and it remains that some must enter in, therefore,” he says, “there remains a rest for the people of God.”

“*My rest*,” says God—the rest of God! Something more wonderful than any other kind of rest. In my text it is (in the original) called the *Sabbatism*—not the Sabbath but the rest of the Sabbath—not the outward ritual of the Sabbath, which was binding upon the Jew, but the inward spirit of the Sabbath, which is the joy and delight of the Christian. “There remains therefore”—because others have not had it, because some are *to* have it—“There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.”

Now, this rest, I believe, is partly enjoyed on earth. “We who have believed do enter into rest,” for we have ceased from our own works, as God did from His. But the full fruition and rich enjoyment of it remains in the future and eternal state of the beatified on the other side the stream of death! Of that it shall be our delightful work to talk a little this morning. And oh, if God should help me to raise but one of his feeble saints on the wings of love to look within the veil and see the joys of the future, I shall be well content to have made the bells ring joyously in at least one heart—to have set one eye flashing with joy and to have made one spirit light with gladness! The rest of Heaven! I shall first try to *exhibit it* and then to *extol it*.

I. First, I shall try to EXHIBIT the rest of Heaven. And in doing so I shall exhibit it, first, by way of contrast and then by way of comparison.

1. To begin, then, I shall try to exhibit Heaven *by way of contrast*. The rest of the righteous in Glory is now to be contrasted with certain other

things. We will contrast it, first, *with the best estate of the worldling and the sinner*. The worldling has frequently a good estate. Sometimes his vats overflow, his barns are crammed, his heart is full of joy and gladness. There are periods with him when he flourishes like a green bay tree, when field is added to field and house to house, when he pulls down his barns and builds greater, when the river of his joy is full and the ocean of his life is at its flood with joy and blessedness! But ah, Beloved, the state of the righteous in Heaven is not for a moment to be compared with the joy of the sinner—it is so infinitely superior, so far surpassing it that it seems impossible that I should even try to set it in contrast! The worldling, when his corn and his wine are increased, has a glad eye and a joyous heart. But even then he has the direful thought that *he may soon leave his wealth*. He remembers that death may cut him down, that he must then leave all his fair riches behind him and sleep like the mean of the land in a narrow coffin—six feet of earth his only heritage. Not so the righteous man—he has obtained an inheritance which is “undefiled and that fades not away.” He knows that there is no possibility of his losing his joys—

**“He is securely blessed,
Has done with sin and care and woe,
And does with Jesus rest.”**

He has no dread of dissolution, no fear of the coffin or the shroud and, so far, the life of Heaven is not worthy to be put in comparison with the life of the sinner! But the worldling, with all his joys, always has *a worm at the root* of them. You worshippers of pleasure! The blush upon your cheek is frequently but a painted deception! Ah, you sons and daughters of gaiety! The light feet of your dance is not in keeping with the heavy woe of your miserable spirits! Do you not confess that if by the excitement of company you, for a while forget the emptiness of your heart—yet silence and the hour of midnight and the waking watches of your bed bid you sometimes think that there must be something more blessed than the mere wanderings of gaiety in which you are now found? You are trying the world, some of you— then speak! Do you not find it empty? Might it not be said of the world, as an old philosopher said of it when he represented a man with it in his hands smiting it and listening to its ringing—“Touch it, touch it! Make it ring again. It is empty!” So it is with the world. You know it is so. And if you know it not as yet, the day is coming when, after you have plucked the sweets, you shall be pricked with the thorn and when you shall find that all is unsatisfactory that does not begin and end with God!

Not so the Christian in Heaven. For him there are no nights. And if there are times of solitude and rest, he is always filled with ecstatic joy. His river always flows full of bliss without one pebble of sorrow over

which it ripples. He has no aching conscience, no, “aching void the world can never fill.” He is supremely blessed, satisfied with favor and full with the goodness of the Lord! And you know, you worldlings, that your best estates often bring you great anxiety, *lest they should depart from you*. You are not yet so foolish as to conceive that riches endure forever! You men of business are frequently led to see that riches take to themselves wings and fly away. You have accumulated a fortune. But you find it is harder to retain than it is to get! You are seeking after a retirement, but you find that you grasp at shadows that flit away—that the everlasting vicissitudes of business and the constant changes of mankind are causes of prudent alarm to you! You fear that you shall lose your gods and that your gourd shall be eaten by the worm and fall down and your shadow shall be taken away. Not so the Christian! He lives in a house that can never decays. He wears a crown, the glitter of which shall never be dim! He has a garment which shall never wax old. He has bliss that never can depart from him, nor he from it. He is now firmly set like a pillar of marble in the Temple of God. The world may rock, the tempest may sway it like the cradle of a child, but there, above the world, above the perpetual revolution of the stars, the Christian stands secure and immovable. His rest infinitely surpasses yours! Ah, you shall go to all the fabled luxuries of eastern monarchs and see their dainty couches and their luscious wines. Behold the riches of their pleasantries! How charming is the music that lulls them to sleep! How gently moves the fan that wafts them to their slumber! But ah—

***“I would not change my blessed estate
For all the world calls good or great!
And while my faith can keep her hold
I envy not the sinner’s gold!”***

I reckon that the richest, highest, noble condition of a worldly man is not worthy to be compared with the joy that is to be revealed hereafter in the breasts of those who are sanctified! O you spendthrift mortals who for one merry dance and a giddy life will lose a world of joys! O fools that catch at bubbles and lose realities! O ten thousand times mad men that grasp at shadows and lose the substance! What? Sirs, do you think a little round of pleasure, a few years of gaiety and merriment—just a little time of the tossing about, to and fro, of worldly business is a compensation for eternal ages of unfading bliss? Oh, How foolish will you conceive yourselves to be when you are in the next state! When cast away from Heaven, you will see the saints blessed! I think I hear your mournful soliloquy, “Oh, how cheaply did I sell my soul! What a poor price did I get for all I have now lost! I have lost the palace and the crown and the joy and bliss forever and am shut up in Hell! And for what did I lose it? I lost it for the lascivious wanton kiss. I lost it for the merry drunken song. I lost

it for just a few short years of pleasures, which, after all, were only painted pleasures!" Oh, I think I see you in your lost estates, cursing yourselves, pulling out your hair, that you should have sold Heaven for mere change and have traded away eternal life for pitiful farthings which were spent quickly and which burned your hands in the spending of them! Oh, that you were wise, that you would weigh those things and reckon that a life of the greatest happiness, here, is nothing compared with the glorious hereafter—"There remains a rest for the people of God."

Now let me put it in *more pleasing contrast*. I shall contrast the rest of the Believer above with the miserable estate of the Believer sometimes here below. Christians have their sorrows. Suns have their spots. Skies have their clouds and Christians have their sorrows, too! But oh, how different will the state of the righteous be up there, from the state of the Believer here! Here the Christian has to suffer anxiety. He is anxious to serve his Master, to do his best in his day and generation. His constant cry is—"Help me to serve You, O my God." And he looks out, day after day, with a strong desire for opportunities of doing good. Ah, if he is an active Christian, he will have much labor, much toil in endeavoring to serve his Master. And there will be times when he will say, "My soul is in haste to be gone. I am not wearied *of* the labor, I am wearied *in* it. To toil thus in the sun, though for a good Master, is not the thing that I desire just now." Ah, Christian, the day shall soon be over and you shall no longer have to toil. The sun is nearing the horizon. It shall rise again with a brighter day than you have ever seen before! There, up in Heaven, Luther has no more to face a thundering Vatican. Paul has no more to run from city to city and continent to continent. There Baxter has no more to toil in his pulpit, to preach with a broken heart to hard-hearted sinners! There no longer has Knox to "cry aloud and spare not" against the immoralities of the false Church. There no more shall be the strained lung and the tired throat and the aching eyes. No more shall the Sunday school teacher feel that his Sabbath is a day of joyful weariness. No more shall the tract distributor meet with rebuffs. No, there, those who have served their country and their God, those who have toiled for man's welfare with all their might shall enter into everlasting rest! Sheathed is the sword, the banner is furled, the fight is over, the victory won! And they rest from their labors!

Here, too, the Christian is always *sailing onward*. He is always in motion. He feels that he has not yet attained. Like Paul he can say, "Forgetting the things that are behind, I press forward to that which is before." But there his weary head shall be crowned with unfading light! There the ship that has been speeding onward shall furl its sails in the port of eternal bliss. There he who, like an arrow, has sped his way shall be

fixed forever in the target! There we who, like fleeting clouds were driven by every wind, shall gently distil in one perennial shower of everlasting joy! There is no progress, no motion there—they are at rest, they have attained the summit of the mountain, they have ascended to their God and our God! Higher they cannot go. They have reached the *Ultima Thule*, there are no fortunate islands beyond. This is life's utmost end of happiness! And they furl their sails, rest from their labors and enjoy themselves for sure. There is a difference between the progress of earth and the perfect peace of the rest of Heaven!

Here, too, the Believer is often the subject of *doubt and fear*. "Am I His or am I not?" is often the cry. He trembles lest he should be deceived. At times he almost despairs and is inclined to not put his name down as one of the children of God. Dark insinuations are whispered into his ears. He thinks that God's mercy is clean gone forever and that He will not be mindful of him anymore! Again, his sins sometimes upbraid him and he thinks God will not have mercy on him. He has a poor fainting heart. He is like Ready-to-Halt—he has to go all his way on crutches. He has a poor feeble mind, always tumbling down over a straw and fearing one day he shall be drowned in a cart rut! Though the lions are chained, he is as much afraid of them as if they were loose! Hill Difficulty often frightens him. Going down into the Valley of Humiliation is often troublesome work for him. But there, there are no hills to climb, no dragons to fight, no foes to conquer, no dangers to dread. Ready-to-Halt, when he dies, will bury his crutches and Feeble-Mind will leave his feebleness behind him! Fearing will never fear again! Poor Doubting-Heart will learn to confidently believe! Oh, joy above all joys! The day is coming when I shall "know as I am known." When I shall not need to ask whether I am His or not, for encircled in His arms there shall be no room for doubt! Oh, Christian, you think there are slips between your lips and that cup of joy—but when you grasp the handle of that cup with your hand and are drinking draughts of ineffable delight—then you will have no doubt or fear—

***"There you shall see His face,
And never, never sin!
There from the rivers of His Grace,
Drink endless pleasures in."***

Here, too, on earth, the Christian has to *suffer*. Here he has the aching head and the pained body. His limbs may be bruised or broken, disease may rack him with torture. He may be an afflicted one from his birth. He may have lost an eye or an ear or he may have lost many of his powers. Or if not, being of a weakly constitution he may have to spend the most of his days and nights upon the bed of weariness. Or if his body is sound, yet what suffering he has in his mind! Conflicts between depravi-

ty and gross temptations from the Evil One. Assaults of Hell, perpetual attacks of many kinds from the world, the flesh and the devil. But in Heaven—no aching head, no weary heart! There, no palsied arms, no brow plowed with the furrows of old age! There the lost limb shall be recovered and old age shall find itself endowed with perpetual youth! There the infirmities of the flesh shall be left behind. There they shall flit, as on the wings of angels, from pole to pole and from place to place, without weariness or anguish. There they shall never need to lie upon the bed of rest, or the bed of suffering, for day without night, with unflagging joy, they shall circle God's Throne rejoicing and always praise Him who has said, "The inhabitants there shall never be sick."

There, too, they shall be free from *persecution*. Here Sicilian Vespers and St. Bartholomew and Smithfield are well-known words. But there shall be none to taunt them with a cruel word, or touch them with a cruel hand! There emperors and kings are not known and those who had power to torture them cease to be! They are in the society of saints. They shall be free from all the idle conversation of the wicked and from their cruel jeers set free forever. Set free from persecution! You army of martyrs—you were slain, you were torn asunder. You were cast to wild beasts, you wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins—destitute, afflicted and tormented. I see you now, a mighty host! The garments you wear are torn with thorns. Your faces are scarred with sufferings. I see you at your stakes and on your crosses. I hear your words of submission on your racks, I see you in your prisons, I behold you in your pillories—but—

***"Now you are arrayed in white,
Brighter than the noonday sun!
Fairest of the sons of light,
Nearest the eternal Throne!"***

These are they, who "for their Master died, who love the Cross and crown." They waded through seas of blood in order to obtain the inheritance! And there they are—with the blood-red crown of martyrdom about their heads—that ruby brightness, far excelling every other! Yes, there is no persecution there. "There remains a rest for the people of God."

Alas, in this mortal state the child of God is also subject to sin. Even *he* fails in his duty and wanders from his God. Even he does not walk in all the Law of his God blameless, though he desires to do it. Sin now troubles him constantly. But there in Glory sin is dead! There they have no temptation to sin, from without or from within—they are perfectly free to serve their Master. *Here* the child of God has sometimes to weep repenting of his backslidings. But *there* they never shed tears of penitence, for they never have cause to do so!

And last of all, here, the child of God has to wet the cold ashes of his relatives with *tears*. Here he has to bid adieu to all that is lovely and fair of mortal race. Here it is he hears, “earth to earth and dust to dust and ashes to ashes,” while the solemn music of the dust upon the coffin lid beats doleful time to those words. Here is the mother buried, the child snatched away, the husband torn from the bosom of a loving wife, the brother parted from the sister. The plate upon the coffin, the last coat of arms of earth—earth’s last emblems are here always before our eyes. But there never once shall be heard the toll of the funeral bell! No hearse with plumes has ever darkened the streets of gold, no emblems of sorrow have ever intruded into the homes of the immortal! They are strangers to the meaning of death. They cannot die—they live forever, having no power to decay and no possibility of corruption. Oh, rest of the righteous, how blessed are you, where families shall again be bound up in one bundle, where parted friends shall again meet to part no more and where the whole Church of Christ united in one mighty circle shall together praise God and the Lamb throughout eternal ages!

Brothers and Sisters, I have tried thus to set the rest of the righteous in the way of contrast. I feel I have failed. Poor are the words I can utter to tell you of immortal things! Even holy Baxter, himself, when he wrote of the “Saints’ Rest,” paused and said—“But these are only tinklings compared with the full thunders of Heaven.” I cannot tell you, dear Friends, nor can mortal tell what God has prepared for them who love Him!

2. And now I shall try very briefly to exhibit this contrast *in the way of comparison*. The Christian has some rest here but nothing compared with the rest which is to come.

There is the *rest of the Church*. When the Believer joins the Church of God and becomes united with them, he may expect to rest. The good old writer of the *Pilgrim’s Progress*” said that when the weary pilgrims were once admitted to the House Beautiful, they were shown to sleep in a chamber called, “peace,” or, “rest.” The Church member at the Lord’s Table has a sweet enjoyment of rest in fellowship with the saints. But ah, up there the rest of Church fellowship far surpasses anything that is known here! For there are no divisions there, no angry words at the Church meetings, no harsh thoughts of one another, no bickering about Doctrine, no fights about practice. There Baptist and Presbyterian and Independent and Wesleyan and Episcopalian serve the same Lord and, having been washed in the same blood, sing the same song and are all joined in one! There pastors and deacons never look coolly on each other. No haughty prelates there, no lofty-minded ministers there but all meek

and lowly, all knit together in brotherhood! They have a rest which surpasses all the rest of the Church on earth!

There is, again, a rest of *faith* which a Christian enjoys. A sweet rest. Many of us have known it. We have known what it is, when the billows of trouble have run high, to hide ourselves in the breast of Christ and feel secure! We have cast our anchor deep into the rocks of God's promise. We have gone to sleep in our chamber and have not feared the tempest. We have looked at tribulation and have smiled at it. We have looked at Death, himself, and have laughed him to scorn! Yes, in the midst of calumny, reproach, slander and contempt, we have said, "I shall not be moved, for God is on my side." But the rest up there is still better—more unruffled, more sweet, more perfectly calm, more enduring and more lasting than even the rest of faith!

And, again, the Christian sometimes has the blessed rest of *communion*. There are happy moments when he puts his head on the Savior's breast—when, like John, he feels that he is close to the Savior's heart and there he sleeps. "God gives His Beloved sleep." Not the sleep of unconsciousness, but the sleep of joy! Happy, happy, happy are the dreams we have had on the couch of communion! Blessed have been the times, when, like the spouse in Solomon's song, we could say of Christ, "His left hand was under my head and with His right hand did He embrace me."—

***"But sweeter still the fountainhead,
Though sweet may be the stream."***

When we shall have plunged into a very bath of joy, we shall have found the delights even of communion on earth to have been but the dipping of the finger in the cup! But the dipping of the bread in the dish, whereas Heaven shall be the participation of the whole of the joy and not the mere taste of it. Here we sometimes enter into the portico of happiness—there we shall go into the presence chamber of the King! Here we look over the hedge and see the flowers in Heaven's garden—there we shall walk between the beds of bliss and pluck fresh flowers at each step! Here we just look and see the sunlight of Heaven in the distance, like the lamps of the thousand-gated cities shining afar off—there we shall see them in all their blaze of splendor! Here we listen to the whisperings of Heaven's melody, borne by winds from afar. But there, entranced, amidst the grand oratorio of the blessed, we shall join in the everlasting hallelujah to the great Messiah, the God, the I AM! Oh, again I say, do we not wish to mount aloft and fly away, to enter into the rest which remains for the people of God?

II. And now, yet more briefly and then we shall have done. I am to endeavor to EXTOL this rest, as I have tried to EXHIBIT it. I would extol this rest for many reasons. And oh, that I were eloquent, that I might extol it as it deserves! Oh, for the lips of an angel and the burning tongue of

a cherub to now talk of the bliss of the sanctified and of the rest of God's people!

It is, first, a *perfect* rest. They are wholly at rest in Heaven. Here rest is but partial. I hope in a little time to cease from everyday labors for a season—but then the head will think and the mind may be looking forward to prospective labor. And while the body is still, the brain will yet be in motion. Here, on Sabbath days a vast multitude of you sit in God's House, but many of you are obliged to stand and rest but little except in your mind and even when the mind is at rest, the body is wearied with the toil of standing. You have a weary mile, perhaps many miles, to go to your homes on the Sabbath-Day. And let the Sabbatarian say what he will, you may work on the Sabbath-Day if you work for God! And this Sabbath-Day's work of going to the House of God is work for God and God accepts it. For yourselves you may not labor—God commands you to rest—but if you have to toil these three, these four, these five, these six miles—as many of you have done—I will not and I must not blame you! “The priests in the sanctuary profane the Sabbath and are blameless.” It is toil and labor, it is true, but it is for a good cause—for our Master! But there, my Friends, the rest is perfect! The body there rests perpetually—the mind, too—always rests! Though the inhabitants are always busy, always serving God, yet they are never weary, never toil-worn, never fatigued. They never fling themselves upon their couches at the end of the day and cry, “Oh, when shall I be away from this land of toil?” They never stand up in the burning sunlight and wipe the hot sweat from their brow. They never rise from their bed in the morning, half refreshed, to go to laborious study. No, they are perfectly at rest, stretched on the couch of eternal joy! They know not the semblance of a tear! They have done with sin and care and woe and, with their Savior, they rest!

Again, it is a *seasonable* rest. How seasonable it will be for some of you! You sons of wealth, you know not the toils of the poor! The calloused-handed laborer, perhaps you have never seen and you know not how he has to tug and to toil! Among my congregation I have many of a class upon whom I have always looked with pity, poor women who must rise tomorrow morning with the sun and begin that everlasting, “stitch, stitch,” that works their fingers to the bone. And from Monday morning till Saturday night, many of you, my Members and multitudes of you, my Hearers, will not be able to lay aside your needle and your thread, except when, tired and weary, you fall back on your chair and are lulled to sleep by your thoughts of labor! Oh, how seasonable will Heaven's rest be to you! Oh, how glad will you be, when you get there, to find that there are no Monday mornings, no more toil for you—just rest, eternal rest! Others of you have hard manual labor to perform. You have reason to thank God

that you are strong enough to do it and you are not ashamed of your work. For labor is an honor to a man. But still, there are times when you say, "I wish I were not so dragged to death by the business of London life." We have but little rest in this huge city. Our day is longer and our work is harder than our friends in the country. You have sometimes sighed to go into the green fields for a breath of fresh air. You have longed to hear the song of the sweet birds that used to wake you when you were lads. You miss the bright blue sky, the beautiful flowers and the thousand charms of a country life. And perhaps you will never get beyond this smoky city, but remember, when you get up *there*, "sweet fields arrayed in living green" and "rivers of delight" shall be the place where you shall rest! You shall have all the joys you can conceive of in that home of happiness! And though worn and weary you come to your grave—tottering on your staff—having journeyed through the wilderness of life like a weary camel which has only stopped on the Sabbath to sip its little water at the well, or to be baited at the oasis—*there* you will arrive at your journey's end, laden with gold and spices and enter into the grand caravans of Heaven and enjoy forever the things you have wearily carried with you while here!

And I must say that to others of us who have not to toil with our hands, Heaven will be a seasonable rest. Those of us who have to tire our brain day after day will find it no slight benefit to have an everlasting rest above! I will not boast of what I do—there may be many who do more—there may be many who are perpetually and daily striving to serve God and are using their mind's best energies in so doing. But this much I may say, that almost every week I have the pleasure of preaching 12 times and often in my sleep do I think of what I shall say next time. Not having the advantage of laying out my seven shillings and sixpence in buying manuscripts, it costs me hard diligent labor to find even something to say! And I sometimes have a difficulty to keep the hopper full in the mill. I feel that if I had not, now and then, a rest, I would have no wheat for God's children. Still it is on, on, on and on we must go! We hear the chariot wheels of God behind us and we dare not stop! We think that eternity is drawing near and we must go on. Rest to us, now, is more than labor—we want to be at work! But oh, how seasonable it shall be, when to the minister it shall be said—

***"Servant of God, well done!
Rest from your loved employ.
The battle fought, the victory won,
Enter your Master's joy!"***

It will be seasonable rest. You that are weary with State cares and have to learn the ingratitude of men—you that have sought honors and have got them—you seek to do your best but your very independence of spirit

is called servility, while your servility would have been praised! You who seek to honor God and not to honor men, who will not bind yourselves to parties, but seek in your own independent and honest judgment to serve your country and your God. You, I say, when God shall see fit to call you to Himself, will find it no small joy to have done with Parliaments, to have done with States and kingdoms and to have laid aside your honors to receive honors more lasting among those who dwell forever before the Throne of the Most High!

One thing and then once more, and then farewell. This rest, my Brothers and Sisters, ought to be praised because it is *eternal*. Here my best joys bear, “mortal,” on their brow. Here my fair flowers fade. Here my sweet cups have dregs and are soon empty. Here my sweetest birds must die and their melody must soon be hushed. Here my most pleasant days must have their nights. *Here* the flowings of my bliss must have their ebbs. Everything passes away but *there*, everything shall be immortal! The harp shall never rust, the crown never wither, the eyes never dim, the voice never falter, the heart never waver and the being wholly consolidated unto eternity! Happy day, happy day, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life and the mortal shall have put on immortality!

And then, lastly, this glorious rest is to be best of all commended for its *certainty*. “There remains a rest for the people of God.” Doubting One, you have often said, “I fear I shall never enter Heaven.” Fear not! All the people of God shall enter there! There is no fear about it. I love the quaint saying of a dying man, who, in his country brogue, exclaimed, “I have no fear of going Home. I have sent all before me. God’s finger is on the latch of my door and I am ready for Him to enter.” “But,” said one, “are you not afraid least you should miss your inheritance?” “No,” he said, “no, there is one crown in Heaven that the angel Gabriel could not wear. It will fit no head but mine. There is one throne in Heaven that Paul the Apostle could not fill. It was made for me and I shall have it! There is one dish at the banquet that I must eat, or else it will be untasted, for God has set it apart for me.” O Christian, what a joyous thought! Your portion is secure! “There remains a rest.” “But cannot I forfeit it?” No, it is entailed—if I am a child of God I shall not lose it. It is mine as securely as if I were there—

**“Come, Christian, mount to Pisgah’s top
And view the landscape over.”**

See that little river of death, glistening in the sunlight and across it do you see the pinnacles of the Eternal City? Do you mark the pleasant suburbs and all the joyous inhabitants? Turn your eyes to that spot! Do you see where that ray of light is glancing? There is a little spot there—do you see it? That is *your* estate. That is **YOURS!** Oh, if you could fly across, you would see written upon it, “this remains for such an one,

preserved for him, only. He shall be caught up and dwell forever with God.” Poor Doubting One—see your inheritance. It is yours! If you believe in the Lord Jesus, you are one of the Lord’s people. If you have repented of sin, you are one of the Lord’s people. If you have been renewed in heart, you are one of the Lord’s people and there is a place for you, a crown for you, a harp for you! No one else shall have it but yourself and you shall have it before long. Just pardon me one moment if I beg of you to think of yourselves as being in Heaven. Is it not a strange thing to think of—a poor clown in Heaven? Think. How will you feel with your crown on your head? Weary matron, many years have rolled over you. How changed will be the scene when you are young again! Ah, toil-worn laborer, only think when you shall rest forever! Can you conceive it? Could you but think for a moment of yourself as being in Heaven right now, what a strange surprise would seize you! You would not so as much say, “What? Are these streets of gold? What? Are these walls of jasper?” “What? Am I here? In white? Am I here, with a crown on my brow? Am I here singing, who was always groaning? What? I praise God who once cursed Him? What? I lift up my voice in His honor? Oh, precious blood that washed me clean! Oh, precious faith that set me free! Oh, precious Spirit that made me repent, else I had been cast away and been in Hell! But oh, what wonders! Angels! I am surprised! I am enraptured! Wonder of wonders! Oh, gates of pearls, I long since heard of you! Oh, joys that never fade, I long since heard tell of you! But I am like the Queen of Sheba, the half has not yet been told me! Profusion, oh profusion of bliss!—Wonder of wonders!—Miracle of miracles! What a world I am in! And oh, that I am here, this is the greatest miracle of all!”

And yet ‘tis true, ‘tis true. And that is the glory of it. It is true! Come, worm, and prove it! Come, pall, come shroud, come and prove it! Then come wings of faith, come, leap like a seraph! Come, eternal ages, come and you shall prove that there are joys that the eyes have not seen, which the ears have not heard and which only God can reveal to us by His Spirit. Oh, my earnest prayer is that none of you may come short of this rest, but that you may enter into it and enjoy it forever and ever! God give you His great blessing, for Jesus sake! Amen.

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

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

THE WORD A SWORD

NO. 2010

**DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 17, 1887,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“For the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”
Hebrews 4:12.*

THOSE who are fond of a labyrinth of exposition will find a maze perplexing to the last degree if they will read the various commentators and expositors upon this verse. This is the question—By the Word of God, are we here to understand the Incarnate Word, the Divine Logos, who was in the beginning with God? Or does the passage relate to this inspired Book, and to the Gospel, which is the kernel of it, as it is set forth in the preaching of the Truth in the power of the Holy Spirit?

You shall find Dr. John Owen, with a very large number of eminent servants of God, defending the first theory, that the Son of God is doubtless here spoken of. And I confess that they seem to me to defend it with arguments which I should not like to controvert. Much more is to be said on this side of the question than I can here bring before you. On the other side, we find John Calvin, with an equally grand array of divines, all declaring that it must be the Book that is meant, the Gospel, the Revelation of God in the Book. Their interpretation of the passage is not to be set aside and I feel convinced that they all give as good reasons for their interpretation as those who come to the other conclusion.

Where such Doctors differ, I am not inclined to present any interpretation of my own which can be set in competition with theirs though I may venture to propound one which comprehends them all and so comes into conflict with none. It is a happy circumstance if we can see a way to agree with all those who did not themselves agree. But I have been greatly instructed by the mere fact that it should be difficult to know whether in this passage the Holy Spirit is speaking of the Christ of God, or the Book of God.

This shows us a great Truth of God which we might not otherwise have so clearly noted. How much that can be said of the Lord Jesus may be also said of the inspired volume! How closely are these two allied! How certainly do those who despise the one reject the other! How intimately are the Word made flesh and the Word uttered by inspired men, joined together!

It may be most accurate to interpret this passage as relating both to the Word of God Incarnate and the Word of God Inspired. Weave the two into one thought, for God has joined them together, and you will then see fresh lights and new meanings in the text. The Word of God, namely, this Revelation of Himself in Holy Scripture, is all it is here described to be, be-

cause Jesus, the Incarnate Word of God, is in it. He does, as it were, incarnate Himself as the Divine Truth in this visible and manifest Revelation. And thus it becomes living and powerful, dividing and discerning.

As the Christ reveals God, so this Book reveals Christ, and therefore it partakes, as the Word of God, in all the attributes of the Incarnate Word. And we may say many of the same things of the written Word as of the embodied Word. In fact, they are now so linked together that it would be impossible to divide them. This I like to think of, because there are some nowadays who deny every doctrine of Revelation and yet, indeed, they praise the Christ. The Teacher is spoken of in the most flattering style and then His teaching is rejected, except so far as it may coincide with the philosophy of the moment.

They talk much about Jesus, while that which is the real Jesus, namely, His Gospel and His inspired Word, they cast away. I believe I do but correctly describe them when I say that, like Judas, they betray the Son of Man with a kiss. They even go so far as to cry up the names of the doctrines, though they use them in a different sense that they may deceive. They talk of loyalty to Christ and reverence for the Sermon on the Mount—but they use vain words. I am charged with sowing suspicion. I do sow it and desire to sow it. Too many Christian people are content to hear anything so long as it is put forth by a clever man, in a taking manner.

I want them to try the spirits, whether they are of God, for many false prophets have gone forth into the world. What God has joined together, these modern thinkers willfully put asunder and separate the Revealer from His own Revelation. I believe the Savior thinks their homage to be more insulting than their scorn would be. Well may He do so, for they bow before Him and say, "Hail, Master!" while their foot is on the blood of His Covenant and their souls abhor the doctrine of His substitutionary sacrifice.

They are crucifying the Lord afresh and putting Him to an open shame by denying the Lord that bought them, by daring to deride His purchase of His people as a "mercantile transaction," and I know not what of blasphemy beside. Christ and His Word must go together. What is true of the Christ is here predicated both of Him and of His Word. Behold this day the everlasting Gospel has Christ within it. He rides in it as in a chariot. He rides in it as, of old, Jehovah "did ride upon a cherub and did fly—yes, He did fly upon the wings of the wind." It is only because Jesus is not dead that the Word becomes living and effectual, "and sharper than any two-edged sword."

If you leave Christ out of it, you have left out its vitality and power. As I have told you that we will not have Christ without the Word, so neither will we have the Word without Christ. If you leave Christ out of Scripture, you have left out the essential Truth of God which it is written to declare. Yes, if you leave out of it Christ as a Substitute, Christ in His death, Christ in His garments dyed in blood, you have left out of it all that is living and powerful. How often have we reminded you that as concerning the

Gospel, even as concerning every man, “the blood is the life thereof”—a bloodless Gospel is a lifeless Gospel!

A famous picture has been lately produced, which represents our Lord before Pilate. It has deservedly won great attention. A certain excellent newspaper which brings out for a very cheap price a large number of engravings, has given an engraving of this picture. But, inasmuch as the painting was too large for the paper to print it all, they have copied a portion of it. It is interesting to note that they have given us Pilate here and Caiaphas there but since there was no room for Jesus upon the sheet, they have left out that part of the design. When I saw the picture, I thought that it was wonderfully characteristic of a great deal of modern preaching.

See Pilate here, Caiaphas there, and the Jews yonder—but the Victim, bound and scourged for human sin—is omitted. Possibly, in the case of the publication, the figure of the Christ will appear in the next issue. But even if He should appear in the next sermon of our preachers of the new theology, it will be as a moral example and not as the Substitute for the guilty, the Sin-bearer by whose death we are redeemed. When we hear a sermon with no Christ in it, we hope that He will come out next Sunday. At the same time, the preaching is, so far, spoilt and the presentation of the Gospel is entirely erroneous so long as the principal Figure is left out.

Oh, it is a sad thing to have to stand in any house of prayer and listen to the preaching and then have to cry, “They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him”! Rest assured that they have laid Him in a tomb. You may be quite certain of that. They have put Him away as a dead thing and to them He is as good as dead. True Believer, you may comfort your heart with this recollection—He will rise again. He cannot be held by the bonds of death in any sense. And, though His own Church should bury Him and lay the huge lid of the most enormous sarcophagus of heresy upon Him, the Redeemer will rise again and His Truth with Him and He and His Word will live and reign together forever and ever.

Brethren, you will understand I am going to speak about the Word of God as being like the Lord Jesus, the Revelation of God. This inspired volume is that Gospel whereby you have received life unless you have heard it in vain. It is this Gospel, with Jesus within it, Jesus working by it—which is said to be living and effectual and “sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” I shall only talk with you in very simple style. First, concerning the qualities of the Word of God. And, secondly, concerning certain practical lessons which these qualities suggest to us.

I. First let me speak CONCERNING THE QUALITIES OF THE WORD OF GOD. It is “quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.” The Word of God is said to be “quick.” I am sorry the translators have used that word because it is apt to be mistaken as meaning speedy and that is not the meaning at all. It means *alive*, or living. “Quick” is the old English word for alive and so we read of the “quick and the dead.” The

Word of God is alive. This is a living Book. This is a mystery which only living men, quickened by the Spirit of God, will fully comprehend. Take up any other book except the Bible and there may be a measure of power in it, but there is not that indescribable vitality in it which breathes and speaks—and pleads and conquers in the case of this sacred volume.

We have in the book market many excellent selections of choice passages from great authors and in a few instances the persons who have made the extracts have been at the pains to place under their quotations from Scripture the name “David,” or “Jesus,” but this is worse than needless. There is a style of majesty about God’s Word and with this majesty a vividness never found elsewhere. No other writing has within it a heavenly life whereby it works miracles and even imparts life to its reader. It is a living and incorruptible seed. It moves, it stirs itself, it lives, it communes with living men as a living Word. Solomon says concerning it, “When you go, it shall lead you. When you sleep, it shall keep you. And when you awake, it shall talk with you.”

Have you ever known what that means? Why, the Book has wrestled with me. The Book has smitten me. The Book has comforted me. The Book has smiled on me. The Book has frowned on me. The Book has clasped my hand. The Book has warmed my heart. The Book weeps with me and sings with me. It whispers to me and it preaches to me. It maps my way and holds up my goings. It was to me the Young Man’s Best Companion and it is still my Morning and Evening Chaplain. It is a living Book—all over alive—from its first chapter to its last word it is full of a strange, mystic vitality which makes it have pre-eminence over every other writing for every living child of God.

See, my Brothers and Sisters, our words, our books, our spoken or our printed words by-and-by die out. How many books there are which nobody will ever read now because they are out of date? There are many books that I could read profitably when I was a youth but they would teach me nothing now. There are also certain religious works which I could read with pleasure during the first ten years of my spiritual life. But I should never think of reading them now, any more than I should think of reading the “a-b ab,” and the “b-a ba,” of my childhood. Christian experience causes us to outgrow the works which were the textbooks of our youth.

We may outgrow teachers and pastors but not Apostles and Prophets. That human system which was once vigorous and influential may grow old, and at length lose all vitality. But the Word of God is always fresh and new and full of force. No wrinkle mars its brow—no trembling is in its foot. Here, in the Old and New Testaments, we have at once the oldest and the newest of books. Homer and Hesiod are infants to the more ancient parts of this venerable volume, and yet the Gospel which it contains is as truly new as this morning’s newspaper. I say again that our words come and go—as the trees of the forest multiply their leaves only to cast them off as withered things—so the thoughts and theories of men are but for the season and then they fade and rot into nothingness.

“The grass withers and the flower thereof falls away—but the Word of the Lord endures forever.” Its vitality is such as it can impart to its readers. Hence, you will often find, when you converse with Revelation, that if you yourself are dead when you begin to read, it does not matter—you will be quickened as you peruse it. You need not bring life to the Scripture. You shall draw life *from* the Scripture. Oftentimes a single verse has made us start up—as Lazarus came forth at the call of the Lord Jesus. When our soul has been faint and ready to die, a single word, applied to the heart by the Spirit of God, has aroused us.

It is a quickening as well as a living Word. I am so glad of this because at times I feel altogether dead. But the Word of God is not dead. And coming to it we are like the dead man, who, when he was put into the grave of the Prophet, rose again as soon as he touched his bones. Even these bones of the Prophets, these words of theirs spoken and written thousands of years ago, will impart life to those who come into contact with them. The Word of God is thus exceedingly alive. I may add it is so alive that you need never be afraid that it will become extinct.

They dream—they dream that they have put us among the antiquities—those of us who preach the old Gospel that our fathers loved! They sneer at the doctrines of the Apostles and of the Reformers and declare that Believers in them are left high and dry—the relics of an age which has long since ebbed away. Yes, so they say! But what they say may not after all be true. For the Gospel is such a living Gospel that if it were cut into a thousand shreds every particle of it would live and grow. If it were buried beneath a thousand avalanches of error, it would shake off the incubus and rise from its grave, If it were cast into the midst of fire it would walk through the flame as it has done many a time, as though it were in its natural element.

The Reformation was largely due to a copy of the Scriptures left in the seclusion of a monastery and there hidden till Luther came under its influence and his heart furnished soil for the living seed to grow in. Leave but a single New Testament in a Popish community and the evangelical faith may at any moment come to the front—even though no preacher of it may ever have come that way. Plants unknown in certain regions have suddenly sprung from the soil—the seeds have been wafted on the winds, carried by birds, or washed ashore by the waves of the sea. So vital are seeds that they live and grow wherever they are borne.

And even after lying deep in the soil for centuries, when the upturning spade has brought them to the surface, they have germinated at once. Thus is it with the Word of God—it lives and abides forever and in every soil and under all circumstances it is prepared to prove its own life by the energy with which it grows and produces fruit to the glory of God. How vain, as well as wicked, are all attempts to kill the Gospel. Those who attempt the crime, in any fashion, will be forever still beginning and never coming near their end. They will be disappointed in all cases, whether they would slay it with persecution, smother it with worldliness, crush it with error, starve it with neglect, poison it with misrepresentation, or drown it with infidelity. While God lives His Word shall live. Let us praise

God for that. We have an immortal Gospel incapable of being destroyed which shall live and shine when the lamp of the sun has consumed its scant supply of oil.

In our text the Word is said to be “powerful” or “active.” Perhaps “energetic” is the best rendering, or almost as well, “effectual.” Holy Scripture is full of power and energy. Oh, the majesty of the Word of God! They charge us with Bibliolatry. It is a crime of their own inventing, of which few are guilty. If there are such things as venial sins, surely an undue reverence of Holy Scripture is one of them. To me the Bible is not God, but it is God’s voice—and I do not hear it without awe. What an honor to have as one’s calling to study, to expound and to publish this sacred Word! I cannot help feeling that the man who preaches the Word of God is standing, not upon a mere platform, but upon a throne.

You may study your sermon, my Brother, and you may be a great rhetorician and be able to deliver it with wonderful fluency and force. But the only power that is effectual for the highest design of preaching is the power which does not lie in *your* word nor in *my* word but in the Word of God. Have you ever noticed, when persons are converted, that they almost always attribute it to some text that was quoted in the sermon? It is God’s Word, not our comment on God’s Word, which saves souls. The Word of God is powerful for all sacred ends. How powerful it is to convince men of sin!

We have seen the self-righteous turned inside out by the revealed Truth of God. Nothing else could have brought home to them such unpleasant Truths and compelled them to see themselves as in a clear mirror but the searching Word of God. How powerful it is for conversion! It comes on board a man and without asking any leave from him, it just puts its hand on the helm and turns him round in the opposite direction from that in which he was going before. And the man gladly yields to the irresistible force which influences his understanding and rules his will. The Word of God is that by which sin is slain and Divine Grace is born in the heart. It is the light which brings life with it.

How active and energetic it is, when the soul is convicted of sin, in bringing it forth into Gospel liberty! We have seen men shut up as in the devil’s own dungeon and we have tried to get them free. We have shaken the bars of iron but we could not tear them out so as to set the captives at liberty. But the Word of the Lord is a great breaker of bolts and bars. It not only casts down the strongholds of doubt but it cuts off the head of Giant Despair. No cell or cellar in Doubting Castle can hold a soul in bondage when the Word of God, which is the master key, is once put to its true use and made to throw back bolts of despondency.

It is living and energetic for encouragement and enlargement. O Beloved, what a wonderful power the Gospel has to bring us comfort! It brought us to Christ at first and it still leads us to look to Christ till we grow like He. God’s children are not sanctified by legal methods but by gracious ones. The Word of God, the Gospel of Christ, is exceedingly powerful in promoting sanctification and bringing about that whole-hearted consecration which is both our duty and our privilege. May the Lord cause

His Word to prove its power in us by making us fruitful unto every good work to do His will! Through the “washing of water by the Word”—that is, through the washing by the Word—may we be cleansed every day and made to walk in white before the Lord, adorning the doctrine of God our Savior in all things!

The Word of God, then, is quick and powerful in our own personal experience and we shall find it to be so if we use it in laboring to bless our fellow men. Dear Brethren, if you seek to do good in this sad world, and want a powerful weapon to work with, stick to the Gospel, the living Gospel, the old, old Gospel. There is a power in it sufficient to meet the sin and death of human nature. All the thoughts of men, use them as earnestly as you may, will be like tickling Leviathan with a straw. Nothing can get through the scales of this monster but the Word of God. This is a weapon made of sterner stuff than steel and it will cut through coats of mail.

Nothing can resist it. “Where the word of a king is, there is power.” About the Gospel, when spoken with the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven, there is the same omnipotence as there was in the Word of God when in the beginning He spoke to the primeval darkness saying, “Let there be light,” and there was light. Oh how we ought to prize and love the Revelation of God. Not only because it is full of life but because that life is exceedingly energetic and effectual and operates so powerfully upon the lives and hearts of men.

Next, the Apostle tells us that His Word is cutting. “Cutting” would be as correct a translation as that of our own version—it is “more cutting than any two-edged sword.” I suppose the Apostle means by the description “two-edged” that it is all edge. A sword with two edges has no blunt side—it cuts both this way and that. The Revelation of God given us in Holy Scripture is edge all over. It is alive in every part and in every part keen to cut the conscience and wound the heart. Depend upon it, there is not a superfluous verse in the Bible nor a chapter which is useless. Doctors say of certain drugs that they are inert—they have no effect upon the system one way or the other.

Now, there is not an inert passage in the Scriptures—every line has its virtues. Have you ever heard of one who read, as the lesson for the Sabbath Day, that long chapter of names wherein it is written that each Patriarch lived so many hundred years, “and he died”? Thus it ends the notice of the long life of Methuselah with “and he died.” The repetition of the words, “and he died,” woke the thoughtless hearer to a sense of his mortality and led to his coming to the Savior. I should not wonder that, away there in the Chronicles, among those tough Hebrew names, there have been conversions worked in cases unknown to us as yet.

Anyhow, any bit of Holy Writ is very dangerous to play with and many a man has been wounded by the Scriptures when he has been idly, or even profanely reading them. Doubters have meant to break the Word to pieces and it has broken them. Yes, fools have taken up portions and studied them on purpose to ridicule them and they have been sobered and vanquished by that which they repeated in sport. There was one who went to

hear Mr. Whitefield—a member of the “Hell-fire Club,” a desperate fellow. He stood up at the next meeting of his abominable associates and he delivered Mr. Whitefield’s sermon with wonderful accuracy, imitating his very tone and manner.

In the middle of his exhortation the Lord converted him and he came to a sudden pause, sat down broken-hearted and confessed the power of the Gospel. That club was dissolved. That remarkable convert was Mr. Thorpe, of Bristol, whom God so greatly used afterwards in the salvation of others. I would rather have you read the Bible, to mock at it, than not read it at all. I would rather that you came to hear the Word of God, out of hatred to it, than that you never came at all.

The Word of God is so sharp a thing, so full of cutting power, that you may be bleeding under its wounds before you have seriously suspected the possibility of such a thing. You cannot come near the Gospel without its having a measure of influence over you. And, God blessing you, it may cut down and kill your sins when you have no idea that such a work is being done. Dear Friends, have you not found the Word of God to be very cutting, more cutting than a two-edged sword, so that your heart has bled inwardly and you have been unable to resist the heavenly stroke?

I trust you and I may go on to know more and more of its edge till it has killed us outright, so far as the life of sin is concerned. Oh, to be sacrificed unto God and His Word to be the sacrificial knife! Oh, that His Word were put to the throat of every sinful tendency, every sinful habit and every sinful thought! There is no sin-killer like the Word of God. Wherever it comes, it comes as a sword and inflicts death upon evil.

Sometimes when we are praying that we may feel the power of the Word we hardly know what we are praying for. I saw a venerable brother the other day and he said to me, “I remember speaking with you when you were nineteen or twenty years of age and I never forgot what you said to me. I had been praying with you in the Prayer Meeting, that God would give us the Holy Spirit to the full, and you said to me afterwards, ‘My dear Brother, do you know what you asked God for?’ I answered, ‘Yes.’ But you very solemnly said to me, ‘The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of burning and few are prepared for the inward conflict which is meant by these two words.’ ” My good old friend told me that at the time he did not understand what I meant but thought me a singular youth.

“Ah,” said he, “I see it now but it is only by a painful experience that I have come to the full comprehension of it.” Yes, when Christ comes, He comes not to send peace on the earth, but a sword. And that sword begins at home, in our own souls, killing, cutting, hacking, breaking in pieces. Blessed is that man who knows the Word of the Lord by its exceeding sharpness, for it kills nothing but that which ought to be killed. It quickens and gives new life to all that is of God. But the old depraved life which ought to die, it hews in pieces, as Samuel destroyed Agag before the Lord. “For the Word of God is quick, and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.”

But I want you to notice next, that it has a further quality—it is piercing. While it has an edge like a sword, it has also a point like a rapier,

“Piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.” The difficulty with some men’s hearts is to get at them. In fact, there is no spiritually penetrating the heart of any natural man except by this piercing instrument, the Word of God. But the rapier of Revelation will go through anything. Even when the “heart is as fat as grease,” as the Psalmist says, yet His Word will pierce it.

Into the very marrow of the man, sacred Truth will pass and find him out in a way in which he cannot even find himself out. As it is with our own hearts, so it is with the hearts of other men. Dear Friends, the Gospel can find its way anywhere. Men may wrap themselves up in prejudice but this rapier can find out the joints of their harness. They may resolve not to believe and may feel content in their self-righteousness but this piercing weapon will find its way. The arrows of the Word of God are sharp in the hearts of the King’s enemies, whereby the people fall under him. Let us not be afraid to trust this weapon whenever we are called up to face the adversaries of the Lord Jesus. We can pin them and pierce them and finish them with this.

And next, the Word of God is said to be discriminating. It divides asunder soul and spirit. Nothing else could do that for the division is difficult. In a great many ways writers have tried to describe the difference between soul and spirit. But I question whether they have succeeded. No doubt it is a very admirable definition to say, “The soul is the life of the natural man, and the spirit the life of the regenerate or spiritual man.” But it is one thing to define and quite another thing to divide.

We will not attempt to solve this metaphysical problem. God’s Word comes in and it shows man the difference between that which is of the soul and that which is of the spirit. That which is of man and that which is of God. That which is of Divine Grace and that which is of nature. The Word of God is wonderfully decisive about this. Oh, how much there is of our religion which is—to quote a spiritual poet—“The child of nature finely-dressed, but not the living child”—it is of the soul and not of the spirit!

The Word of God lays down very straight lines and separates between the natural and the spiritual, the carnal and the Divine. You would think sometimes, from the public prayers and preaching of clergymen, that we were all Christian people. But Holy Scripture does not sanction this flattering estimate of our condition. When we are gathered together the prayers are for us all and the preaching is for us all, as being all God’s people—all born so, or made so by Baptism, no question about that! Yet the way the Word of God talks is of quite another sort.

It talks about the dead and the living—about the repentant and the impenitent. It talks about the believing and the unbelieving—about the blind and the seeing—about those called of God and those who still lie in the arms of the Wicked One. It speaks with keen discrimination and separates the precious from the vile. I believe there is nothing in the world that divides congregations, as they ought to be divided, like the plain preaching of the Word of God. This it is that makes our places of worship to be solemn spots, even as Dr. Watts sings—

“Up to her courts with joys unknown

***The holy tribes repair;
The Son of David holds the throne,
And sits in judgment there.
He hears our praises and complaints;
And, while His awful voice
Divides the sinners from the saints,
We tremble and rejoice.”***

The Word of God is discriminating.

Once more, the Word of God is marvelously revealing to the inner self. It pierces between the joints and marrow—and marrow is a thing not to be got at very readily. The Word of God gets at the very marrow of our manhood—it lays bare the secret thoughts of the soul. It is “a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Have you not often, in hearing the Word, wondered how the preacher could so unveil that which you had concealed? He says the very things in the pulpit which you had uttered in your bed-chamber. Yes, that is one of the marks of the Word of God—that it lays bare a man’s inmost secrets. It shows him that which he had not even himself perceived. The Christ that is in the Word sees everything. Read the next verse—“All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”

The Word not only lets you see what your thoughts are, but it criticizes your thoughts. The Word of God says of this thought, “it is vain,” and of that thought, “it is acceptable.” Of this thought, “it is selfish,” and of that thought, “it is Christ-like.” It is a Judge of the thoughts of men. And the Word of God is such a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart that when men twist about and wind and wander, yet it tracks them. There is nothing so difficult to get at as a man. You may hunt a badger and run down a fox but you cannot get at a man—he has so many doublings and hiding places. Yet the Word of God will dig him out and seize on him. When the Spirit of God works with the Gospel, the man may dodge and twist but the preaching goes to his heart and conscience and he is made to feel it and to yield to its force.

Many times, I do not doubt, dear Brothers and Sisters, you have found comfort in the discerning power of the Word. Unkind lips have found great fault with you. You have been trying to do what you could for the Lord and an enemy has slandered you and then it has been a delight to remember that the Master discerns your motive. Holy Scripture has made you sure of this by the way in which it understood and commended you. He discerns the true object of your heart and never misinterprets you. And this has inspired you with a firm resolve to be the faithful servant of so just a Lord. No slander will survive the Judgment Seat of Christ. We are not to be tried by the opinions of men but by the impartial Word of the Lord. And therefore, we rest in peace.

II. I have been all this while over the first part of the discourse. I have only a minute or two just to show ONE OR TWO LESSONS WE OUGHT TO GATHER FROM THE QUALITIES OF THE WORD OF GOD that I have described.

The first is this—Brothers and Sisters, let us greatly reverence the Word of God. If it is all this, let us read it, study it, prize it and make it the man of our right hand. And you that are not converted, I do pray you treat the Bible with a holy love and reverence and read it with the view of finding Christ and His salvation in it. Augustine used to say that the Scriptures are the swaddling-bands of the child Christ Jesus—while you are unrolling the bands, I trust you will meet with Him.

Next, dear Friends, let us, whenever we feel ourselves dead and especially in prayer, get close to the Word, for the Word of God is alive. I do not find that gracious men always pray alike. Who could? When you have nothing to say to your God, let Him say something to you. The best private devotion is made up half of searching Scripture in which God speaks to us and the other half of prayer and praise in which we speak to God. When you are dead, turn from your death to that which still lives.

Next, whenever we feel weak in our duties let us go to the Word of God and the Christ in the Word, for power. And this will be the best of power. The power of our natural abilities, the power of our acquired knowledge, the power of our gathered experience—all these may be vanity—but the power which is in the Word will prove effectual. Get up from the cistern of your failing strength to the fountain of omnipotence. For they that drink here, while the youths shall faint and are weary and the young men shall utterly fall, shall *run* and not be weary and shall walk and not faint.

Next, if you need, as a minister, or a worker, anything that will cut your hearers to the heart, go to this Book for it. I say this because I have known preachers try to use very cutting words of their own. God save us from that! When our hearts grow hot and our words are apt to be sharp as a razor, let us remember that the wrath of man works not the righteousness of God. Let us not attempt to carry on Christ's war with the weapons of Satan. There is nothing so cutting as the Word of God. Keep to that.

I believe, also, that one of the best ways of convincing men of error is not so much to denounce the error as to proclaim the Truth more clearly. If a stick is very crooked and you wish to prove that it is so, get a straight one and quietly lay it down by its side. When men look they will surely see the difference. The Word of God has a very keen edge about it and all the cutting words you want you had better borrow therefrom.

And next, the Word of God is very piercing. When we cannot get at people by God's Truth, we cannot get at them at all. I have heard of preachers who have thought they ought to adapt themselves a little to certain people and leave out portions of the Truth of God which might be disagreeable. Brothers, if the Word of God will not pierce, our words will not—you may depend upon that. The Word of God is like the sword of Goliath which had been laid up in the sanctuary, of which David said, "There is none like it, give it to me."

Why did he like it so well? I think he liked it all the better because it had been laid up in the Holy Place by the priests. That is one thing. But I think he liked it best of all because it had stains of blood upon it—the blood of Goliath. I like my own sword because it is covered with blood right up to the hilt—the blood of slaughtered sins and errors and preju-

dices has made it like the sword of Don Rodrigo, “of a dark and purple tint.” The slain of the Lord have been many by the old Gospel. We point to many vanquished by this true Jerusalem blade.

They desire me to use a new one. I have not tried it. What have I to do with a weapon which has seen no service? I have proved the Sword of the Lord and of Gideon and I mean to keep to it. My dear Comrades in Arms, gird this sword about you and disdain the wooden weapons with which enemies would delude you! Let us use this blade of steel, well tempered in the fire, against the most obstinate, for they cannot stand against it. They may resist it for a time but they will have to yield. They had better make preparations for surrender. For if the Lord comes out against them with His own Word, they will have to give in and cry to Him for mercy.

Next, if we want to discriminate at any time between the soul and the Spirit and the joints and marrow, let us go to the Word of God for discrimination. We need to use the Word of God just now upon several subjects. There is that matter of holiness, upon which one says one thing, and another says something else. Never mind what they all say—go to the Book—for this is the umpire on all questions. Amidst the controversies of the day about a thousand subjects, keep to this infallible Book and it will guide you unerringly.

And lastly, since this Book is meant to be a discerner, or critic, of the thoughts and intents of the heart, let the Book criticize us. When you have issued a new volume from the press—which you do every day, for every day is a new treatise from the press of life—take it to this great critic and let the Word of God judge it. If the Word of God approves you, you are approved. If the Word of God disapproves you, you are disapproved. Have friends praised you? They may be your enemies in so doing. Have other observers abused you? They may be wrong or right, let the Book decide.

A man of one Book—if that Book is the Bible—is a man, for he is a man of God. Cling to the living Word and let the Gospel of your fathers, let the Gospel of the martyrs, let the Gospel of the Reformers, let the Gospel of the blood-washed multitude before the Throne of God, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ—be your Gospel and none but that—and it will save you and make you the means of saving others to the praise of God.

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THE TENDERNESS OF JESUS

NO. 2148

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 8, 1890,
 BY C. H. SPURGEON,
 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“We have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”
Hebrews 4:15.

BELOVED, we have a *High Priest*. All that Israel had under the Law we still retain, only we have the *substance* of which they had only the *shadow*. “We have an Altar, of which they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.” We have a Sacrifice, which, being once offered, forever avails. We have “One greater than the temple,” and He is to us the Mercy Seat and the High Priest. Take it for granted that all the blessings of the Law remain under the Gospel. Christ has restored that which He took not away, but He has not taken away one single possible blessing of the Law—on the contrary, He has secured all to His people.

I look to the Old Testament and I see certain blessings appended to the Covenant of Works and I say to myself by faith, “Those blessings are mine, for I have kept the Covenant of Works in the Person of my Covenant Head and Surety. Every blessing which is promised to perfect obedience belongs to me, since I present to God a perfect obedience in the Person of my great Representative, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Every real spiritual blessing which Israel had, you have as a Christian.

Note, next, not only do we read that there is a High Priest, but in the 14th verse we read, “We have a High Priest.” It would be a small matter to us to know that such-and-such blessings existed—the great point is to know by faith that we *personally* possess them! What is the great High Priest to me unless He is mine? What is a Savior but a *word* to tantalize my despairing spirit, until I can say that this Savior is mine? Every blessing of the Covenant is prized in proportion as it is *had*—“We have a High Priest.” I pray you, never talk of the blessings and Doctrines of Grace as matters apart from personal possession, but seek habitually to enjoy and experience them! That was a grand exclamation of Thomas, “My Lord, and my God,” and this is a sweet word for the saints—“We have a High Priest.”

Beloved, come boldly to the Throne of God for you have a High Priest. Grasp firmly by *faith* the choice favors which your interest in the Lord Jesus secures to you. It is precious to reflect that Jesus, as High Priest, is still ours, though, according to the text, He “*is passed into the heavens.*” He does not forget us now that He has passed through the lower heavens into the Heaven of heavens where He reigns supreme in His Father’s Glory. He is still touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Though He has left behind Him all pain, suffering and infirmity, He retains to the fullest the fellow feelings which His life of humiliation has developed in Him.

“The Man is near of kin unto us” and no difference of situation or condition has changed His kinship or the boundless love which goes with it.

Our Joseph, though Lord of all Egypt, is our Brother, still, and beneath the vestments of a king there beats the heart of love. Think of our High Priest as not having laid aside that breastplate of His on which our names are engraved, nor the “two onyx stones, set in pouches of gold,” which He wore upon His shoulders, inscribed in the same manner. On His heart and on His shoulders our exalted High Priest bears all His people—His heart and His arms are both engaged for them—His love and His power are engrossed by them.

Our Lord carries in His pierced hands, feet and side, the memorials of His redeemed, as it is written, “I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands.” We have in Him who has passed into the heavens as truly merciful a High Priest as if He were still on this side of the veil ministering as in the day of His humiliation. Put those things together and read them experimentally, each Believer for himself. We have a High Priest—we have Him now—and while He is beyond the heavens, in the Glory of glories, He is still ours, in all tenderness exercising His Grace and power towards us.

Observe here that the Apostle delights to dwell upon the majesty and glory of our High Priest. What does he say? “Seeing, then, that we have a *great* High Priest,” as if Aaron and all his sons were little personages compared with Him! In Jesus, the Son of God, we have “a great High Priest.” The long succeeding line of priests called of God to stand before Him in the holy place on earth have all passed away—but we have “a great High Priest,” seeing He never dies. These men were all faulty—but we have a “great High Priest,” who is absolutely perfect. These men did but humbly represent Him, as in a dewdrop the sun may be reflected. But He is the true High Priest between God and man and therefore the epithet “*great*” is put before His name as it could not be before any other.

He is “the great High Priest,” for He has passed, not within a material veil into some inner sanctuary encompassed with curtains, but into the heavens where God dwells! His name is *Jesus*. There is His Manhood—He was born of a woman to save His people from their sins. But we read further, “Jesus, *the Son of God*.” There is His Deity. He is the Only-Begotten of the Father—as glorious in His Godhead as He is gracious in His Manhood. Paul delights to dwell upon these points of glory.

But when he has done so, it seems to occur to him that when we consider the greatness of our High Priest, some poor trembling sinners may be afraid to draw near to Him—and the Apostle ever has a longing eye towards drawing souls to Jesus. Therefore he falls back upon our Lord’s tenderness. Great as He is, our High Priest is not One who “cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” He puts a negative on that fear which might naturally arise in trembling bosoms. This morning, being myself more than usually compassed with infirmities, I desire to speak, as a weak and suffering preacher, of that High Priest who is full of compassion—and my longing is that any who are low in spirit, faint, despondent, or even at the point of total despair, may take heart to approach the Lord Jesus!

Let no man be afraid of Him who is the embodiment of gentleness and compassion! Though conscious of your own infirmities, you may feel free to come to Him who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the

smoking flax! I want to speak so tenderly that even the despairing may look up and may feel a drawing towards our Beloved Master who is so graciously touched with a feeling of our infirmities.

I. So I am going to begin my sermon by saying of our blessed Lord, HE HAS ASSUMED A VERY TENDER OFFICE. If the office of high priest had been fully carried out, as it ought to have been, it would have been one of the most tenderly helpful that could have been devised. A king may render great aid to the unhappy, but, on the other hand, he is a terror to evil-doers—a high priest is in the highest sense “ordained for men,” and he is the friend and benefactor of the most wretched.

It was intended, first, that *by the high priest God should commune with men*. That needs a person of great tenderness. A mind that is capable of listening to God and understanding, in a measure, what He teaches, had need be very tender so as to interpret the lofty sense into the lowly language of humanity. If the man is to come from among the Infinite down to the ignorance and narrow capacities of mortal men, he had need be tender as a nurse to her children. Great philosophers have not always been great teachers—their very profundity has prevented their translating their great thoughts into the speech of common minds. There is a possibility of knowing so much that the knowledge becomes crowded up and there remains no possible gate for the orderly going out of such a multitude of thoughts.

Great knowledge needs great patience if it would instruct the ignorant. The great loaves of wisdom must be broken and crumbed into a basin of milk for the children. How few remember the words, “Let the children first be filled”! Now, the high priest had to be a man who could commune with God and listen to the sacred Oracle—and then he was bound to come out to common men of the wilderness, or men of the farm, and tell them what he had heard in secret from the Infinite God! He must mediate and allow his mouth to be God’s mouth to the people—for “the priest’s lips should keep knowledge.” What he had grasped from the Lord he must so put that the people could grasp it and act upon it. This is what our Lord has done in the most tender manner.

He reveals the Father. The things of God which He knows, He makes known unto us by His Holy Spirit, as we are able to bear them. We are to learn of Him. Some say that they will go from Nature up to Nature’s God—they will do no such thing—the steps are much too steep for their feeble climbing! They fall into some such abyss of absurdity as evolution and come not near to God. You have not to go from Jesus Christ to God, for He Himself *is* God! “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him.” Come, then, and learn of the great High Priest! His office, itself, is a compassionate one and you may learn all of God from Him the more readily because He is meek and lowly of heart and will count it no drudgery to teach you the very A B Cs of Divine Truth.

But a high priest took the other side also—*he was to communicate with God from men*. Here, also, he needed the most tender spirit to rule his faculties and to move his affections. He must sit down and hear all the trembling petitions of troubled mothers who had come from the utmost end of Israel laden with their domestic burdens. He must listen to all the complaints of the oppressed, the woes of the afflicted, the trials of the

poor, the perplexities of the distracted. And then, as a man of God, he was ordained to take all these things in prayer before the Host High and in fitter language to present the requests of the broken in heart. What a tender office! How few could carry it out!

Even some well-meaning ministers do not seem able to enter into the struggles of a seeking sinner, or into the conflicts of a tempted soul. Those who go to them, that they may enjoy their intercessions, are disappointed. Our High Priest is quite at home with mourners and enters into their case as a good physician understands the symptoms of his patients. When we tell our Lord the story of our inward grief, He understands it better than we do. He rightly reads our case and then wisely presents it before the Majesty on high, pleading His Sacrifice, that the Lord may deal graciously with us.

Beloved, this is what Jesus Christ will do for all who desire to speak with God. He is the "Interpreter, one of a thousand," by whom our sighs will be reported to Heaven! If you wish to communicate your needs to the great Father who is able to help in time of need—here is the Ambassador between earth and Heaven who can plead the cause of your soul at that Throne from which succor always comes! Is it not gracious on our Lord's part to undertake so tender an office for those who need it so greatly and have no other way of access to the God of Grace?

But if I understand the high priest's office aright, he had many things to do which come under this general description, but which might not suggest themselves if you did not have the items set before you. The high priest was one who had *to deal with sin and judgment for the people*. We read in Exodus 28:29, "Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually." In consequence, he was called upon to hear confessions of sin and pleas for pardon. Many came to him and acknowledged known transgressions, or wished for aid in discovering sins of ignorance.

As God's representative, he judged the errors of those who came to offer sacrifice for their sins and helped them to deal rightly in the things of God. This is a very tender post to occupy. No mere man is fitted to hear, as a rule, the confessions of all sorts of people and certainly he should not seek to do so. Yet the man whom God calls to feed His flock is forced, at times, to enter into the soul-conflicts of his fellow men and to hear the mournful story of their wanderings. And he needs great tenderness in so doing. We have a High Priest into whose ears we may pour all the confessions of our penitence without fear. Go and do so! It is a wonderful easement to the mind to tell Jesus all. Men who have consciences that tear them to pieces will find perfect repose follows upon a full pouring out of their soul before the Lord Jesus. Our merciful High Priest will never make a harsh observation, nor ask a rasping question, nor pronounce a crushing sentence. Go to Him, only, for there is none like He. He will come so near to you that you shall unburden your soul at His feet.

No doubt the high priest was resorted to that *he might console the sorrowful*. It must have been a great relief for those who were of a sorrowful spirit, to go unto the sanctuary of the Lord and sit at the feet of a man of God who could remind the stricken one of the promises made to meet

such sorrow. Only to tell the story was helpful. Mourners often get more comfort from telling their griefs than they do from the remarks of those to whom they unburden themselves. Go to Jesus, dear Friend, if a sharp grief is now gnawing at your heart. If it is a trouble which you could not tell to your father or your husband, go to Jesus with it! That holy woman, Hannah, when she sat in the court of the Lord's house, got but little at first from Eli—she was telling her Lord her secret—but the aged priest thought that she was drunk because her lips were moving and she spoke not aloud!

He rebuked her roughly. But when she explained herself, then he bade her go in peace, for her prayer would be granted her—and she went away no more sad. Jesus will make no mistake as to your meaning, dear Friend, even though you should be as one drunk with sorrow. Go to your chamber all alone. Tell Jesus your troubles and He will meet it in the fullness of His compassion and wisdom. Through Him the Comforter shall come to you and your sorrow shall be turned into joy! Try it. I cannot preach to you this morning with any power of words, but words are not needed if you will put everything to the test which I tell you concerning the tender-hearted Savior. Hasten to lay Rabshakeh's letter before your Lord! Pour out the wormwood and the gall before Him—He knows their bitterness and He will surely make them to be swallowed up in victory. This is the purpose of His office and He will not fail in it.

The high priest would hear, also, *the desire and wishes of the people*. When men in Israel had some great longing, some overwhelming desire, they not only prayed in private but they would make a journey up to the Temple to ask the high priest to present their petitions before the Lord. Hannah only told Eli her heart's longing after it had been gratified, for she could not have summoned courage to mention so special a desire to a man who had so harshly judged her. She had evidently gone to Shiloh to make petition for a child, since her husband's other wife had been cruel to her because of her barrenness. She told Eli that the Lord had heard her and then she consulted him as to the dedication of her son to the Lord.

My Friend, you may have some very peculiar, delicate desire as to spiritual things that only God and your own soul may know, but fear not to mention it to your tender High Priest who will know your meaning and deal graciously with you! It was the high priest's business *to instruct and to reprove the people*. To instruct is delightful, but to reprove is difficult. Only a tender spirit can wisely utter rebuke. Israel's high priest needed to be meek as Moses in his rebukes of the erring. Our Lord Jesus Christ tells us our faults in tones of love. His rebukes never break our heart. He never upbraids in bitterness, though He does so in faithfulness. Oh, the tenderness of Christ! I feel my subject deeply, but I cannot speak it as I would. He has been most gracious in correcting me. I know His Word is true: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." We can take anything from Jesus—His hands make the bitter sweet.

There are men whom you would shun in the hour of your wounding even though you believe that they would do their best to help you, for you do not feel that you could reveal your heart to them, nor feel happy to be under obligation to them. Their kindness is hard and cold. Their counsel

is without the sweetening of compassion. They are as keen as a sword and as cutting. It may be they are so much above us that we cannot reach up to them, nor expect them to reach down to us. But there are other men, blessed among their fellows, who seem to be like havens for ships—you rejoice to cast anchor under their shelter. You feel, “I could tell that man anything. I know that he would have patience with me and pity for me, and that his heart would go out towards me.”

Now, Beloved, you will often be disappointed if you select a man or woman to be your confidante. But if you will resort to the Lord Jesus, whom God has commissioned to be High Priest for this very end and purpose, you will find Him just the Friend you need. He loves the troubled, for “in all their affliction He was afflicted.” He is very careful of the feeble-minded and of the little ones, for is it not written—“He shall gather the lambs with His arms and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young”? When circumstances are peculiarly trying, Jesus is peculiarly tender. When we are grieved, He is gentle. Did you ever hear any of His people say of their Lord, that He is overbearing? Did His spouse, in the song, ever say that her Beloved had a rough side to His hand, or a cold place in His heart?

He can and does chide, for His love is wise, but he has much pity and His love knows no limit. His heart is made of tenderness and His soul melts for love of His chosen. We adore our High Priest, not only for the greatness of His merit, but for the sweetness of His mercy. I wish I could fitly speak of Him. But this much I must and will say—Come to Him and rest in Him, for He calls you. He is near at all times and in all places, and you can come to Him while you sit in the pew, or when you walk by the way. Come, you that labor and are heavy laden, and lay your burdens at His feet! Come, you whose souls sink down within you under a sense of sin, come to Him who, as your great High Priest, has offered a guilt-removing Sacrifice! He sits at the door of the house of mercy—He waits to be gracious. This is my first head.

II. Now, secondly, as our Lord Jesus has a tender office, so, next, HE HAS TENDER FEELINGS. “We have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” Note that it is not said, “touched *by*,” but touched *with*. Many a man can be touched by the sorrow of another, but he is not touched *with* that sorrow. He has feeling, but not fellow feeling. He pities the sorrowing, but he does not sorrow with them.

How many of the rich are sorry for the poor, but they were never poor themselves, so they may be touched *by* the woe of poverty, but they are not touched *with* a feeling for it. Our Lord is touched *with* a feeling of our infirmities. You are touched and He is touched at the same time. A pang shoots through my heart—that pang has been felt by my Lord, also. A grief has stirred the waters of my spirit and the spirit of the great High Priest has moved in harmony with me. They say, but I know not that it is true, that when the strings of one harp are touched, if there is another harp in the room, it gently responds in unison, though not touched by any hand.

Assuredly it is so with the Believer and his Lord. Touch any one of His members and you touch the Head of the spiritual body. Your present trouble is upon the heart of our Well-Beloved—

***“He, in His measure, feels afresh
What every member bears.”***

It is not merely true that He is apprised of our infirmities, since the Lord has said, “I know their sorrows,” but He “is touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” Hold that thought! It is a great matter that our God should note the trials of His people, that His condescending Omniscience should concern itself with their everyday distresses! But this word goes further—He *feels* with His people—He is “touched with the *feeling* of our infirmities.” The sense of feeling is more intense, vivid and acute than the sense of sight. It is one thing to *see* pain, but another thing to be touched with the *feeling* of it. Treasure up this view of your Lord’s sympathy, for it may be a great support in the hour of agony and a grand restorative in the day of weakness.

Note again, “The feeling of *our* infirmities.” Whose infirmities? Does not “our” mean yours and mine? Jesus is touched with the feeling of your infirmities and mine. You, my venerable Brother, and you, my younger Sister—you who have come here from a fresh grave and you that will return to a bed shortly to be emptied of your dearest one—you that are slandered and you that are sick. You that can scarcely hold up your head for sadness—and you that are distracted with fear—He is “touched with a feeling of our infirmities.” I do not know how you feel about it, but the text draws me very near to all of you who are under infirmities even as I am. We nestle together in that little word, “our.” We meet in the hospital ward of that other word, “infirmities.” The best of all is that *Jesus* meets us all there and is touched with the feeling of the infirmities, not only of renowned divines in their pulpits and of great saints in their closets, but with “our” infirmities—even ours, who are “less than the least of all saints.”

Note well that word, “infirmities”—“touched with the feeling of our *infirmities*.” If it had only said sorrows, there would have been a sound of the sublime about it. But our Master stoops to “infirmities.” He is not only touched with the feeling of the heroic endurance of the martyrs, but He sympathizes with those of us who are not heroes but can only plead—“the spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak.” While you are entreating the Lord, thrice, to take away the thorn in the flesh He is sympathizing with you! Is it not well that it does not say, touched with the feeling of our *patience*? Our *self-denial*, our *valor*? But “with a feeling of our *infirmities*”—that is, our weakness, our littleness—the points in which we are not strong nor happy. Our pain, our depression, our trembling, our sensitiveness—He is touched with these though He falls not into the sin which so often comes of them. Hold fast this Truth of God, for it may greatly tend to your consolation some day.

Jesus is touched, not with a feeling of your strength, but of your infirmity. Down here, poor, feeble nothings affect the heart of their great High Priest on high who is crowned with glory and honor! As the mother feels the weakness of her babe, so does Jesus feel with the poorest, saddest and weakest of His chosen! Why is this, Brothers and Sisters? Let us

think of it a while! *Our Lord has a tender Nature.* Some people are not sympathetic and never will be. Their spirit is not generous. We are all made of clay, but some clay is stiffer and more gritty than another—and in some cases very hard grit is in it. Some men have no more feeling than granite. They will say about the collection today, “I shall not give anything to the hospitals. Let the people take care of themselves. If they were more thrifty they would have a little laid by for a rainy day and would not need to have hospitals provided for them.”

This gentleman can supply wagon-loads of the same sort of hard material. I know you, my Friend. I have known you, too, a long time. I was going to say, “I would be happy to attend your funeral,” but I will not say so, lest it seem that I am hardening myself under your influence. And besides, there are so many of your order, that one more or less is of no great consequence. You know the people who are always griping against charity and finding a shilling’s worth of reasons why they should not give a penny. Such people will not willingly put anything into the box—but as it will come round to them, anyway—possibly they will do so for fear of being known!

Jesus, our Lord, is tender by Nature. Amid the bliss of Heaven He foresaw the miseries of earth and resolved to leave His Glory that He might come here to rescue man. His innate tenderness brought Him from the Throne to the manger, from the manger to the Cross. Our Lord is not only tender of Nature but *quick of understanding as to the infirmities of men.* Lack of sense often prevents men being sensitive and sympathetic. If you have never suffered a disease, you need a little imagination to realize it so as to be touched with the feeling of it. I noticed a very able address delivered by Mr. Hutchinson before the Lord Mayor, last Friday, in which he advises a person who mourns his lack of sympathy to go for a week to his usual city vocation with a black patch over one eye, or wearing a wooden leg.

“If this does not effect the business,” he says, “let him choose some leisure day in the country in bright spring and resolutely, for 24 hours, keep a bandage firmly placed over both eyes. His organization is, I fear, in this direction, well-near hopeless if next morning he does not feel inclined to send a liberal donation to some hospital that has for its mission the prevention of blindness.” I have no doubt that improvable persons might be all the better for some such attempt to gain feeling for their fellows. The same doctor thinks that the wearing of a truss, or a spinal apparatus for one day might be a help to tenderness.

I will not urge these modes of cure, but the thought is good and it might be tried in other directions. Suppose the squire of the parish who thinks 10 or 12 shillings abundant wages for a week, should say to his lady, “We have always said that our agricultural laborers have quite enough money to live upon—let us try their fare. We will leave this house for a week and take one of the old cottages in the village and live, all of us, on the wages we pay our men.” What a capital school for social economy! How well would some people know the value of our silver currency and of the copper coinage, also! Only we would like members of Parliament to have a longer experience than one week, lest it might be a pleasant

change from feasting to fasting! Say six months for the honorable member! This might foster sympathy.

Our blessed Lord had real experience and, beside that, the faculty of being able to put Himself into the place of sufferers and so to be “acquainted with grief.” His quick understanding made Him realize, as High Priest, the sorrows of His people. Too many people are *so wrapped up in their own grief* that they have no room in their souls for sympathy. Do you not know them? The first thing when they rise in the morning is the dreadful story of the night they have passed. Ah, dear, and they have not quite eaten a hearty breakfast before their usual pain is somewhere or other coming over them! They must have the special care and pity of the whole household.

All the day long the one great business is to keep everybody aware of how much the great sufferer is enduring. It is this person’s patent right to monopolize all the sympathy which the market can supply and then there will be none to spare for the rest of the afflicted! If you are greatly taken up with self, there is not enough of you to run over to anybody else. How different this from our Lord, who never cried, “Have pity upon Me! Have pity upon Me, O My friends!” He is described as “enduring the Cross, despising the shame.” So strong was He in love that, though He saved others, Himself He could not save! Though He succored the afflicted, none succored Him!

Men who are *wrapped up in their own glories are not sympathetic*. Is it not a fine thing to spend life in contemplating one’s own magnificence? Those who are amazed at their own greatness have no thought to spare for the suffering. “No,” says the man, “the masses must obey the laws of supply and demand and get on as well as they can. Let them do as I have done. I might have been as poor as they are if I had shown as little push and enterprise as they do.” The gentleman talks on a great scale and he has no sympathy for the small woes of common life. His sympathy is needed at home and his charity begins there—and is so satisfied with its beginning that it never goes any further.

Our Lord is at the opposite pole from all this. He never glorified Himself. He “made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant,” thus displaying the tenderness of His heart. Let me say, once more, our Lord is tender to us without any effort—not only because of the reasons I have mentioned, but because *He has made our cause His own*. We are His friends and does not a friend act tenderly to a friend? We are more than that—we are *married* to Him and shall not a husband be tender to his spouse? More than that, “we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones”—and shall not the Head feel every pain of the members? It must be so! Jesus has so identified Himself with His own redeemed that He must forevermore be in living, loving, lasting sympathy with them!

III. I must now notice very briefly, in the third place, that our LORD HAD TENDER TRAINING. Hear what Paul says of it. He “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Beloved, *our Lord was tried as we are*—that is one meaning of the passage. As to all manner of bodily ills, He was subject to them all. Hungry, weary, faint, without a place to lay His

head, He was tried in all the points to which poverty exposes its victims. "He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." Even to the death-sweat and the cry, "I thirst!" Jesus has gone along our pathway of pain and grief. No step of it has been spared Him.

Our Lord has been tried *mentally*. There is never an exceeding heaviness, nor a sore amazement, nor a wound of treachery, nor a stab of ingratitude of which He did not feel. The sharpest arrows in the quiver of anguish have been shot at His dear heart. "Oh," says one, "I do not think anybody has been tried as I have been by cruel unkindness." Say not so, for Jesus was forsaken of all and betrayed by the friend in whom He trusted. As to *spiritual* distress, our Lord has been there, also. Where any sinless foot could go, He has gone. The abyss has heard Him cry, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Tried in all points from above and from below, from without and from within, He can sympathize with every form of tribulation.

"Like as we are." Who are meant by the "we"? That again is like the "our"—it means you and I. Jesus Christ passed through a training similar to ours. The discipline of life for all the children is much the same. The first-born is tried as the rest of the household are tried. But the text says, "*tempted*" and that bears a darker meaning than "tried." Our Lord could never have fallen the *victim* of temptation, but through life He was the *object* of it. He could never have been so tempted as that the sin of a temptation could spot His soul. Far from it! Yet remember that in the wilderness He was tempted to *unbelief*. The Evil One said, "*If you are the Son of God.*" Most of us know how he can hiss that "if" into our ears. "If you are the Son of God."

Upon our Lord that "if" fell painfully but harmlessly. Then came the temptation to help Himself and anticipate the Providence of God by selfish action—"Command that these stones be made bread." We, too, have had this rash act suggested to us. The tempter has said, "You could get out of your difficulties by doing a wrong thing—do it! It is not a very wrong thing, either—indeed, it is questionable whether it might not be justifiable under the circumstances! In vain will you wait for the Lord—put out your own hand and provide for yourself! The way of faith in God is slow and you are in pressing need." Our Lord was tempted just like that. When no bread in the house is made the background of a great temptation, remember that our Lord has undergone the counterpart of that temptation.

Next, the Lord Jesus was tempted to *presumption*. Set on the pinnacle of the temple, He heard a voice saying, "If You are the Son of God cast Yourself down from here, for it is written, He shall give His angels charge over You, to keep You." Are you haunted by a similar suggestion to presume? Is it suggested that you quit your old standing and try the new notions, or that you speculate in business, or that you profess to understand what God has never taught you? Resist earnestly! Ah, dear Friends, your Lord knows all about this and as He escaped that temptation, you shall do the same. Then Satan—how often I have wondered at him—dared to say to Christ, "All these things will I give You if You will fall down and worship me."

Picture the Lord of angels, with all the royalty of Heaven shining on His brow, and the black fiend daring to say, "Fall down and worship *me*." It may be that a like temptation is coming home to you—live for gold, live for fame, live for pleasure—in some form or other worship the devil and renounce faith in God. "Worship me," says the Prince of Darkness—"take to the new doctrines. Practice the current worldliness. Leave the Word of God for the wisdom of the philosophers." In some such form will the temptation come, but even though Satan could fulfill his promise and all the world should be ours, we are bound to resist unto the death and we are encouraged to do so by the fact that we are upon the old ground where our Redeemer fought and conquered!

He can enter into the distress which this temptation is causing you, for He has felt the same. How the Lord Jesus must have started back with horror from the suggestions of the devil! He never entertained them for an instant, but the mere passing of those temptations over the drum of His ear and the apprehension of His mind must have caused Him the sharpest wounding—for He hated sin with immeasurable hate. Beloved, our Lord has endured so much of temptation that He will be tender towards you this morning, "touched with the feeling of your infirmities," because He was tempted at all points as you are. Even though temptation follows you as the serpent which bites at the horses' heels, your Lord knows it and will deliver you.

IV. I am happy to come to my last point, through Divine aid. OUR LORD HAS A PERFECT TENDERNESS. As I read the verse—"In all points tempted like as we are, *yet without sin*," I thought I heard you say, "But that is just the pinch of the matter. He cannot sympathize with me in *sin* and that is my great trouble!" Brother, do you wish that your Lord had become a sinner like yourself? Abhor the idea! It would be blasphemy if understood and indulged. You see at once that you could not wish anything of the kind! But listen to me—do not imagine that if the Lord Jesus had sinned He would have been any more tender toward you—for *sin is always of a hardening nature*.

If the Christ of God could have sinned, He would have lost the perfection of His sympathetic Nature. It needs perfection of heart to lay self all aside and to be touched with a feeling of the infirmities of others. Listen again—do you not think that *sympathy in sin would be a poisonous sweet*? A child, for instance, has done wrong and he has been wisely chastened by his father. I have known cases in which a foolish mother has sympathized with the child. This may seem affectionate, but it is wickedly injurious to the child. Such conduct would lead the child to love the evil which it is necessary he should hate. Have you not felt, yourself, that in unbelieving moments it would have been a great evil for a Christian Brother to have petted you in your unbelief? Have you not felt it was far better for you to have heard a bracing word of upbraiding?

We ought not to wish for sympathy in wrong. Sympathy in sin is conspiracy in crime. We must show sympathy with sinners but not with their sins. If, then, you dream that our Lord Jesus would have derived any gracious power to sympathize with us from Himself sinning, you greatly err! Such sympathy, had it been possible, would have been to the last degree

injurious to us. Inasmuch as He had no sin we can drink in His words of comfort without fear. His oil and wine will bring no evil to our wounds. His holy experience comforts us and puts us in no risk. It is a blessed thing for a sinner to have the sympathies of one who never sinned! Rejoice, you people of God! Rejoice in this, that the Sinless One has perfect sympathy with you in your infirmities! He sympathizes all the more graciously because He is without sin.

I have done when I have said this—if our Lord was thus sympathetic, let us be tender to our fellow men. Let us not restrain our tender feelings, but encourage them. Love is the brightest of the Graces of God and most sweetly adorns the Gospel. Love to the sorrowing, the suffering, the needy, is a charming flower which grows in the garden of a renewed heart. Cultivate it! Make your love practical! Love the poor not in word only, but in actual gifts to them! Love the sick and help them to a cure! Today I cannot conceive of you as thinking of the sick poor of London without wishing that you could house them all, relieve them all with medical skill and then send them for a little respite into the country, or by the seaside, to gather strength!

It is a painful fact that our great hospitals have so many beds unoccupied while patients are in need of them! As a governor of St. Thomas's Hospital, I have seen, from time to time, how the endowments have decreased in value through the agricultural depression and the lowering of rents. Surely London is rich enough to make up the deficit of 100,000 pounds! To do this the collections must be at least doubled. Will you allow the poor to pine in their narrow rooms? Shall they perish for lack of surgical care and medical help? Do you call yourselves followers of the tender Jesus? Do you hope to be saved through his compassion?

On this Hospital Sunday I charge rich Christians to delay no longer but to be touched with the feeling of the sufferings of those who are made of one flesh with them. Let all of us do our best. I will not insult you by pleading with you as though you were unwilling. You are eager to give for His dear sake who sympathizes with you so tenderly and helps you so graciously. Let the collection be made at once!

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—

Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-14.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—306, 328, 326.

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“THE THRONE OF GRACE”

NO. 1024

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 19, 1871,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“The Throne of Grace.”
Hebrews 4:16.*

THESE words are found embedded in that gracious verse, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need.” They are a gem in a golden setting. True prayer is an approach of the soul by the Spirit of God to the Throne of God. It is not the utterance of *words*. It is not, alone, the *feeling* of desires. It is the *advance* of the desires to God, the spiritual approach of our nature towards the Lord our God. True prayer is not a mere mental exercise, nor a vocal performance, but it is far deeper than that—it is *spiritual* commerce with the Creator of Heaven and earth.

God is a Spirit unseen of mortal eyes, and only to be perceived by the inner man. Our spirit within us, begotten by the Holy Spirit at our regeneration, discerns the Great Spirit, communes with Him, prefers to Him its requests, and receives from Him answers of peace. It is a spiritual business from beginning to end. Its aim and object end not with man, but reach to God Himself. In order to such prayer, the work of the Holy Spirit, Himself, is needed. If prayer were of the lips alone, we should only need breath in our nostrils to pray. If prayer were of desires alone, many excellent desires are easily felt—even by natural men.

But when it is the *spiritual* desire, and the *spiritual* fellowship of the human spirit with the Great Spirit, then the Holy Spirit, Himself, must be present all through it. He must give it life and power, or else true prayer will never be presented. The thing offered to God will wear the name and have the form, but the inner life of prayer will be far from it.

Moreover, it is clear from the collection of our text, that the interposition of the Lord Jesus Christ is essential to acceptable prayer. As prayer will not be truly prayer without the Spirit of God, so it will not be *prevailing* prayer without the Son of God. He, the Great High Priest, must go within the veil for us—no—through His Crucified Person the veil must be entirely taken away! Until then, we are shut out from the living God.

The man who, despite the teaching of Scripture, tries to pray without a Savior insults the Deity. And he who imagines that his own natural desires, coming up before God unsprinkled with the precious blood, will be an acceptable sacrifice before God, makes a mistake. He has not brought an offering that God can accept any more than if he had struck off a dog’s neck, or offered an unclean sacrifice. Worked in us by the Spirit, presented for us by the Christ of God, prayer becomes power before the Most High, but no other way.

In order, dear Friends, that I may stir you up to prayer this morning, and that your souls may be led to come near to the Throne of Grace, I purpose to take these few words and handle them as God shall give me

ability. You have begun to pray. God has begun to answer. This week has been a very memorable one in the history of this Church. Larger numbers than ever before at one time have come forward to confess Christ—as plain an answer to the supplications of God’s people as though the hand of the Most High had been seen stretched out of Heaven handing down to us the blessings for which we asked!

Now, let us continue in prayer, yes, let us gather strength in intercession and the more we succeed, the more earnest let us be to succeed yet more and more. Let us not be straitened in our own hearts since we are not straitened in our God. This is a good day, and a time of glad tidings—and seeing that we have the King’s ear, I am most anxious that we should speak to Him for thousands of others—that they also, in answer to our pleadings, may be brought near to Christ. In trying to explore the text this morning, I shall take it thus—First, *here is a Throne*. Then, secondly, *here is Grace*. Then we will put the two together, and we shall see Grace on a Throne. And putting them together in another order, we shall see *sovereignty manifesting itself, and resplendent in Grace*.

I. Our text speaks of A THRONE—“The Throne of Grace.” God is to be viewed in prayer as our Father. That is the aspect which is dearest to us. But still we are not to regard Him as though He were such as we are. For our Savior has qualified the expression, “Our Father,” with the words “who art in Heaven.” And close at the heels of that condescending name, in order to remind us that our Father is still infinitely greater than ourselves, He has bid us say, “Hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come,” so that our Father is still to be regarded as a King. And in prayer we come not only to our Father’s feet, but we come also to the Throne of the Great Monarch of the universe.

The Mercy Seat is a Throne, and we must not forget this. If prayer should always be regarded by us as an entrance into the courts of the royalty of Heaven. If we are to behave ourselves as courtiers should in the presence of an illustrious majesty, then we are not at a loss to know the right spirit in which to pray. If in prayer we come to a Throne, it is clear that our spirit should, in the first place, be one of *lovely reverence*. It is expected that the subject in approaching to the King should show forth homage and honor.

The pride that will not acknowledge the king, the treason which rebels against the sovereign will should, if it is wise, avoid any near approach to the throne. Let pride bite the curb at a distance. Let treason lurk in corners, for only lowly reverence may come before the king himself when he sits clothed in his robes of majesty. In our case, the King before whom we come is the highest of all monarchs, the King of kings, the Lord of lords. Emperors are but the shadows of His imperial power. They call themselves kings by right divine, but what Divine right have they? Common sense laughs their pretensions to scorn.

The Lord alone has Divine right, and to Him only does the kingdom belong. He is the blessed and only Potentate. They are but nominal kings, to be set up and put down at the will of men, or the decree of Providence, but He is Lord alone, the Prince of the kings of the earth—

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

My Heart, be sure that you prostrate yourself in such a Presence. If He is so great, place your mouth in the dust before Him, for He is the most powerful of all kings. His Throne has sway in all worlds! Heaven obeys Him cheerfully, Hell trembles at His frown, and earth is constrained to yield Him homage willingly or unwillingly.

His power can make or can destroy. To create or to crush—either is easy enough to Him. My Soul, be sure that when you draw near to the Omnipotent, who is as a consuming fire, you take your shoes from off your feet, and worship Him with lowliest humility. Besides, He is the most Holy of all kings. His Throne is a great white Throne, unspotted, and clear as crystal. "The heavens are not pure in His sight, and He charged His angels with folly." And you, a sinful creature, with what lowliness should you draw near to Him?

Familiarity there may be, but let it not be unhallowed. Boldness there should be, but let it not be impertinent. Still you are on earth and He in Heaven. You are still a worm of the dust, a creature crushed before the moth, and He the Everlasting—before the mountains were brought forth He was God—and if all created things should pass away again, yet still were He the same. My Brethren, I am afraid we do not bow as we should before the Eternal Majesty! But from now on, let us ask the Spirit of God to put us in a right frame of mind, that every one of our prayers may be a reverential approach to the Infinite Majesty above.

A Throne, and therefore, in the second place, to be approached with *devout joyfulness*. If I find myself favored by Divine Grace to stand among those favored ones who frequent His courts, shall I not feel glad? I might have been in His prison, but I am before His Throne—I might have been driven from His Presence forever, but I am permitted to come near to Him, even into His royal palace, into His secret chamber of gracious audience—shall I not, then, be thankful? Shall not my thankfulness ascend into joy, and shall I not feel that I am so honored that I am made the recipient of great favors when I am permitted to pray?

Why is your countenance sad, O Suppliant, when you stand before the Throne of Grace? If you were before the Throne of Justice to be condemned for your iniquities, your hands might well be on your loins. But now you are favored to come before the King in His silken robes of love—let your face shine with sacred delight! If your sorrows are heavy, tell them unto Him, for He can relieve them. If your sins are multiplied, confess them, for He can forgive them. O you courtiers in the halls of such a Monarch, be exceedingly glad and mingle praises with your prayers!

It is a Throne, and therefore, in the third place, whenever it is approached it should be with *complete submission*. We do not pray to God to instruct Him as to what He ought to do, neither for a moment must we presume to dictate the line of the Divine procedure. We are permitted to say unto God, "Thus and thus would we have it," but we must evermore add, "But, seeing that we are ignorant and may be mistaken—seeing that we are still in the flesh, and, therefore, may be actuated by carnal motives—not as we will, but as You will."

Who shall dictate to the Throne? No loyal child of God will, for a moment, imagine that he is to occupy the place of the King! He bows before Him who has a right to be Lord of All. And though he utters his desire earnestly, vehemently, importunately, and pleads and pleads again, yet it

is evermore with this necessary reservation—“Your will be done, my Lord. And if I ask anything that is not in accordance with Your will, my inmost desire is that You would be good enough to deny Your servant. I will take it as a true answer if You refuse me, if I ask that which seems not good in Your sight.”

If we constantly remembered this, I think we should be less inclined to push certain suits before the Throne, for we should feel, “I am here in seeking my own ease, my own comfort, my own advantage, and perhaps I may be asking for that which would dishonor God—therefore will I speak with the deepest submission to the Divine decrees.”

But, Brethren, in the fourth place, if it is a Throne it ought to be approached with enlarged expectations. Well does our hymn put it—

**“You are coming to a King—
Large petitions with you bring.”**

We do not come, as it were, in prayer only to God’s almonry where He dispenses His favors to the poor. Nor do we come to the back door of the House of Mercy to receive the broken scraps, though that were more than we deserve. To eat the crumbs that fall from the Master’s table is more than we could claim. But when we pray, we are standing in the palace, on the glittering floor of the great King’s own reception room, and thus we are placed upon a vantage ground. In prayer we stand where angels bow with veiled faces—there, even there—the cherubim and seraphim adore before that same Throne to which our prayers ascend!

And shall we come there with stunted requests, and narrow and contracted faith? No, it becomes not a King to be giving away pence and goats—he distributes pieces of broad gold. He scatters not as poor men must, scraps of bread and broken meat, but he makes a feast of fat things, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. When Alexander’s soldier was told to ask what he would, he did not ask for little after the nature of his own merits, but he made such a heavy demand that the royal treasurer refused to pay it, and put the case to Alexander. And Alexander in right kingly sort replied, “He knows how great Alexander is, and he has asked as from a king. Let him have what he requests.”

Take heed of imagining that God’s thoughts are as your thoughts, and his ways as your ways. Do not bring before God stunted petitions and narrow desires, and say, “Lord, do according to these,” but, remember, as high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are His ways above your ways, and His thoughts above your thoughts! Ask, therefore, after a God-like sort—ask for great things, for you are before a great Throne. Oh that we always felt this when we came before the Throne of Grace, for then He would do for us exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or even think.

And Beloved, I may add in the fifth place that the right spirit in which to approach the Throne of Grace is that of *unstaggering coincidence*. Who shall doubt the King? Who dares impugn the imperial Word? It was well said that if integrity were banished from the hearts of all mankind, it ought still to dwell in the hearts of kings. Shame on a king if he can lie. The poorest beggar in the streets is dishonored by a broken promise, but what shall we say of a king if his word cannot be depended upon? Oh shame upon us, if we are unbelieving before the throne of the King of Heaven and earth!

With our God before us in all His Glory, sitting on the Throne of Grace, will our hearts dare to say we mistrust Him? Shall we imagine either that He cannot, or will not keep His promise? Banished be such blasphemous thoughts, and if they must come, let them come upon us when we are somewhere in the outskirts of His dominions, if such a place there is, but not in *prayer* when we are in His immediate Presence and behold Him in all the Glory of His Throne of Grace. There, surely, is the place for the child to trust its Father, for the loyal subject to trust his Monarch—and therefore, far from it be all wavering or suspicion! Unstaggering faith should be predominant before the Mercy Seat.

Only one other remark upon this point, and that is if prayer is coming before the Throne of God, it ought always to be conducted with the *deepest sincerity*, and in the spirit which makes everything real. If you are disloyal enough to despise the King, at least for your own sake do not mock Him to His face and when He is upon His Throne. If anywhere you dare repeat holy words without heart, let it not be in Jehovah’s palace! If a person should ask for audience with royalty, and then should say, “I scarcely know why I have come, I do not know that I have anything very particular to ask. I have no very urgent suit to press”—would he not be guilty both of folly and baseness?

As for our great King, when we venture into His Presence, let us have an errand there. As I said the other Sunday, let us beware of *playing* at praying. It is insolence towards God. If I am called upon to pray in public, I must not dare to use words that are intended to please the ears of my fellow worshippers, but I must realize that I am speaking to God Himself and that I have business to transact with the great Lord.

And in my private prayer, if, when I rise from my bed in the morning I bow my knees and repeat certain words, or when I retire to rest at night go through the same regular form, I rather sin than do anything that is good unless my very soul does speak unto the Most High. Do you think that the King of Heaven is delighted to hear you pronounce words with a frivolous tongue, and a thoughtless mind? You know Him not! He is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in Truth. If you have any empty forms to prate, go and pour them out into the ears of fools like yourself, but not before the Lord of Hosts!

If you have certain words to utter to which you do attach a superstitious reverence, go and say them in the gaudy courts of the harlot Rome, but not before the glorious Lord of Zion! The spiritual God seeks spiritual worshippers, and such He will accept, and only such. But the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord, and only a sincere prayer is His delight. Beloved, the gathering up of all our remarks is just this—prayer is no trifle. It is an eminent and elevated act. It is a high and wondrous privilege. Under the old Persian Empire a few of the nobility were permitted at any time to come in unto the king and this was thought to be the highest privilege possessed by mortals.

You and I, the people of God, have a permit, a passport to come before the Throne of Heaven at any time we will, and we are encouraged to come there with great boldness. But still let us not forget that it is no mean thing to be a courtier in the courts of Heaven and earth—to worship Him who made us and sustains us in being. Truly, when we attempt to pray, we may hear the voice saying, out of the excellent Glory, “Bow the knee.”

From all the spirits that behold the face of our Father who is in Heaven, even now, I hear a voice which says, "Oh, come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness! Fear before Him all the earth."

II. Lest the glow and brilliance of the word "throne" should be too much for mortal vision, our text now presents us with the soft, gentle radiance of that delightful word—"GRACE." We are called to the Throne of Grace, not to the throne of Law. Rocky Sinai once was the throne of Law, when God came to Paran with ten thousand of His holy ones. Who desired to draw near to *that* throne? Even Israel might not. Boundaries were set about the mount, and if but a beast touched the mount, it was stoned or thrust through with a dart.

O you self-righteous ones who hope that you can obey the Law, and think that you can be saved by it, look to the flames that Moses saw, and shrink, and tremble, and despair! To that throne we do not come now, for through Jesus the case is changed. To a conscience purged by the precious blood there is no anger upon the Divine Throne, though to our troubled minds—

***"Once it was a seat of burning wrath,
And shot devouring flames.
Our God appeared a consuming fire,
And Jealous was His name."***

And, blessed be God, we are not this morning to speak of the Throne of Ultimate Justice. Before that we shall all come, and as many of us as have believed will find it to be a Throne of Grace as well as of Justice, for, He who sits upon that Throne shall pronounce no sentence of condemnation against the man who is justified by faith.

But I have not to call you this morning to the place from where the Resurrection trumpet shall ring out so shrill and clear. Not yet do we see the angels with their vengeful swords come forth to smite the foes of God. Not yet are the great doors of the pit opened to swallow up the enemies who would not have the Son of God to reign over them. We are still on praying ground and pleading terms with God, and the Throne to which we are bid to come, and of which we speak at this time is the Throne of Grace.

It is a Throne set up on purpose for the dispensation of Grace—a Throne from which every utterance is an utterance of Grace. The scepter that is stretched out from it is the silver scepter of Grace. The decrees proclaimed from it are purposes of Grace. The gifts that are scattered down its golden steps are gifts of Grace. And He that sits upon the Throne is Grace itself. It is the Throne of Grace to which we approach when we pray. And let us for a moment or two think this over, by way of consolatory encouragement to those who are beginning to pray. Indeed, to all of us who are praying men and women, if in prayer I come before a Throne of Grace, then *the faults of my prayers will be overlooked.*

In the beginning of your praying, dear Friends, you feel as it you do not pray. The groanings of your spirit, when you rise from your knees, are such that you think there is nothing in them. What a blotted, blurred, smeared prayer it is! Never mind. You are not come to the Throne of Justice, else when God perceived the fault in the prayer He would spurn it—

your broken words, your gasps, and stammering are before a Throne of Grace.

When any one of us has presented his best prayer before God, if we saw it as God sees it, there is no doubt we would have great lamentation over it—for there is enough sin in the best prayer that was ever prayed to secure its being cast away from God. But it is not a Throne of Justice, I say again—and here is the hope for our lame, limping supplications. Our condescending King does not maintain a stately etiquette in His court like that which has been observed by princes among men, where a little mistake or a flaw would secure the petitioner's being dismissed with disgrace. Oh, no!

The faulty cries of His children are not severely criticized by Him. The Lord High Chamberlain of the palace above, our Lord Jesus Christ, takes care to alter and amend every prayer before He presents it. He makes the prayer perfect with His perfection, and prevalent with His own merits. God looks upon the prayer as presented through Christ, and forgives all its own inherent faultiness. How this ought to encourage any of us who feel ourselves to be feeble, wandering, and unskillful in prayer!

If you cannot plead with God as sometimes you did in years gone by. If you feel as if somehow or other you have grown rusty in the work of supplication, never give up, but come still, yes, and come more often, for it is not a Throne of severe criticism, it is a Throne of Grace to which you come. Then, further, inasmuch as it is a Throne of Grace, *the faults of the petitioner himself shall not prevent the success of his prayer*. Oh, what faults there are in us! To come before a Throne—how unfit we are! We, that are all defiled with sin within and without! Dare any of you think of praying were it not that God's Throne is a Throne of Grace?

If you could, I confess I could not. An absolute God, infinitely holy and just, could not in consistency with His Divine Nature answer any prayer from such a sinner as I am were it not that He has arranged a plan by which my prayer comes up no longer to a Throne of absolute Justice, but to a Throne which is also the Mercy Seat—the Propitiation—the place where God meets sinners through Jesus Christ. Ah, I could not say to you, "Pray," not even to you saints, unless it were a Throne of Grace.

Much less could I talk of prayer to you sinners. But now I will say this to every sinner here, though he should think himself to be the worst sinner that ever lived—cry unto the Lord and seek Him while He may be found. A Throne of Grace is a place fitted for you—go to your knees! By simple faith go to your Savior, for He, He it is who is the Throne of Grace. It is in Him that God is able to dispense Grace unto the most guilty of mankind. Blessed be God, neither the faults of the prayer nor yet of the suppliant shall shut out our petitions from the God who delights in broken and contrite hearts! If it is a Throne of Grace, then *the desires of the pleader will be interpreted*. If I cannot find words in which to utter my desires, God in His Grace will read my desires without the words.

He takes the meaning of His saints, the meaning of their groans—a Throne that was not gracious would not trouble itself to make out our petitions. But God, the infinitely Gracious One, will dive into the soul of our desires and He will read there what we cannot speak with the tongue. Have you ever seen the parent, when his child is trying to say something to him, and he knows very well what it is the little one has got to say, help

him over the words and utter the syllables for him? And if the little one has half-forgotten what he would say, you have seen the father suggest the word—and so the Ever-Blessed Spirit, from the Throne of Grace, will help us and teach us words, no, write in our hearts the desires themselves!

We have in Scripture instances where God puts words into sinners' mouths. “Take with you words,” says He, “and say unto him, Receive us graciously and love us freely.” He will put the desires, and put the expression of those desires into your spirit by His Grace. He will direct your desires to the things which you ought to seek. He will teach you your wants, though as yet you know them not. He will suggest to you His promises that you may be able to plead them. He will, in fact, be Alpha and Omega to your prayers, just as He is to your salvation—for as salvation is from first to last of Grace—so the sinner's approach to the Throne of Grace is of Grace from first to last.

What comfort is this! Will we not, my dear Friends, with greater boldness draw near to this Throne, as we suck out the sweet meaning of this precious word, “the Throne of Grace”? If it is a Throne of Grace, then *all the wants of those who come to it will be supplied*. The King from off such a Throne will not say, “You must bring to Me gifts, you must offer to Me sacrifices.” It is not a Throne for receiving tribute. It is a Throne for dispensing gifts. Come, then, you who are poor as poverty itself! Come you that have no merits and are destitute of virtues! Come you that are reduced to a beggarly bankruptcy by Adam's fall and by your own transgressions! This is not the Throne of majesty which supports itself by the taxation of its subjects, but a Throne which glorifies itself by streaming forth like a fountain with floods of good things.

Come, now, and receive the wine and milk which are freely given, yes, come buy wine and milk without money and without price. All the petitioner's wants shall be supplied, because it is a Throne of Grace. And so, *all the petitioner's miseries shall be compassionated*. Suppose I come to the Throne of Grace with the burden of my sins. There is One on the Throne who felt the burden of sin in ages long gone by, and has not forgotten its weight. Suppose I come loaded with sorrow. There is One there who knows all the sorrows to which humanity can be subjected. Am I depressed and distressed? Do I fear that God Himself has forsaken me?

There is One upon the Throne who said, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” It is a Throne from which Grace delights to look upon the miseries of mankind with tender eyes, to consider them and to relieve them. Come, then! Come, then! Come, then, you that are not only poor, but wretched—whose miseries make you long for death—and yet dread it. You captive ones, come in your chains! You slaves, come with the irons upon your souls! You who sit in darkness, come forth all blindfold as you are. The Throne of Grace will look on you if you cannot look on it, and will give to you though you have nothing to give in return—and will deliver you, though you cannot raise a finger to deliver yourself. “The Throne of Grace.”

The word grows as I turn it over in my mind, and to me it is a most delightful reflection that if I come to the Throne of God in prayer, I may feel a thousand defects, but yet there is hope. I usually feel more dissatisfied with my prayers than with anything else I do. I do not believe that it is an

easy thing to pray in public so as to conduct the devotions of a large congregation aright. We sometimes hear persons commended for preaching well, but if any shall be enabled to *pray* well, there will be an equal gift and a higher Grace in it. But, Brethren, suppose in our prayers there should be defects of knowledge—it is a Throne of Grace—and our Father knows that we have need of these things. Suppose there should be defects of faith—He sees our little faith and still does not reject it, small as it is.

He does not in every case measure out His gifts by the degree of our faith, but by the sincerity and trueness of faith. And if there should be grave defects even in our spirit, and failures in the fervency or in the humility of the prayer, still, though these should not lie there and are much to be deplored, Grace overlooks all this. It forgives all this, and still its merciful hand is stretched out to enrich us according to our needs. Surely this ought to induce many to pray who have not prayed, and should make us who have been long accustomed to use the consecrated art of prayer to draw near with greater boldness than ever to the Throne of Grace!

III. But now regarding our text as a whole, it conveys to us the idea of GRACE ENTHRONED. It is a Throne, and who sits on it? It is Grace personified that is here installed in dignity. And truly, today Grace is on a Throne. In the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Grace is the most predominant attribute of God. How comes it to be so exalted? We reply, Grace has a Throne *by conquest*. Grace came down to earth in the form of the Well-Beloved, and it met with sin. Long and sharp was the struggle and Grace appeared to be trampled under foot of sin. But Grace at last seized sin, threw it on its own shoulders, and though all but crushed beneath the burden, Grace carried sin up to the Cross and nailed it there, slew it there, put it to death forever and triumphed gloriously.

For this cause at this hour Grace sits on a Throne because it has conquered human sin, has borne the penalty of human guilt, and overthrown all its enemies. Grace, moreover, sits on the Throne because it has established itself there *by right*. There is no injustice in the Grace of God. God is as Just when He forgives a Believer as when He casts a sinner into Hell. I believe in my own soul that there is as much and as pure a justice in the acceptance of a soul that believes in Christ as there will be in the rejection of those souls who die impenitent and are banished from Jehovah's Presence.

The sacrifice of Christ has enabled God to be Just, and yet the Justifier of him that believes. He who knows the word "Substitution," and can spell its meaning aright, will see that there is nothing due to punitive justice from any Believer. Jesus Christ has paid all the Believer's debts, and God would be unjust if He did not save those for whom Christ vicariously suffered, for whom His righteousness was provided, and to whom it is imputed. Grace is on the Throne by conquest, and sits there by right.

Grace is enthroned this day, Brethren, because Christ has finished His work and gone into the heavens. It is enthroned *in power*. When we speak of its Throne, we mean that it has unlimited might. Grace sits not on the footstool of God. Grace stands not in the courts of God, but it sits on the Throne. It is the reigning attribute. It is the King today. This is the dispensation of Grace, the year of Grace—Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. We live in the era of reigning Grace, for seeing He ever

lives to make intercession for the sons of men, Jesus is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.

Sinner, if you were to meet Grace in the by-way, like a traveler on his journey, I would bid you make its acquaintance and ask its influence. If you should meet Grace as a merchant on the Exchange, with treasure in its hand, I would bid you court its friendship, it will enrich you in the hour of poverty. If you should see Grace as one of the peers of Heaven, highly exalted, I would bid you seek to get its ear. But, oh, when Grace sits on the Throne, I beseech you close in with it at once. It can be no higher, it can be no greater, for it is written "God is Love," which is an alias for Grace.

Oh, come and bow before it! Come and adore the infinite mercy and Grace of God. Doubt not, halt not, hesitate not. Grace is reigning! Grace is God! God is Love. Oh that you, seeing Grace is thus enthroned, would come and receive it! I say, then, that Grace is enthroned by conquest, by right, and by power. And, I will add, it is enthroned in Glory, for God glorifies His Grace. It is one of His objects now to make His Grace illustrious. He delights to pardon penitents, and so to show His pardoning Grace. He delights to look upon wanderers and restore them, to show His reclaiming Grace.

He delights to look upon the broken-hearted and comfort them, that He may show His consoling Grace. There is Grace to be had of various kinds, or rather the same Grace acting in different ways, and God delights to make His Grace glorious. There is a rainbow round about the Throne like unto an emerald, the emerald of His compassion and His love. O happy souls that can believe this, and believing it can come at once and glorify Grace by becoming instances of its power!

IV. Lastly, our text, if rightly read, has in it SOVEREIGNTY RESPLENDENT IN GLORY—THE GLORY OF GRACE. The Mercy Seat is a throne, though Grace is there, it is still a throne. Grace does not displace Sovereignty. Now the attribute of Sovereignty is very high and terrible—its light is like unto a jasper stone, most precious—and like unto a sapphire stone, or, as Ezekiel calls it, "the terrible crystal." Thus says the King, the Lord of Hosts, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." "Who are you, O man, 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 to make of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?"

These are great and terrible words, and are not to be answered. He is a King, and He will do as He wills. None shall stay His hand, or say unto Him, What are you doing? But, ah, lest any of you should be downcast by the thought of His Sovereignty, I invite you to the text. It is a throne—there is Sovereignty. But to every soul that knows how to pray, to every soul that by faith comes to Jesus, the true Mercy Seat, Divine Sovereignty wears no dark and terrible aspect, but is full of love!

It is a Throne of Grace, from which I gather that the Sovereignty of God to a Believer, to a pleader, to one who comes to God in Christ, is always exercised in pure Grace. To you, to you who come to God in prayer, the Sovereignty always runs thus—"I will have mercy on that sinner though he deserves it not, though in him there is no merit, yet because I can do as I will with My own, I will bless him, I will make him My child, I will ac-

cept him. He shall be Mine in the day when I make up My jewels." On the Mercy Seat God never executed Sovereignty otherwise than in a way of Grace. He reigns, but in this case Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

There are these two or three things to be thought of, and I have done. On the Throne of Grace Sovereignty has placed itself under bonds of love. I must speak with words choice and picked here, and I must hesitate and pause to get right sentences, lest I err while endeavoring to speak the Truth in plainness. God will do as He wills, but on the Mercy Seat He is under bonds—bonds of His own making—for He has entered into Covenant with Christ, and so into Covenant with His chosen. Though God is and ever must be a Sovereign, He never will break His Covenant, nor alter the Word that is gone out of His mouth.

He cannot be false to a Covenant of His own making. When I come to God in Christ, to God on the Mercy Seat, I need not imagine that by any act of Sovereignty God will set aside His Covenant. That cannot be—it is impossible. Moreover, on the Throne of Grace, God is again bound to us by His promises. The Covenant contains in it many gracious promises, exceedingly great and precious. "Ask and it shall be given you. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you." Until God had said that Word or a Word to that effect, it was at His own option to hear prayer or not, but it is not so now.

For now, if it is true prayer offered through Jesus Christ, His Truth binds Him to hear it. A man may be perfectly free, but the moment he makes a promise, he is not free to break it. And the everlasting God wants not to break His promise. He delights to fulfill it. He has declared that all His promises are yes and amen in Christ Jesus. But, for our consolation, when we survey God under the high and terrible aspect of a Sovereign, we have this to reflect on—that He is under Covenant bonds of promise to be faithful to the souls that seek Him. His Throne must be a Throne of Grace to His people.

And once more, and sweetest thought of all, every Covenant promise has been endorsed and sealed with blood, and far be it from the everlasting God to pour scorn upon the blood of His dear Son! When a king has given a charter to a city, he may before have been absolute, and there may have been nothing to check his prerogatives, but when the city has its charter, then it pleads its rights before the king. Even thus God has given to His people a charter of untold blessings, bestowing upon them the sure mercies of David. Very much of the validity of a charter depends upon the signature and the seal, and, my Brethren, how sure is the charter of Covenant Grace! The signature is the handwriting of God Himself, and the seal is the blood of the Only-Begotten!

The Covenant is ratified with blood, the blood of His own dear Son. It is not possible that we can plead in vain with God when we plead the blood-sealed Covenant, ordered in all things and sure. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the power of the blood of Jesus with God can never fail. It speaks when we are silent, and it prevails when we are defeated. Better things than that of Abel does it ask for, and its cry is heard. Let us come boldly, for we bear the promise in our hearts. When we feel alarmed because of the Sovereignty of God, let us cheerfully sing—

"The Gospel bears my spirit up,

A faithful and unchanging God

Lays the foundation for my hope

In oaths, and promises, and blood."

May God the Holy Spirit help us to use aright from this time forward "the Throne of Grace." Amen.

Rome, December 7, 1871

TO MY BELOVED CHURCH AND FRIENDS IN GENERAL

Beloved in the Lord, having felt it to be my duty to leave England for a short time to prevent a return of my former complaint, I am bound gratefully to acknowledge the good hand of the Lord upon me during my short sojourn abroad. I hope to return in a brief season, so strengthened as to continue to labor on for a considerable period without another pause. I take this opportunity of thanking my affectionate Church and kind friends for their innumerable acts of generous sympathy in aiding our College and Orphanage, and especially for those many prayers which were turned to my comfort and healing in my late illness, and are the means of my upholding in my ever-growing service for the Lord.

The Lord return into their bosoms a thousand-fold the good which faithful friends have implored for me, and make me far more than ever the means of blessing to them by my ministry. Just now I implore a renewal of those prayers with increased earnestness, for a revival of religion is greatly needed. And it would be a sure evidence of its speedy coming if Believers united in prayer for it. Already the flame is kindled at the Tabernacle but it needs to be fanned into a mighty conflagration.

Our country requires a Divine visitation, and the promise of it only needs to be pleaded to be fulfilled. Brethren, as one man, cry mightily to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, beseeching Him to put His hand to the work, and magnify His Son in the eyes of all the people. Standing where Satan's seat is, in the midst of ten thousand idols, I beseech those who worship God in the spirit to wrestle in prayer for times of refreshing, that all lands may know that Jesus Christ is Lord.

How long shall the name of Jesus be blasphemed by the idolatries of Antichrist? It may be that the times of darkness will last till the children of light cry out bitterly, day and night, by reason of soul anguish. Then will God avenge His own elect, and that speedily. As I have trod the Ap-pian way I have rejoiced that Jesus, whom Paul preached, is yet alive, and is certain in due season to put down His enemies. Already He has desolated the Coliseum where His faithful martyrs poured forth their blood. The pagan power has fallen, and so also shall the papal, and all others which opposes His kingdom.

Let us proclaim a spiritual crusade, and set up our banners by redoubled prayer! It is certain that supplication produces marvelous results in Heaven and earth! Its power is proven in our own personal experience, and throughout the history of the Church. Brethren, LET US PRAY!

Yours, for Jesus' sake,

C. H. SPURGEON

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BOLDNESS AT THE THRONE

NO. 3182

**A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 1910.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 14, 1873.**

***“Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.”
Hebrews 4:16.***

[Another sermon by Mr. Spurgeon, upon the same subject, is #1024, Volume 17—
“The Throne of Grace”—Read/download the entire sermon,
free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

PRAYER occupies a most important place in the life of the Christian. “Behold, he prays,” was one of the first and also one of the surest indications of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. No one begins to live the life of faith who has not also begun to pray—and as prayer is necessary at the commencement of the Christian career, so is it necessary all through. A Christian’s vigor, happiness, growth and usefulness all depend upon prayer. It is—

***“His watchword at the gates of death,
He enters Heaven with prayer.”***

I suppose that even there we shall continue to pray. At all events, we read of the souls under the altar crying with a loud voice and saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, do You not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” I imagine that in Heaven we shall still lift up our hearts in prayer for the spread of Christ’s Kingdom, though our principal occupation there will be that of praise. But prayer is always needed *here*—every day, every hour, every moment we have cause for crying unto the Most High—

“Long as they live should Christians pray,”

for only while they pray do they truly live!

It is because of the supreme importance of prayer that we find so much about it in the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit continually encourages us to pray by precept, promise and example. One conspicuous instance of that encouragement is the exhortation we are now to consider—“Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.”

So, coming at once to the text, notice that we have here, first, *a description of our great resort for prayer*—“The Throne of Grace.” Secondly, we have a *loving exhortation*—“Let us come unto the Throne of Grace.” Thirdly, we have a *qualifying adverb*, telling us how we are to come—“Let us come *boldly*.” Fourthly, we have a reason *given for boldness*. The reason is in the context. We shall also think of other reasons and then shall close with *the reason* upon which Paul laid the stress of the argument in

writing to the Hebrews—“Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.”

I. First, then, dear Friends, we have A DESCRIPTION OF OUR GREAT RESORT FOR PRAYER—“The Throne of Grace.”

Under the Law of God, there was to be an ark overlaid inside and outside with pure gold. And above the ark was to be the Mercy Seat of pure gold with the golden cherubim covering the Mercy Seat with their wings. This mysterious emblem no one ever saw except the high priest—and he saw it only once a year—and then but dimly, for he saw it through the smoke of the incense which he presented before the Lord. It was a secret thing, but now it is revealed to us, for the veil has been torn and the symbol taken away that we may now come boldly right up to the Throne of heavenly Grace.

I was conversing, some time ago, with a member of the Catholic and Apostolic Church who took great pains to instruct me as to the meaning of the various offices and ordinances of the body with which he was connected. After he had explained a great many mysteries to his own satisfaction, if not to my edification, he pointed out the position of the saints at the present day. And then I felt that it was time to answer him, so I said, “I do not believe that Christians are intended to go crawling about the outer court and keeping far off from the Holy Place, for the Apostle Paul said, ‘Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace,’ right into the Holy of Holies, for there is no longer any separating veil to keep us away from the Mercy Seat. As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, my place is not in the outer court, nor even in the court of the priests. I have advanced beyond them and come right up to the Throne of Grace that I may there obtain mercy and find Grace to help in time of need.” That is the position of all true Christians, not only on one day of the year, but every day!

I wish that all Believers could realize the privileges to which they were born when they were created anew in Christ Jesus. You may have heard a whole congregation saying, “Lord, have mercy upon us and incline our hearts to keep this Law,” and you may have seen them all shivering there at the foot of Sinai with the lightning flashing above them, and the thunder pealing around them! Yet it is possible that at least *some* of them may have had the right to come before the Lord as His own dear children through faith in Jesus Christ. And if so, they might have said to Him, “Lord, You have had mercy upon us. You have blotted out all our transgressions and now we are not under the Law, but under Grace, and are completely delivered from the thralldom of the old Covenant of Works and are put under the new Covenant of Grace, that we may serve You in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.” Blessed are they who are enjoying the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free and who, therefore, come boldly right up to the Throne of Grace!

The Mercy Seat, then, is where the high priest typically came once each year. But our Great High Priest, “by His own blood entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” As He died, He tore down the separating veil and threw the Holiest of All open

to all who believe in Him! And He has made them kings and priests unto God, so that where the high priest stood, is where they stand in Christ Jesus! That place is so solemn and awe-inspiring that we might fear and quake at the very thought of coming to it were it not for this and other similar exhortations, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy and find Grace to help in time of need.”

Our Mercy Seat is called “a throne” because *we come there to God as a King* and we, by faith, behold Him in His excellent glory and majesty. He is our Father and our Friend, but He is also “the King eternal, immortal, invisible,” so we approach even the Throne of Grace with the deepest awe and reverence. We come to this Throne with the utmost confidence, for God gives as a King and, therefore, we ask largely and expectantly! John Newton caught the very spirit of this verse when he wrote—

***“You are coming to a King,
Large petitions with you bring!
For His Grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much.”***

It is a Throne of Grace where no ordinary monarch presides, but where One is sitting who is Infinite and All-Sufficient, One who can bestow upon us more than we ask, or ever think of asking, and yet not impoverish Himself in the slightest degree! Always remember, Beloved, in coming to the Mercy Seat, that you are coming to a King and to One who gives like a King! Always open your mouth wide and ask great things of the King who is so ready to bestow them upon you!

In drawing near to God in prayer, *we come to a King who sits upon a Throne of Grace*. That word, “Grace,” is one of the choicest in the whole description of our great resort for prayer. We might well have trembled if we had been bid to come to a throne of justice! We might have been afraid to come to a throne of power, alone. But we need not hesitate to come to the Throne of Grace where God sits on purpose to dispense Divine Grace! It would be terrible if we had to pray to a just God if He were not also a Savior—if we could only see the awful glare of Sinai without the blessed attractions of the Atonement made on Calvary! If we can see the “rainbow round about the Throne, in sight like unto an emerald,” the token of God’s Covenant Love and Grace, then we can pray very differently from the way in which we would pray if we could only see the naked sword of Divine Justice brandished to and fro to keep us back from the holy God who would not have His peerless Majesty polluted by our sinful presence! Let us always remember that when we pray aright, we deal with God on terms of Grace—and answers to our petitions come to us not according to what we deserve, but according to His Infinite Mercy and Grace in Christ Jesus our Lord!

It is also very comforting to us to observe that *the God who hears prayer is enthroned and glorified*. The God of Grace sits upon the Throne of Grace and so Grace reigns supreme at the place where God meets with us in prayer! The hands of Grace are full of blessings through the atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ—and those hands are happily employed in dispensing royal largess among the poverty-stricken sons and daughters

of men! Come here, then, all you who feel your need of Grace! Be not afraid to approach the Throne of Grace. Since Jesus Christ has taken upon Himself our nature and suffered in our place, the Throne to which the sinner is bid to draw near is a Throne of superlative, unlimited, reigning Grace—Grace that pardons, Grace that regenerates, Grace that adopts, Grace that preserves, Grace that sanctifies, Grace that perfects and makes meet for Glory! Happy is the preacher whose privilege it is to invite sinners to come to such a blessed meeting place with God, but happier far will be the sinners who shall have the Grace to come to that meeting place! May many here be among them!

II. Now, secondly, we have A LOVING EXHORTATION—“Let us come unto the Throne of Grace.”

Who is it that gives this exhortation? Why did he put it in this form? We might have expected the exhortation to be simply, “Come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.” Or even, “Go boldly unto the Throne of Grace.” But it is put in the form of an invitation from someone who urges us to *go with him*—who is this?

Well, first, it is *from Paul who had, himself, proved the power of prayer*. “Paul? Have I not heard his name before?” Oh, yes! “But had he not once another name?” Yes, his name was Saul. “Then, surely, that must have been the man who persecuted the saints of God, who was exceedingly mad against them and against the Christ whom they loved more than they loved their own lives.” Yes, that is the man! Only he has been so changed by Divine Grace that he is a new man in Christ Jesus! And now he confesses that he was the chief of the sinners whom Jesus came to save. It is this saved sinner who is now a saint of God, an Apostle of Jesus Christ and who writes to his fellow Believers, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.” I think that I can summon up courage to go to the Mercy Seat in such company as this! If the *chief of sinners* is going to the Throne of Grace, I, also, may go! Under another aspect I may be the chief of sinners, too, and if so, there will be a pair of us and we will go together!

Yes, it was Paul who gave this exhortation. A man of like passions with ourselves who was once as great a sinner as any of us have ever been. He puts out his hand to us and he says, “Come along, Brothers and Sisters—let us go boldly to the Throne of Grace.” When he gave this exhortation, Paul had become an experienced Believer who had often gone to the Throne of Grace and there proved the power of prayer. He was no stranger at the Mercy Seat. He had done much heavenly business with his Master there—so now, having proved the power of prayer—he does not speak as a mere theorist, but as a practical man who had put the matter to the test and, therefore, knew that God answered prayer! So he wrote to those who had not had such a wonderful experience as his had been, to those whose knowledge of Divine things was far inferior to his own and, linking himself with them, he said, “Let us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.”

It always does me good to hear an aged Christian talk about the Lord Jesus Christ. I recollect, at this moment, a venerable minister who has

long gone to Glory. I heard him make almost his dying speech. He had been blind for many years and when he rose at the Communion Table and told us of the loving kindness of the Lord toward him, of how he had tried and tested his God in the deep waters of affliction and had always found Him faithful—and when he bade us, “Young people, be sure to put your trust in the Lord, for He is well worth trusting,” he did us all good. I think it is in some such way as this that the Apostle Paul, a man of deep and varied experience, writes to the Hebrews—and through them to us—and says, as one who has tried and proved the power of prayer, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.”

It is, however, not only Paul who speaks in this exhortation, but it seems to me that *this exhortation comes through Paul from the whole Church of Christ*. Paul was a representative man. And as he penned these lines, it seems as though the entire Church of God was speaking through his words. Even the saints in Glory appear to cry out to us, “Come boldly to the Throne of Grace! We can urge you to do so from a remembrance of our own experience, for we long ago tried and proved the efficacy of prayer in every emergency that we had to face.” It is certain that all the saints on earth unite in this exhortation, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.” From many a sick bed where aged Christians have been for years pining away—no, I correct myself and say—where they have been melting into Glory as the morning star melts into the sunlight—from many such a bed whose faith has triumphed over physical weakness and pain, I hear the cry, “Let us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.” From many a night-watcher compelled by terrible pain to lie awake and guard the night with prayer, as the sentinels of the Church of God, I hear the cry, “Let us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.” From many another child of God, who, in the midst of activities and trials combined, has daily and hourly to draw his strength from the Most High by fervent supplication, I hear the cry, “Let us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.” And from many who, through prayer, have been enabled to do great exploits in the name of Jesus, having cast themselves by faith upon a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God—and who are today the living evidences of what Divine Grace can accomplish through human instrumentality—from these, also, I hear the cry, “Let us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.” The Church militant, with its blood-red banner floating in the breeze, marches bravely on to the conflict, crying, “Let us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy and find Grace to help in time of need.”

But I also hear in this exhortation a voice much more powerful than that of the Apostle Paul, or even of the whole Church of Christ, for it seems to me to come *from the Holy Spirit Himself*, for Paul wrote as he was moved by the Holy Spirit. I think I am not going too far when I say that the Divine Spirit, who dwells in all the saints, is now speaking through the Inspired page and says to us, “Let us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.” Paul wrote to the Romans, “We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself makes intercession for

us with groans which cannot be uttered. And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” It appears to me that in our text the Spirit, speaking in the soft and gentle accents that the Comforter delights to use, is not so much bidding us go to the Throne of Grace, as *promising that He will go there with us!* And, surely we will go if He will accompany us! As it is His Divine voice that says, “Let us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace,” let us obey the gracious exhortation! This is not the only time that the Spirit and the Church of Christ say the same thing, for we read in the Revelation, “The Spirit and the bride say, Come.” So here the Spirit and the bride both seem to me to say, “Let us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.” Therefore all you who form part of the mystical bride of Christ, hear the Spirit’s gentle call—comply with His exhortation and come boldly unto the Throne of Grace!

III. Now, thirdly, we have A QUALIFYING ADVERB—“Let us come *boldly* unto the Throne of Grace.”

We must not mistake the meaning of this word, “boldly.” Paul does not say, “Let us come *proudly* unto the Throne of Grace.” God forbid that we should do that! Abraham’s prayer for Sodom and Gomorrah is an admirable model of how we are to come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, for although he pleaded again and again for the guilty cities of the plain, he said, “Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.” The greatest boldness in prayer is perfectly consistent with the lowest self-humiliation.

Neither must we ever think of coming before the Lord arrogantly or presumptuously, for it is to a “Throne” that we are bid to come, although that Throne is “the Throne of Grace.” I have heard prayers that have seemed to me like dictating to God rather than the humble, reverent petitions which should be presented by the creature to the Creator, or by the children of God to their loving Father in Heaven. We are to come boldly to the Throne of Grace, yet always with submission in our hearts, even as our Lord, Himself, prayed, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

I think that by this adverb, “boldly,” is meant that *we may come constantly*—at all times. Eastern potentates would only admit petitioners to their presence when they pleased. Though Esther was made queen by Ahasuerus, she was not allowed to go near him unless she was especially called. But it is not so with us! The path to the Throne of Grace is always open—there are no guards to bar the way of those who come in the right spirit. There are no set times for prayer—one hour is as good as any other for coming to the Throne of Grace. Whenever the Spirit of God inclines the heart to pray, the ear of God is open to hear our supplications—and the mouth of God is open to grant us gracious answers of peace!

“Boldly” also means that *we may come unreservedly*, with all sorts of petitions. Whatever it is that lies as a burden upon your heart, come with it to the Throne of Grace! Do you really need some great thing? Then come and ask for it! Or do you need some little thing? Then come and ask for it! Have you some care that is crushing you into the very dust? Come and leave it at the Mercy Seat! Have you some little care that wor-

ries you, some thorn in the flesh, some messenger from Satan to buffet you? Come and tell your God all about it! Cast *all* your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Think not that God will be angry with you for asking too much from Him—and imagine not that you will insult Him by asking Him for little things. If you are a believer in Jesus, God is your Father, so speak to Him as you would to your earthly father—only have far more confidence in coming to Him than you would have in approaching the most affectionate earthly parent.

Further, “boldly,” also means that *we may come freely*, with simple words. Do not say, “My words are not good enough to present to God. I must get a book of prayers and try to find suitable words with which to approach the Most High.” Oh, do not do it! It is true that in private prayer, in family prayer and even in public prayer it is better to use a form than not to pray at all. I have often said that it is better to walk with crutches than not to walk at all, but what need have you of crutches—for that is what forms of prayer really are? Your Father in Heaven does not want you to come to Him in a stiff, formal way, but just to proclaim, as simply and naturally as possible, the desires of your heart. If one of my boys wanted a new suit of clothes, or anything else that it was proper for him to have, I would not like him to come with a written request, as if he were presenting a petition to parliament! I would not feel that he loved me very much if he came in such a fashion as that! But when he asks me for what he needs in a bold, familiar and yet respectful manner, I am only too pleased to supply his needs!

You who are parents know that you do not make your children offenders for a word. When they first learn to talk to you, they pronounce their words very imperfectly and make many blunders. They break all the rules of grammar and their prattle is often so indistinct that strangers who come to your house do not know what they are saying. But you know, Mother. You know, Father. You understand them all right and you like to hear them talk like that—it is the natural speech for little children—and there is the accent of love in it that endears it to you. Well, now, go to your God as your little child comes to you! Tell Him all that is on your heart. Never mind about your words—use such language as your heart dictates—and when you find that you cannot pray as you would, tell Him so. Say to Him, “O Lord, I cannot put my words together properly, but I pray You to take my meaning, O my Father—do not judge my prayer by my broken, faulty speech, but read the desires of my heart and grant them if they are in accordance with Your gracious will!” Perhaps the best prayers of all are those that have no words at all—those that are too deep down in your heart to get shaped into words. We hardly know how they got there, except that we believe God put them there by His Holy Spirit—so He accepts them even if they are never formed into words!

“Boldly” means, too, that we may come hopefully, with full confidence of being heard. It is not a matter of doubt as to whether God hears and answers prayer—if there is any fact in the world that is proved by the testimony of honest men, this is that fact! You know that at a trial before

an earthly judge there are often many witnesses who give their testimony as to the facts of the case as far as they are known to them. And the weight of their evidence is very largely determined by their personal character. Now, if this were the right time and I was the counsel in charge of the case, I could bring forward hundreds—even thousands of the best men and women who have ever lived—I mean those who are admitted to be so by all who know them—honest, straightforward witnesses whose evidence would carry weight in any court of law, who would calmly and deliberately declare that, over and over and over again, God has answered their prayers! Answered them so often that it has now become with them a matter of course that when they really need anything, to go to God and get it. “Oh,” says someone, “that is only a delusion! There is no such thing as answers to prayer.” No, Sir, you have no right to say that, for the witnesses have as much right to be believed as you have! Possibly even more, for you may not have the character to support your infidel assertion that these witnesses have to back up their Christian testimony! We can bring forward men who are the equals in learning of any unbeliever, men who are eminent in the ranks of literature, men who are masters of scientific knowledge—yet these very men have been simple as little children in the matter of prayer and they all testify that God has heard them again and again—and granted their requests! That is a strange “delusion” which is a daily fact in the history of millions and which has been proved to be true in the lives of millions who are now before the Throne of God on high! So let us still pray knowing that God will hear us and be fully persuaded that He will give us whatever is for His own Glory and our own and others’ good! The Apostle James reminds us that we must “ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.”

Once more, this word, “boldly,” means that *we should come perseveringly*, with a fervent importunity that will not be denied. If at our first coming to the Throne of Grace, we do not get what we want, let us come again and keep on coming until we do get it. God sometimes makes us wait for a blessing in order that we may value it all the more when we do receive it. He would have us ask, and seek, and knock again and again—and not be content until we obtain the blessing we crave. If we are sure that what we are asking is in accordance with the will of God, let us keep on coming like the importunate widow came to the unjust judge—until the desire of our heart is granted to us!

I think this is what is meant by coming “boldly unto the Throne of Grace.”

IV. Now, lastly, we have A REASON GIVEN FOR BOLDNESS—“let us *therefore* come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.”

There are a great many other reasons besides the one to which Paul here alludes. I will give them to you in brief.

First, *we are invited to pray*. God would never have invited us to pray if He had not intended to hear and answer us. No right-minded man would invite his fellows to a feast and then send them away empty. So,

the very invitation to us to pray implies that there are blessings waiting for us at the Mercy Seat—"Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace."

Let us remember, too, that Grace is for sinners, and *we are invited to come to the Throne of Grace*. It is only on terms of Grace that we can expect to obtain the blessings that we need—but it is to the Throne of Grace that we are bid to come. So let the sinner come, for it is the Throne of Grace! Let the needy saint come and at the Throne of Grace, "find Grace" to help in time of need." Let us *all* come, good or bad, prepared or unprepared, whoever or whatever we may be—let us come boldly because it is the Throne of Grace—and Divine Grace is what we all need.

Let us also remember *the Character of the King who sits upon the Throne of Grace*. He is Infinite in mercy and love and He delights to bless His creatures. He is Infinite in power and is, therefore, "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." He is Infinite in wisdom and is, therefore, able to give us whatever is best for us in the best possible way. He is altogether unlimited in His Nature and, therefore, we cannot exceed His power or His willingness to help us, let our requests be as large as they may! Oh, when I think of what God is as He is revealed in Christ Jesus, and remember that it is He who sits upon the Throne of Grace, I feel that I may well repeat Paul's exhortation, "Let us *therefore* come boldly unto the Throne of Grace!"

Remember also, O Christian, your relationship to the King who sits upon the Throne of Grace! You are not merely His servant—you are His child—an heir of God, and joint-heir with Jesus Christ! All that you ask for is already yours by right of inheritance and shall be in your possession in due time. Shall a child tremble in his loving Father's presence? Shall a son act as if he were a slave? Shall I, with tremulous hands, present a petition to my own Father whom I love? If I have perfect love to Him, it casts out all fear. So, because we are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, "let us *therefore* come boldly unto the Throne of Grace."

I have already reminded you that the Holy Spirit has been given to teach us how to pray. Now the Holy Spirit knows the mind of God and, therefore, He never moves us to pray for anything which God does not intend to give us. Prayer is often the shadow of God's coming blessing. Before the Divine Decrees are fulfilled, they often cast their blessed shadow across the Believer's heart by the power of the Holy Spirit so that when the Believer prays in the Spirit, he is only asking God to do what He has from all eternity determined to do! If we came to the Throne of Grace with petitions which we had ourselves prepared, we might well tremble! But when we come with a Spirit-written petition, we may well "come boldly unto the Throne of Grace."

Then, Beloved, there is one sweet thought which should always encourage you to "come boldly unto the Throne of Grace," and that is, the many "*exceedingly great and precious promises*" in the Scriptures. If we had to ask for unpromised blessings, we might come tremblingly. But there are promises in God's Word to meet every emergency. "I will never

leave you, nor forsake you.” “As your days, so shall your strength be.” “Whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give to you.” I might go on quoting promises by the hour, together, but it will be more profitable for you to search them out for yourselves, especially if you remember what Paul writes concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, “for all the promises of God in Him are yes, and in Him, Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” These promises are all the more precious to us because they are free promises, not made to us because of our merits, but solely because of God’s Grace! And all the promises are made by that faithful God who cannot lie, and by that Almighty God who is as able to fulfill the promises as He was to make them! “Let us *therefore* come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.”

If we need any more reasons to encourage us to come boldly to the Throne of God, let us remember that *God has already given us His dear Son*, and let us ask again the question that Paul asked so long ago, “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” You and I, if we are believers in Christ, are already saved with an everlasting salvation! Then after God has given us this greatest of all blessings, will He refuse to bestow upon us the lesser mercies? Brothers and Sisters in Christ, as the Lord has already done such great things for us, He cannot turn a deaf ear to our petitions, especially when they are inspired by His own gracious Spirit! “Let us *therefore* come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.”

Besides, some of us have had *many years’ experience in the power of prayer*. Some of you have had 50 years of soul-enriching communion with God at the Mercy Seat. Do you not remember many times when you were in deep trouble and prayer brought you deliverance from it? Do you not recollect some seasons of terrible depression of spirit when prayer brought the sunlight back to you? Do you not recall that time when you were bereaved and when, as you stood weeping by the open grave, prayer brought you sweet relief and dried up your tears? Do you not remember when you were in poverty and prayer obtained bread for you? The ravens did not bring it, nor did a widow sustain you, yet you were fed by the God of Elijah in answer to your earnest supplication! What is there that prayer has not done for us? Oh, there are multitude of instances which come to our memory when prayer has unlocked Mercy’s door—and they all say, “Let us *therefore* come boldly unto the Throne of Grace.”

Now I will close by briefly referring to the reason which the Apostle gives why we should come boldly to the Throne of Grace. I have given you many good reasons, but this is the best reason of all—“We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us *therefore* come boldly unto the Throne of Grace that we may obtain mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need.” That is to say, we are to come with boldness to the Throne of God because there is pleading for us there, a Man who is also God, to whom every petition put up by those who trust in Him is a very precious thing which He, as the great representative Man before the Throne presents to His Father, for He is God’s

own dear Son! Yes, He is one with the Eternal and His will is the will of the Infinite Jehovah to whom we address our prayers in Christ's name! This glorious God-Man Mediator continually presents before His Father His one great Sacrifice for sin. There will never be a repetition of it and it will never need to be offered again, "for by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified," that is, those who are set apart unto Himself. This one Sacrifice He perpetually pleads before the Throne—and our prayers, therefore, ascend to God with the merit of Christ's atoning blood giving them acceptance with His Father. So they must have power with God, for they come before Him signed, as it were, with the name of His well-beloved Son. He lays His hand upon each petition and so leaves the print of the nails upon it—and therefore it must prevail with God!

Remember, too, that this same Jesus Christ was once a Man upon earth like ourselves, except that He was "without sin." When your prayer is broken through grief, recollect that He also knew what a broken-hearted prayer meant. The sighs and tears of Gethsemane taught Him that. He was made perfect through suffering that He might perfectly sympathize with all His suffering saints. Do not imagine that you can ever get into any condition in which Jesus Christ cannot comprehend you and, consequently, cannot sympathize with you. If you are in the depths, as Jonah was, remember that Jonah was but a type of Christ, who therefore knows all about your present experience and also knows how to deliver you out of it! If you seem to be altogether deserted by God and know not why it is so that you have to cry, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" that is an experience through which Jesus, Himself, passed. Yet—

***"In every pang that rends the heart
The Man of Sorrows had a part"—***

so that we have, before the Throne of God, a High Priest who is as sympathetic as He is powerful! "Let us *therefore* come boldly unto the Throne of Grace."

Remember, too, that every blessing which you have a right to ask for through Christ is yours already, "for all things are yours; things present, or things to come; all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Every right prayer that you offer is but putting in a claim for that which is rightly yours through your union to Christ. Therefore come boldly to the Throne of Grace because you have such a Pleader to appear there for you and such a plea to urge with God through Him!

Dear Brothers and Sisters, let us begin to pray more boldly for sinners! Let us pray more boldly for London! Let us pray more boldly for our country! Let us never cease praying to the Lord to send a great revival throughout the whole world! And O, you sinners, you may come, too, for it is, "the Throne of Grace" to which we are invited! And it is before that Throne that Jesus stands interceding for the transgressors. Come and welcome to Jesus Christ! This is your "time of need." You are full of sin and need mercy to forgive it and cleanse you from it. You are full of weakness and need the help of God. Come to the Throne of Grace and ask for His Grace to help you in your time of need and you shall surely

have it! God has not left off being a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God, so come to Him! Yes, let us all “come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need.”

What I have been saying to you, I have said far more to myself than to anyone else here, for if there is one who needs more prayer than all the rest, I am that one, burdened as I am with incessant service and overwhelming responsibilities. Yet, after taking to myself more of the sermon than I pass on to any of you, I venture to say that there is not one person in this building whose condition does not make prayer necessary for him. I do not know what the special need of each one of you may be, but I think everyone here who seriously thinks about the matter, must say, “Well, if there is anybody in this place who can do without prayer, I am not the one! I *must* pray! There is something about my case that drives me to the Mercy Seat.” Thank God that it is so, but be sure that you go to the Throne of Grace that you may obtain the help you need.

It is a blessed trouble that drives us to the Mercy Seat, yet one would scarcely wish to have the kind of trouble that Mr. Fraser, a good old Scotch minister, had. He had a wife who tormented him dreadfully, yet, when someone jestingly said to him that he would not drink to her health, he replied, “I hope she will live long, for she has driven me to my knees ten times a day when, otherwise, I might not have prayed.” One would not wish to be driven to prayer in such a fashion as that, yet I venture to say that Mr. Fraser was a gainer by it! Real prayer must make us more like our Master. “Let us *therefore* come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need.”

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

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

COMPASSION ON THE IGNORANT NO. 1407

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

***“Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.”
Hebrews 5:2.***

THIS is a part of the necessary qualification of a priest. Under the old Law there were priests who were taken from among men in order that they might speak to God *for* men and might speak *to* men for God. They were taken from among men, not from among angels, and they were taken from men compassed with infirmity—not from absolutely perfect men like those in Heaven—in order that they might be familiar with sinful and suffering men and on a level with them. When the people of Israel came to them they saw that they were speaking to persons who knew and understood their weaknesses and sorrows—not to exalted beings who would look down upon them with serene indifference.

They felt that they could approach their priest without the awe which creates a freezing distance, as though a deep crevasse opened between them. And when they spoke to their friend, the minister of God, they felt that they could tell him their trials and troubles, for he had felt the same and, therefore, was able to console and comfort them. Many a kindly word the good man spoke, before he sent them back to their houses, which he never could have spoken unless he had been a man, himself, “compassed with infirmity.”

Loving them and being such as they were, he was able to have patience with the many strange cases which came before him. He was not soon vexed by their stupidity, but listened carefully to what they had to say, trying to solve their difficulties and to meet their cases. He knew that he, too, was weakness and folly, itself, before his God. And his own afflictions and trembling made him feel that he must be gentle to others since the Lord had been tender to him. It was, in the all-wise Providence of God, ordained that the sons of Aaron should be men compassed with infirmity that they might compass others with sympathy.

Men admire an iron duke for war, but who could bear an iron priest in the hour of trouble? A bronze wall is good for a defense, but we need a breast of flesh and blood for consolation. Give me, for a spiritual comforter and guide, not an infallible pontiff, nor a thrice-crowned spiritual lord, but a *brother* of my own condition, a *friend* possessed of a nature like my own! After mentioning this fact, which is stated in the text, I would bring forth two remarks which will constitute the essence of our discourse.

The first is that compassion and forbearance are two great qualifications for doing good to our fellow men. And, secondly—and upon this I shall dwell at length—that both of these are found pre-eminently in our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, we may with boldness come to Him. May

the great Spirit whose teaching is our only means of profiting bless our meditation!

I. First, then, COMPASSION AND FORBEARANCE ARE TWO THINGS WHICH ANY MAN WHO WOULD DO GOOD TO HIS FELLOW MEN OUGHT TO POSSESS TO A VERY LARGE DEGREE. You will have plenty of use for all the compassion and all the tenderness that you can possibly command, for this will help to draw around you those who are ignorant and out of the way. Men will not gather to some individuals—they are too hard, too cold, too stern. They seem cut out of stone—they have no feeling. Or else they are dry and leathery and have none of the juice of humanity in them—no warm blood—no milk of human kindness and you are not attracted to them.

Who loves a bag of old nails, or a sack of sawdust? And yet some men and women are almost as hard and dry! If you want to draw people around you, you must have sympathy with them. Compassion magnetizes a man and makes him attract as the loadstone fascinates the needle. A big heart is one of the main essentials to great usefulness. Try and cultivate it. Do not let another man's sorrow fall upon a deaf ear as far as you are concerned, but sorrow with the sorrowful and have compassion upon the ignorant and those that are out of the way. They will soon perceive it and they will do to you as they did to your Master, of whom we read, "Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners." Men will cluster around you like bees around their queen! They will not be able to help it. They will not wish to help it. Love is the queen bee and where she is, you will find the center of the hive.

By this same spell you will hold those whom you gather, for men will not long remain with an unloving leader. Even little children in our classes will not long listen to an unsympathetic teacher. Great armies of soldiers must be led by a great soldier—and children must be held in hand by child-like instructors. When human beings surround an uncompassionate person, they soon find it out and fly away at a tangent as if by instinct. You may collect people for a time by some extraneous means, but unless they perceive that you love them and that your heart goes out with desires for their good, they will soon weary of you.

The multitude still clung to the skirts of Jesus, even to the last, whenever He preached, because they saw that He really desired their good. You, dear Friend, must have compassion if you are to keep up the attention of those whom you address. The earth is held together by the force of attraction and to the men upon it that same power is exercised by love and compassion. Compassion in your heart will also be greatly useful in moving sinners to care for themselves. I believe there are some people who will never feel about their own souls until they are driven to it by seeing that other people feel for them.

If I remember the story correctly, Mr. Knill at one time was distributing tracts at Chester and went out where there was a company of soldiers. Many received the tracts, but one man tore a little book in pieces before the good man's eyes! And on another occasion the same individual said to the soldiers, "Now make a ring round him." The men stood round the

preacher and then the wicked fellow cursed him in such a frightful manner that Mr. Knill burst into tears to hear such awful sounds. The sight of Knill's tears broke the heart of the blasphemer—nothing else could have touched him—he could not bear to see a strong man who was at least his equal, and, probably, his superior, weeping over him. Years later he came forward to acknowledge that the tender emotion displayed by Mr. Knill had touched his inmost soul and led him to repentance.

Now, if you have compassion on other people, they will wonder why you should be so much concerned for them. “Why do you care for me?” said a reprobate to an earnest Christian who tried to win him. “Ah,” said another, who looked at it from the opposite side, “no one cares for my soul. I have nobody to pray for me, nobody to care for me, or I might have some hope.” It is clear, beloved Brothers and Sisters, that if you feel moved of God to seek the good of your fellow men, as I trust you do, the first things you need are compassion, forbearance, patience, sympathy—and without these you will no more touch the hearts of those to whom you speak than would a parrot or a talking robot.

You also need great compassion to insure your own perseverance, for if you do not love the children of your class, if you do not love the people whom you try to benefit as you go from house to house, if you have no compassion for the dying sinners around you, you will soon give up your mission or go about it in a merely formal manner. You will not find the conquest of the human heart to be an easy thing. Indeed, it is the most difficult of all enterprises! Unless you so love men that you will bear a thousand rebuffs and disappointments and will still press on with the blessed news of mercy—unless, I say, you have a compassion as enduring as your own life, you will fail and be discouraged and cast away the sacred nets with which you fish for men and the seed basket from which you scatter the heavenly Seed.

You may, perhaps, continue to sow a handful here and there, but you will never reap a large harvest unless the *heart* moves the hand. Besides, only compassion of the heart can teach you how to speak to others. I have often been pleased to see how young converts manage to tell of the love of Christ to people much older than themselves and do it very effectively, too. You cannot take a man into college and teach him how to preach to sinners rightly by giving him books, or lectures, or rules. No, that must be learned by a kind of instinct of the new nature which teaches the man who is ordained to do it.

Nobody, I suppose, teaches the young mother how to manage her first child and yet, somehow or other, it is done because she loves it. It is wonderful, to me, how a widow with quite a swarm of children somehow provides for them. I cannot tell how, but the love she bears them leads her to make exertions which would seem impossible to anyone else and the little ones are somehow or other housed and fed and clothed! If you have love enough, you can, by God's Grace, win any man to Jesus. If his heart is as hard as a diamond, why, then, you must have a purpose *twice as hard* as a diamond and you will yet cut him to his heart!

If you are resolved that you will move Heaven and earth that some soul shall feel the power of the Gospel and if you will go with mighty prayer and invoke the aid of the Divine Spirit, I do not see that you can fail. You must do good if you have but love enough and heart enough! These are the main qualifications, I believe, for a minister of the Gospel, for the teacher of a Sunday school class, or for any other sort of Christian worker—plenteous compassion and unfailing forbearance.

If you possess these two things, dear Friends, you will find that they will be very much tried and exercised. It will not be long, young worker, if you plunge into the midst of Christian service, before you will meet with open opposition. Scoffers will rail at you. Fools will laugh at you. It may be profane persons will swear at you. This is no uncommon thing. Now, if you can look upon an open opposer with compassion, you will not lose your temper, neither will you be at all distressed except for his sake. The surest way of putting down your opponents is to feel that they cannot make you angry or drive you from your purpose.

You must feel that you love them all the more because you see how greatly they need the Gospel—and then the more they sin the more will you be certain that theirs is a case of great necessity requiring you to be in sevenfold earnest. I do not think, however, that all workers are so much put about by open opposition as they are by those persons who never oppose, but who, at the same time, never yield. I do not know, sometimes, how to get on with certain people with whom I speak about Christ. They say, “Yes, Sir. Yes, Sir. Yes, Sir.” You say, “But, my dear Friend, there is a necessity for a new heart.” They answer, “Yes, Sir, yes.” “And you know there is no salvation except by faith in Christ.” “Yes, Sir. Yes, Sir.”

I have spoken to one person several times who always thanks me for doing so and declares that it is very kind of me to speak to him. He says he is very much obliged to me and, “Yes, Sir. Yes, Sir.” That is all I can get out of him! I do not wish he would swear at me, but if he would but say something or other rather outrageous, so that I might go at him hammer and tongs, I should really feel a little hopeful about him! But he never does this and I cannot, therefore, get at him. He will come and hear a sermon and he will not make many remarks about it, but he will say, “It was very nice and very clever and quite a treat,” and that is all.

You cannot entice these Pliables any farther—they conquer you by yielding—even as the bulrush vanquishes the north wind by bowing before it. These people disquiet earnest laborers and make heavy demands upon their compassion. We must get much love into our hearts and have pity upon these poor India rubber-souled people, or we shall become wearied and leave them to their fate. Have pity upon them and still go on with your holy endeavors, bearing and forbearing, even though they seem to frustrate you!

You will, also, often meet with very deceitful, hopeful persons, who encourage you much but disappoint you more. You say, “I saw a tear in that man’s eye when I was preaching.” Yes, he has a watery eye—perhaps he has been drunk and it is easy to weep, then! You lose your man, after all. You say, “That woman is so attentive and earnest. I really think there is

an impression made upon her.” But by-and-by you discover that there was a motive for the apparent attention and it was all pretense. Now is the time to have your compassion in full exercise—the more often you are disappointed the more compassion must you feel. And the more must you resolve, God helping you, never to give up anyone until the funeral knell shall toll and the soul shall have passed beyond the region of your influence.

Alas, there is another and still more wearisome trial of faith and patience, for out of those who profess to be converted there are many who cause us grief of heart! Even when the wheat is come to the ear we may yet lose our harvest, even as the farmer, by smut and mildew, may see his fields blasted before his eyes. There are to be found persons who come forward and declare themselves to be upon the Lord’s side, but very soon grow cold, fall into sin and turn aside from the narrow way. “They went out from us, but they were not of us,” says John, “for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.”

These are heart-breakers, thorns in our side and swords in our bones, causing us sharp sorrows and doing grievous mischief. Like Judas, they sell Christ for money and betray their Master and so prove themselves to be the children of Hell, though, for a while, numbered with Christ’s disciples. Even these we must not cast off utterly, but pity them and seek after the straying sheep. Do, my dear Brothers and Sisters, shun everything that would make your heart callous towards the most provoking and deceitful—it is true their conduct tends to petrify the heart—but yield not to the wretched influence or you will suffer loss.

Living in a city like this, where you get imposed upon very often, it is recommended to some people to get a little hard-hearted, but I cannot sanction such advice. I fear you will find the process acting upon you without your seeking it and I urge you to strive against it. Better to be often deceived than to become unfeeling. I would sooner be a dupe than a brute, though there is no need to be either the one or the other. Try to be tenderhearted, pitying and full of compassion. Labor with all your might to be as the text says—“A man who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.”

Now, there are many reasons why we should have a great deal of compassion and forbearance. God has a great deal with us. You say that such a person grieves you. Alas, he has grieved God much more than you! Oh, but you have had patience with him and tried to bring him to Christ, now, these 10 years. Remember that the Lord has had patience with him, perhaps, these 50 years! Do you reply, “But you do not know how badly he treats me”? No, but *you* forget how badly he treats your Lord, Jesus. Has not man always provoked God? Have not the people grieved His Holy Spirit these thousands of years? It is a thought that ought to lay us in the dust—the innumerable provocations which surround the Most High and arise, even, from one man!

But what must be the provocations caused by the four millions of this great city? What must they be from all the millions of the known world? Idols are worshipped and blocks of wood and stone set up and called gods

while the true God is neglected! False doctrine is taught. A *man* claims to be *infallible*! Christ is forgotten, men trust in their own works and glory in their own pretended righteousness—is not the Lord angered by all this? What with open blasphemy, Sabbath-breaking and a thousand forms of sin, God is terribly provoked! And yet He bears with it from day to day and does not suffer His fierce auger to smoke against His guilty creatures. Is not the Divine forbearance the miracle of miracles?

When I stood, for a few minutes at the bottom of Pilate's Staircase in Rome and saw the poor creatures crawling up and down it on their knees—and the priests looking on—I thought that if I had the loan of a thunderbolt or two I would have cleared out all the impostors and their trumpery in the twinkling of an eye! And then I remembered that they were dealing with God and not with man. He looks down on Antichrist and all its blasphemies and still stays His hand! He sees in this city of London sins which I dare not mention—yet does His thunder sleep. He hears man curse Him and even defy Him to His face—and still His compassions go forth and He bears with them! Wonderful, wonderful is the Omnipotent long-suffering of the Lord! Oh, then, my Brethren, we ought surely to have patience with the trifling affronts which we have to put up with in the service of God! And we ought never to grow weary in well-doing!

Here is another point which will touch some of you more closely. Think, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, what patience God had with you all those years before *your* conversion and multitudes of times since! He has not cast you off nor grown weary of you despite your ill manners. And if He has had patience with you, should not you have patience with your fellow sinner even to the end? There is one reflection which may help you. Remember that these poor souls who sin as they do should be looked upon by you as persons who are deranged, for sin is *madness*. That prodigal who spent his money riotously was out of his mind, for we read that when he repented, "he came to himself."

Look at sinful men as mad and you will pity them and bear with them. If you have a poor daughter at home whose mind is gradually failing, you say, "Do not take much notice of what she says. Her poor mind wanders. Her faculties are out of order." These poor souls are out of order, too. Their minds have wandered from God. Do not take much notice of their ravings—go on and do them all the good you can—in spite of their idle talk and petulant complaining. View them as sick and when people are ill, you know, they will be very touchy and very soon irritated. And, perhaps, they will say naughty things, but you must say to yourselves, "It is the fever or the pain which makes them rattle on in that bewildered manner. Never mind them."

You are very tender with the ailing ones, are you not? A man tells you that when he spoke a cross word to you the other night he had a wretched toothache at the moment, and you reply, "I beg you not to mention it. I quite understand you now." Look on sinners in that light and say of them, "Poor souls, this malady of sin has so laid hold upon them that I must not regard them as in their senses, but must pity them." Such a view of hu-

man nature will greatly help you to have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way. And do remember this—if you do not have compassion you cannot do them good. If you become weary of them and speak sharply, you cannot bless them and, perhaps, if you are not the means of blessing them, nobody else may be.

Ah, is it your own husband? Wife, win him! Win him! Do not drive him from bad to worse by scolding him. Sister, is it your brother? Woo him and win him to Christ! Do not vex him by becoming acid and sour. I am afraid that sharpness of speech and quickness of temper may have much to answer for, since in a moment it may cut the cords with which men were being drawn in the right direction. Have compassion! Have compassion on obstinate ignorance and willful rebellion! Remember, the more trouble it costs you to bring a soul to Christ, the greater will be your reward. In your own conscience you will feel a sweet recompense when you will, in later days, be able to say, “I travailed in birth for that soul.”

You will love it all the more because of the anguish of your spirit during its birth. I am sure it is so—that which costs us most we value most. Jabez was more honorable than his brethren because his mother bore him with sorrow. Jacob gave one portion to Joseph above his brothers because the archers had sorely shot at him and wounded him. And that portion was the more precious because the Patriarch took it out of the hand of the Amorite with his sword and with his bow. If there is a soul that you have, as it were, brought to Christ by severe fighting, taking it out of the hand of the Amorite with your sword and with your bow, that soul will be more precious to you than any other!

So, Beloved, I pray the Holy Spirit to overshadow the company of Christian workers here present and all that are throughout the whole earth, that they may have “compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that they themselves also are compassed with infirmity.”

II. But now for the second part of our subject, which may the eternal Spirit greatly bless. COMPASSION AND FORBEARANCE PREEMINENTLY DWELL IN JESUS CHRIST. Though He was not compassed with any sinful infirmity, for in Him is no sin, yet physical infirmity He did take and He is, to the highest possible degree, the Lord of tenderness—

***“His heart is made of tenderness,
His heart melts with love.”***

First—for I will keep to my text, and not be very long—first, He has compassion on the ignorant. That is to say, sins of ignorance Jesus readily puts away. Some of you did not know better while you lived in unregeneracy. You had been trusting in your good works, but though you might well have *suspected*, you did not know that they were a faulty foundation for your hope.

Some of you were very diligent in outward forms and ceremonies. You had a zeal for God, but it was not according to knowledge—you did not know that salvation is to be found only in Jesus. There are many who, if they had known, would not have crucified the Lord of Glory year by year as they have done. They may say, as Paul did, “But I did it ignorantly in

unbelief.” Well, dear Hearts, if you have been living in sin, not knowing what you were doing. If you have rejected the Savior whom you would not have rejected if you had known Him better, the Lord Jesus, our great High Priest, readily blots out such sins! Come to Him! Say, “What I know not, teach me. Cleanse me from secret faults,” and though you cannot now, in looking back, discover all the evil of your conduct and the sin of your life, yet, nevertheless, let Him see what is in your heart—lay it bare before Him and He will have compassion on your ignorance and put away your sin forever!

But the text does not refer only to sins resulting from ignorance, but to ignorance itself. Very many persons are willfully ignorant of Christ. They might have known about Him if they would. Possibly some have come to this place, this evening, who very seldom attend a place of worship though there is one on the street in which they live. Any man in London who does not know the Gospel has nobody to blame for it but himself. It would be well worth while for you to walk a hundred miles to hear Jesus Christ preached, but I thank God few of you need to walk *one* mile to hear the Gospel. You may hear it if you will—and if you Londoners perish, you perish with the opportunity of life brought to your very doors.

I believe, no doubt, there are many now living in utter ignorance of Christ and yet they have the Bible in their houses and have Christian neighbors who would be glad enough to explain it to them—and they might go and hear the Gospel if they would. It is as if the sun is shining and they shut their eyes—the thunder is pealing and they close their ears. Is not this enough to move the Lord to anger? And yet His patience continues! Still will the Lord Jesus have compassion upon you who have been cruel to yourselves as well as contemptuous to Him! Come to Him just as you are and confess your willful blindness and He will put it away and enable you to understand the things which make for your peace.

Some are ignorant, however, because they have been cast where they could not well know. They were born in an ungodly family, or thrown among godless people, or, what is much the same, among those who have only a mere formal religion. They do not know the Truth of God, but they can scarcely be blamed for it. Well, dear Hearts, Christ is able to teach you! Come and sit at His feet, for He will have compassion on your ignorance! Some are very young and, therefore, do not understand much. Dear young people, there are some of you here—Jesus is quite ready to have compassion on the ignorance of little children and save them! They may know but very little, but if they know Christ Jesus to be the Savior of sinners, He will have compassion on their ignorance.

Alas, others are getting very old, but they are so dull that we cannot get much knowledge into their heads and their ears are dull of hearing. I sometimes have such an enquirer to talk to and I try to show great compassion to such. I have long, long ago given up estimating character by the amount of intelligence, for I sometimes find that the most intelligent are the best able to deceive me. How often in daily life we find that the most knowing are the most cunning—and the greatest scholars are the biggest rogues! We see plenty of instances in the newspapers.

On the other hand, many a poor soul who cannot get two ideas into his head has got the right idea, the grand Gospel idea, and that fills his head and heart! He knows that Christ came into the world to save sinners and he hangs on to that. Some of the most simple-hearted people are quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord. The Lord will have compassion on such ignorance readily enough. There are many, alas, who are ignorant, not from lack of capacity or lack of faculty, but because sin has made them so brutish that they cannot understand. Like salt cast on the soil, it has made the mind barren.

This is a frightful state of heart! There are, in this city of ours, many who have so soaked themselves in the most gross vices that they appear to be incapable of knowing purity, delicacy, truth, holiness, or any Divine excellence. They have so indulged themselves in drunkenness and chambering wantonness that you really cannot get a spiritual idea into them! They have developed backward into a mere animal and, like the swine, they feed on husks and have no idea above the mire they wallow in. Our City Missionaries can tell us the brutal power of sin if we have never seen it for ourselves! As Divine Grace makes fools wise, so sin makes wise men fools! As Grace turns stone to flesh, so sin turns flesh to stone! As Grace lifts man to the angels, so sin sinks him to the devils!

Sin is a murky cloud which buries the human mind in sevenfold night, which, it seems impossible to pierce with a beam of day. Yet when a flash of light from God the Holy Spirit penetrates the thick Egyptian darkness of such a soul, Jesus manifests His compassion on the ignorant and proves His saving power! Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, what a mercy it is that the Lord Jesus Christ saves people who know very little about Him! The poor woman who touched the hem of His garment made a mistake, I suppose, in imagining that power must necessarily dwell in His clothes, but, nevertheless, the Lord went with her mistake and let the virtue go even out of His robe as well as out of Himself.

He will meet you, dear Friend—meet you where you are and grasp the hand of even your blind and lame faith and save you! However deeply ignorant you may be, He will have compassion on your ignorance by sending forth His light and His salvation—and you shall know Him and rejoice in Him! When He was here, you know, He picked up a few fishermen and tax gatherers and such—and He set to work to teach them—and how beautifully He did it! He taught them with parables and little easy words, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.

Look at that Gospel of John. Look at any of the sermons of Christ. How very different they are from the very magnificent discourses which we get from the learned and thoughtful divines of the present period! They preach over people's heads, but Christ preached *into* people's hearts! He taught so plainly and simply that anybody could understand Him! But these great doctors of today preach so that they do not even understand themselves! All this makes us see that our Lord had compassion on the ignorant.

I would repeat the thought that He did not teach those disciples too much at once. He gave them one idea at a time and He did not drive that

out with another. He said, "I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." What He did teach was mainly simple and He left it till the Holy Spirit was given for Paul to elaborate the Gospel and tell us in plain language some of the more doctrinal Truths. He was bent on teaching His disciples as much as they could receive and so He did—but He taught them no more lest they should be overfed and become unable to digest what they had received.

And then how very little chiding there was in all our Lord's conversation with His pupils. He did say, "Have I been so long a time with you and yet have you not known Me, Philip?" He did have, now and then, to upbraid because of the hardness of their hearts, but still, what gentleness there was about such rebukes and how seldom did they occur! And He never turned one of them out of class for being stupid. If He had done that, perhaps some friend here might suppose He would turn him or her out—but out of all the 12 there was not one to whom He said, "Now, I really never shall make much of you! Your intellect is too weak." Not at all. He taught each one as much as he could receive and then said, "Go and tell it to others!"

And while they told it to others they were learning it better, themselves, for one of the best ways of learning a thing is trying to teach it. "What I tell you in secret that tell you upon the housetops." He was the wisest of teachers because He was the most compassionate. And I may add here that we know this to be the case with some of us, because He has been very tender in teaching us. Some of our teachers wanted us to learn the big doctrines, first. They did not like it because we could not at once see all the sublime truths of election and predestination. Certain of the old standards who are very orthodox—16, if not 18 ounces to the pound—expect all new-born babes to eat meat at once! As soon as ever a person is converted they would have him know all about the sublapsarian and supralapsarian schemes. And if he does not, they say, "He is a doubtful character. He is not sound."

Ah, but that is not the manner of our Lord who is tender over us as a nurse with a child! He begins by working into our experience a few elementary Truths of God and then, when we get farther on, we find out something more. And as we are able to bear it, He reveals to us His Truths. He does not teach us experimentally all at once any more than He taught the Apostles all at once! By degrees He illuminates our minds. Our poor blind eyes could not bear sunlight at first and, therefore, He gives us just a little starlight, then moonlight, then twilight. Then afterwards He brings us into the high unclouded noon of the clear revelation of His love which is to be our portion in Heaven! Our sight through a glass darkly is purposely made dim to suit our feeble vision for He has compassion on the ignorant.

I speak, then, to everyone here who feels himself to be theologically backward and doesn't know much about the things of God's Word. Never mind, dear Brother. Never mind, dear Sister. Come to Jesus Christ and trust Him—and He will teach you as well as save you! And if you are now untaught and unlearned, do not hold back because of that, but come for-

ward with all hopefulness. If you do not know one letter in the alphabet from another and if you do not know one doctrine of the Word of God except that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, yet come and welcome to your great High Priest, for He will have compassion on the ignorant!

My time is almost gone and I want to speak a word upon the last point, which is that He will have compassion upon those that are out of the way. "Out of the way"—out of the *right* way, the *narrow* way, the *happy* way, the *ONLY* way! Who are these people? Some are out of the way because they never were in it and never knew it. They have heard of it, perhaps, a little, but they have never tried it by setting one foot in it. You are not church-goers or chapel-goers, for you are altogether out of the way. You are not hearers of the Gospel, not people who even *practice* a form of prayer. You are avowedly out of the way.

Listen then, while I tell you that Jesus can have compassion on those that are out of the way! Many are in a very emphatic sense, out-of-the-way sinners! They have gone to such extravagances that they are out of the way of common morality and quite startle their careless comrades. Even those who have no religion yet say, "Well, now, you go beyond me! You are an out-of-the-way fellow." "I drink sometimes," says one man, "but as for you, you are an out-of-the-way drinker." "I," says another—"well, I make no pretensions to be very precise, but still I draw a line *somewhere*. As for you, you go beyond all bounds and are an out-of-the-way fellow altogether."

Well, I have to say tonight that my Lord Jesus will have compassion on you out-of-the-way sinners! However far you have gone, only turn to Him—for pardon is freely published. Forsake your sin, tonight, and come to Jesus' feet and cast yourself there and say, "I will not go till You renew me and deliver me from the guilt and bondage of my sin." He can do it, yes He *WILL* do it, for He has compassion on out-of-the-way sinners! Perhaps I am addressing some who were once *nominally* in the way. You were members of a Church years ago. Where are you now? The Church may well disown you and you may well disown the Church, for you are a disgrace to it.

What have you been doing this morning? How do you spend your Sabbaths? What is your conduct during the week? I would speak personally to those of you who were once professors and are now prodigals. You were with the Methodists, were you not, when you were in the country? You have nothing to do with them now. Ah, yes, before you entered the army you had some idea of religion and loved, in some respects, the service of your mother's God. But you have forgotten it since you have been in the barracks. I know how it is with many—they are very willing to go with Christ when He wears His golden vest and His starry crown and walks out on sunshiny days—but to bear a cross and follow Him through the mocking mob is quite another matter! And, therefore, they go out of the way.

Backslider, do not despair, the great High Priest of our profession will have compassion on you—only return to Him! He still has the greatest pity for the greatest wanderer. He rejoices more over one lost sheep that

He has found than over 99 that went not astray. And oh, dear child of God, here is a word for you, for it may be you feel, tonight, as if you were out of the way. You are not enjoying religion as you once did. When the hymn is sung, your heart does not make music, and when prayer is offered you feel as if you could not pray. Despair not, for He can have compassion on you. You are ignorant, for who among us is there that is not ignorant?

He who knows most of Christ knows very little. We are all ignorant and He has compassion on us all. And we are all out of the way in some measure—the best child of God on earth is not perfect. I did hear from a Brother that *he* was perfect, but I did not believe him nor think any the better of him for his being so conceited. I thought, when he said he was perfect, that I could see an imperfection in his eyesight and, if I had looked a little closer, I should probably have found another in his tongue. Better, far, to pray, “I have gone astray like a lost sheep. Seek Your servant, for I do not forget Your commandments.” The Good Shepherd will have compassion upon us, bind up our wounds and bear with our weaknesses and follies—therefore let us come to Him anew and trust Him more and more.

Let us come to Him as He is now, enthroned in the highest heavens, and say, “Jesus, we have heard that You have compassion on the ignorant and those that are out of the way, and such are we. Behold, we trust ourselves with You.” Trembling Believer, be not slow to draw near, for His loving heart is unable to refuse you! If you will trust yourselves with the Savior, He cannot betray or deceive your trust. Only do that and your faith will have power over the sacred heart of the Crucified One!

You know if a child trusts you—if it is only to buy a penny toy—you do not like to go home without doing it. You City men, if your little daughter trusted you to buy her something, you would not like to disappoint her. Well, and God, our blessed Savior, cannot, *will not* disappoint His trusting children! If we can trust Him with our souls we have a hold upon Him which He will not shake off, but He will bless us—yes, He will bless us eternally! God help you to trust Him now, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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OUR COMPASSIONATE HIGH PRIEST NO. 2251

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*"We can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for he, himself is also compassed with infirmity."
Hebrews 5:2.*

THE High Priest looked Godward and, therefore, he had need to be holy, for he had to deal with things pertaining to God. But at the same time he looked manward—it was for men that he was ordained—that, through him, they might deal with God and, therefore, he had need to be tender. It was necessary that he should be one who could have sympathy with men, otherwise, even if he could succeed Godward, he would fail to be a link between God and man from lack of tenderness and sympathy with those whom he sought to bring near to Jehovah.

Hence, the High Priest was taken from among men that he might be their fellow and have a fellow-feeling with them. No angel entered into the holy place. No angel wore the white garments. No angel put on the ephod and the breastplate with the precious stones. It was a *man*, ordained of God, who for his brothers, pleaded in the Presence of the Shekinah.

Many of us, I trust, have a desire within our hearts to come to God, but we need a High Priest. But we need a High Priest, in order that we may draw near, who shall be a Man as well as God! We may reflect with joy upon the Godhead of our great High Priest. Inasmuch as it is His right, He counts it not robbery to be equal with God, but He communes with the Father as One that was by Him, as One brought up with Him, who was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him. But we ought, also, to be very grateful that we can come into touch with our High Priest on His human side and rejoice that He is truly Man. For thus says the Lord, "I have laid help upon One that is mighty: I have exalted One chosen out of the people." He is anointed, it is true, with the oil of gladness above His fellows, but still, He and they are one, "for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren."

Those who came to the High Priest of old were not often of the rough sort. Those who wished to have fellowship with God through the High Priest in the Tabernacle, or in the Temple, were generally the timid ones of the people. Remember how she who came when Eli was High Priest was "a woman of sorrowful spirit"—and the High Priest had to deal with many such. The sons and daughters of affliction were those who mostly sought the Divine oracle and desired to have communion with God—therefore the

High Priest needed not only to be a man, but a man of tender and gentle spirit. It was necessary that he should be one with whom those with broken hearts and those who were groaning under a sense of sin, would like to speak. They would dread an austere man and would, probably, in many cases, have kept away from him altogether.

Now, the mercy for us is that our Great High Priest is willing to receive the sinful and the suffering, the tried and the tempted! He delights in those that are as bruised reeds and smoking flax, for thus He is able to display the sacred qualifications. He “can have compassion.” It is His Nature to sympathize with the aching heart, but He cannot be compassionate to those who have no suffering and no need. The heart of compassion seeks *misery*, looks for *sorrow* and is drawn towards *despondency*—for there it can exercise its gracious mission to the fullest!

Often, when we are trying to do good to others, we get more good ourselves. When I was here one day this week, seeing friends who came to join the Church, there came among the rest a very diffident tender-hearted woman who said many sweet things to me about her Lord, though I know *she* did not think that they were any good. She was afraid that I should not have patience with her and her poor talk, but she said one thing which I especially remember—“I have, today, put four things together from which I have derived a great deal of comfort,” she told me. “And what are they, my Sister?” I asked. “Well,” she said, “they are those four classes—‘the unthankful and the evil, the ignorant and on them that are out of the way.’ Jesus ‘is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil,’ and He, ‘can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.’ And I think that I can get in through those four descriptions. Though I am great sinner, I believe that He will be kind to me and have compassion upon me.”

I stored that up, for I thought that one of these days I might need it myself. I tell it to you, for if you do not need it now, you may need it one of these days. You may yet have to think that you have been unthankful and evil, ignorant and out of the way—and it will give you comfort to remember that our Lord Jesus is kind to the unthankful and to the evil, and that He, “can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.”

On this latter subject, I would speak at this time, wishing to comfort some who are of a sorrowful spirit, and others who may yet have need of such consolation as this topic gives.

Notice in our text, first, *the sort of sinners with whom our High Priest is concerned*, namely, “the ignorant and them that are out of the way.” Secondly, *the sort of High Priest with whom sinners have to deal*—One “who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.” And thirdly, *the sort of infirmities in men that may be sanctified to great uses*. “For that he, himself, is also compassed with infirmity,” is said of an *earthly* High Priest—this is what it was that made him fit to be a High Priest—and there are certain infirmities that we might almost glory in, for they enable us to be like priests unto God and make us helpful to His sorrowing and suffering children!

I. First, then, let us carefully observe THE SORT OF SINNERS FOR WHOM OUR HIGH PRIEST IS CONCERNED. While it is true that He is willing to receive all sorts of sinners, there are many who never come to Him, nor submit to His authority. With those who proudly and rashly stand before God on their own merit, He has nothing to do! But with others of a different character, He is greatly concerned.

The people who claim Christ's aim are generally *those who have a very low opinion of themselves*. Out of all the tribes of Israel, those that came to the High Priest, to ask him to present their sacrifice to God for them, and to speak a word from God to them, were God-fearing people. No doubt hypocrites, occasionally, did come, and some of a proud spirit who trusted in their own offerings, but I should think that, all the year round, the High Priest saw some of the humblest and best people in all Israel. Men and women in sore trouble would come to him and these chastened spirits would be choice spirits. Men and women who were conscious of sin and longing for pardon would come to the High Priest. Men and women who had not sinned after the similitude of a public transgression, who, nevertheless, felt evil darkening their conscience within, would draw near to him. Men and women who had lost the light of God's Countenance and who came longing to have it back, again, because they could not live without it, would approach the courts of God's House. All these would be welcome visitors at the High Priest's door and would receive his sympathy and compassion. Such are the people whom Christ, our Great High Priest, now delights to bless. The proud and self-satisfied cannot know His love, but the poor and distressed may always find in Him comfort and joy because of His Nature and by means of His intercession.

As with the High Priest of Israel in the olden time, among those who come to our High Priest, *are many whose fear and distress arise from ignorance*. Oh, dear Friends, if all the ignorant were to come, we would *all* come, for we are all ignorant! But there *are* some who fancy that it is otherwise with them. They imagine they know all things and, professing themselves to be wise, they become fools! They know not their need of the Great High Priest. Their folly is proved by their light esteem of Him. But among those who come to our Great High Priest in Heaven, there are none but those who are ignorant.

In the first place, there is *a universal ignorance*. Notwithstanding all that great men may say about what they evolve from their own consciousness, I think that the only thing that a man can evolve from his own consciousness is folly and sin, for there is nothing else there. If he goes on evolving, he will evolve greater folly and greater sin, that is all. But when the Lord deals with men, He makes them feel that they know very little. What do we know of sin? The larger proportion of our sins are probably unknown to us. We do them and scarcely observe that we have committed them. And who knows the evil that lies in any one sin? Who is he that can weigh his iniquities in scales, or his errors in balances? Upon that one dread subject of sin, we are all like babes! We have not begun to learn more than the alphabet of that awful knowledge! Sinful we are, but it is part of the effect of sin that we do not know the extent of our sinfulness—

and we would not know it at all if it were not for the teachings of the Holy Spirit!

Again, what do we know of ourselves? Does any man truly know himself? “The proper study of mankind is man,” says Pope. I am not sure of that, but I *am* certain that the proper study of mankind *is* Christ—for in Him we not only can learn about man, but much more besides. But we know little of ourselves, of our natural weakness, of our evil tendencies, of our proneness in this direction, or in that!

What do we know of God the Unsearchable? Is not He past finding out? Who can sufficiently tell of His Nature, or of His wondrous attributes? Who can speak adequately of His greatness, or of His Glory? Who can number up His years, or declare the whole of His loving kindness? “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” On this great subject as well as on the other topics I have mentioned, there is a universal ignorance. As compared with the Light of God, we are in the dim twilight. He that sees best only sees men as trees walking.

But, in addition to the ignorance that is universal, there is also a *comparative ignorance* on the part of some. And because of this, the compassion of Christ flows forth to them. Those who are ignorant in this way are the kind of sinners whom He has come to help as High Priest. He puts them in a class by themselves.

There are, first, the recent converts—young people whose years are few and who probably think that they know more than they do—but who, if they are wise, will recognize that even by reason of the fewness of their years, their senses have not been fully exercised to discern between good and evil. You must not ask them questions about the deep things of God. They have to be satisfied with those blessed parts of Scripture where a lamb may wade. They must not meddle with those parts where leviathan has to swim. Many Truths of God are either above them or below them—much experience is too deep for them. In the presence of many of God’s ways, they are compelled to say, “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.”

The Lord Jesus Christ can take little boys and girls to His bosom and He does so, while they are, as yet, ignorant of many things. He loves them! He teaches them! He has compassion on them and He says of them, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for such is the Kingdom of God.” Christ receives them in spite of their lack of knowledge and, therefore, we must treat such very tenderly. “Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones,” for our Great High Priest has compassion upon their ignorance and He instructs them. “All your children shall be taught of the Lord and great shall be the peace of your children,” when they trust in Him who sympathizes with them and who cares for them.

Others there are who are ignorant because of their little opportunity of getting instruction. Are there not many who are so placed that they have little chance of ever learning to read? We are thankful that there will be few left of that sort, by-and-by. But there are others who, if they could

read, have scarcely sufficient time allowed them to read their Bibles, and who, when they have read them, are very much like the Ethiopian eunuch in that they do not comprehend what they have read. If the question were addressed to them, "Do you understand what you have read?" they could truly say, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" There are many, all over our land, who are situated in places where they cannot often hear the Gospel—and when they do hear it—it is so mixed up and confused, that it is small wonder they cannot make heads or tails of it! Constantly do we meet with persons of that kind, whose ignorance is excusable, for they have had no teaching. They have not had opportunities of reading and searching, as most of us have had! Upon these our Great High Priest has compassion and often, with their slight knowledge, they show more of the fruits of the Spirit than some of us produce even with our more abundant Light of God!

Further than that, there are many who are of a very feeble mind. You can only, with difficulty, get a thought into their brain—and if you try to get another idea on the top of it—the second one seems to knock the first one out. They never learn much and they are so constructed that they never will. In our pilgrim band we have a number who are like Mr. Feeblemind—we may try all that we can with him, but we shall never make a hero of him. Others are like Mr. Ready-to-Halt with his crutches. He once danced, you will remember, when Giant Despair's head was cut off, but still, he had to go on his crutches, even then, and he never gave them up till he crossed the river! Then he left them to anybody who needed such things and, I fear, there are many who need them today.

We have those in our company who never will be able to give a systematic statement of the Doctrines of Grace, though they are full of Grace. They could never explain how they were saved, but they *are* saved. I dare say the snail could never explain how he got into the ark, but he did get in—and these feeble ones are in Christ though they cannot fully explain how they came to that blessed position! Some of these good people are not very apt to receive knowledge—they are not "learnable," if I may coin a word to express my meaning We cannot make them learn. They are willing to be *taught*—they are *teachable*—but they are not "learnable." Ah, well, our Blessed High Priest can have compassion on the ignorant and the feeble-minded!

Beside the universal ignorance of which we have spoken, and this comparative ignorance, there is a *sinful ignorance*. We have some who are ignorant and no excuse is to be made for them. Their ignorance is to be condemned! And if these words reach any who are thus guilty, I would beseech them to pray God to pardon their guilt—and cease to sin in this way any longer! I mean those who are ignorant for lack of attention. They are so full of business and have such a great many other things to think of that they do not value the means of Grace. They say that they cannot attend, but we know that where there is a will there is a way. Perhaps they go once on a Sunday and never more all the week. Now, if I had to eat one meal a week, and only one, I should need it to be a very good one! But I think that I should hardly be in a good condition for the next one the week

following. It is a grand thing to get a little bit by the way, by coming on a Thursday night, or a morsel or two on a Monday, at the Prayer Meeting. This stays the heart and keeps the soul in good order.

Some will never be much above the ignorant because they have not the *ambition* to learn. They do not set themselves to study the things of God. They do not sufficiently prize the Revelation of God. I pray that they may be stirred up to do so. Though they have been guilty of neglectfulness and forgetfulness, they are not to be deprived of the sweetness of this text. Our Lord can have compassion on the ignorant and on such as are out of the way. Here stands the great company to which His compassion goes out and its name is written, "*The ignorant.*" I think that we had better all get into this class. Indeed, I am sure that we had better join it and thus obtain our Lord's compassion!

I have seen, at a railway station, gentlemen with first-class tickets walking up and down the platform unable to find a first-class carriage. And if the train was going on, they have jumped in the third-class section so as to get to the journey's end. If there is a man here who does not think that he ought to be put down quite among the ignorant, jump in, Brother, because you will get to your journey's end in this compartment—and there is no carriage, just now, for any wise person! There is nothing provided in the train that starts from this text except that which is provided for the ignorant! The Lord has us personally to rejoice that He can have compassion on the ignorant!

Now comes another description of the sort of sinners for whom our High Priest is concerned. There are *many whose fears arise from being out of the way*. The Lord "can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." I remember that when I felt myself to be a very great sinner—and verily thought I was more of a sinner than anybody else—these words were very, very much blessed to me! I read them, "and on them that are out of the way," and I knew that I was an out-of-the-way sinner. I was then, and I am afraid that I am, now, somewhat like a lot out of the catalog, an odd person who must go by himself. Very well! Our High Priest can have compassion on those that are odd, on those that are out-of-the-way, on those who do not seem to be in the common run of people and do not go with the multitude, but who must be dealt with individually and by themselves! He can have compassion upon such.

But now let us look at the more exact meaning of the text.

To be out of the way is, in the case of all men, *their natural state*. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." That is where we all are by nature—and our own way is *out of the way*. Therefore, Christ can have compassion upon *all* of us who come to Him, for He has learned to deal with those who are out of the way, and such, literally, are we all!

In addition to that, men have gone out of the way by *their own personal folly*. We had enough original sin, but we have added to that another kind of originality in evil—

***"Like sheep we went astray,
And broke the fold of God.***

***Each wandering in a different way—
But all the downward road.***

But there are some who wander most foolishly. You wonder why they sin in the particular way that they do. There seems to be no reason for it, no motive for it, no special temptation in that direction and yet, they will do it! They wander out of the way by themselves! Have you done so, dear Friend? The Lord can have compassion on those that are out of the way.

Some are out of the way because of *their seduction from the way by others*. False teachers have taught them and they have taken up with the error brought before them by a stronger mind than their own. In some cases persons of evil life have had a fascination over them. It is wonderful how, in the cases of young men and young women, they frequently seem to not be themselves, but the evil embodiment of another. They are ruled and governed by the will of somebody else and not by their own. Thus they are led out of the way. They are like sheep that “have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.” Ah, poor Friend, it is evil that you should have been the victim of another’s temptation! But do not blame your tempter! Blame yourself and, at the same time, remember that Christ has compassion upon those who have been led out of the way. As by the will of another you were beguiled from the true path, so by the *love* of Another shall you be won back again, even as it has been with many of us!

Many are out of the way because of *their backsliding after Grace has come to them*. Our text comprehends backsliders who were once in the way. To such we may say, “You did run well. Who did hinder you, that you should not obey the Truth of God?” Something has been an occasion of stumbling to such and now, though sitting in the House of God, they know they are not what they once were, nor what they ought now to be, nor what they must be, nor what I hope they will be, even before I shall finish my discourse! “Turn, O backsliding children, says the Lord, for I am married to you.” Why will you wander from the only source of good? “Take with you words and turn to the Lord.” “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” The Lord calls you in infinite tenderness, for He can have compassion upon backsliders and stop them from becoming apostates—bringing them back to Himself according to His Divine purpose.

Others are out of the way because of *their consciousness of special sin*. Is there anyone here conscious of some great sin in years gone by? Is there a crimson spot upon your hand which you have tried to wash out but cannot? Was there some act of your life which you would undo and remove? There it is, still there, always there. Does it fret you by night, and weary you by day, to think of the gross iniquity of yours? Ah, it has put you out of the way! Perhaps you did not grasp all the consequences of what you were doing when you did it. Be comforted by this gracious text! Hear your High Priest pray, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” He pleads your ignorance! You “did it ignorantly in unbelief” and, while this does not *excuse* you, it puts you into the list of those who are both ignorant and out of the way! Come to this compassionate High

Priest and trust your case in His dear hands—they were pieced because of your sin. Trust your iniquity with Him. His heart was opened and set abroad because of your transgression. Come, trust in Him. He died because of your sin. “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.”

Thus I have very feebly set forth the sort of sinners for whom Christ is High Priest—those who are ignorant—and those who are out of the way. This message is for almost everybody here, except my Friend, over there, who knows everything and never did anything wrong! He does not need any Christ and I will not bother him with one. “They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick,” says the Lord Jesus. And He further adds this word, which shuts out you who never did any harm, “I come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” To be so very learned and so very good in your own estimation is no recommendation to Christ, but the reverse! He comes to men who need compassion and *those* He teaches to profit and leads in the way everlasting.

II. Having seen the sort of sinners with whom our High Priest is concerned, let us, in the second place, look at THE SORT OF HIGH PRIEST WITH WHOM SINNERS HAVE TO DEAL.

Now, if I go back to the High Priest under the Law, the type would be a fine fatherly man whose very face invited confidence. I should think that all the people were glad when the High Priest was very tender and compassionate. Possibly they occasionally had a High Priest who was very high and very mighty—one who was very glad when the day’s service was over. If sinners needed to see him, he was not visible. And when he did talk to them, he was not very gentle. Sometimes he may have said to them, “Now you are stupid, you talk nonsense!” And when any of them were very sad, he said, “You ought to know better than to indulge this foolish nervousness of yours.” I think that they were not sorry when that High Priest was taken from them!

But the pattern High Priest was a fatherly-looking man, with love in his eyes, a smile on his face—one who had often sorrowed himself, one to whom all the people could go naturally. There are such men still alive. They are like a harbor for ships. Sometime it brings a very heavy burden upon them, but they are happy men to have such a burden to carry. I think that some of those High Priests must have seen a great deal of sin and a great deal of Divine mercy and love. When the poor people went up to the Temple, one would say, “I must go in and see the High Priest. I have such a burden and he will be able to help me.” Another would say, “No, I shall not go in. I do not need to take up his time. Did you not hear him speak? What he said was just the very thing that I needed. God gave him the very word that my distress required, and so I can go in peace.” But here and there one would say, “Ah, I must tell him. It does me good to unburden my heart.” Now that is the kind of High Priest that we would all have wished for had we been living in those days—but our Lord Jesus is something incomparably better than that!

He is One who can bear with ignorance, forgetfulness and provocation. How do I know? Because He bore so wonderfully with the ignorance of

people when He was here! It was with a very tender accent that He said to one of His disciples, "Have I been so long time with you, and have you not known Me, Philip?" He had told them many, many times the same thing, over again, and yet He was not above repeating it. He had such compassion on them that, sometimes, He could not say what He would have liked to say, and yet He bore with the poor men who did not know the burden He had on His heart. He only said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now." And when, after He had taught them, they still forgot, He did not chide them. I never find that He turned one of them away because of their stupidity. He did not even cast off Thomas for his unbelief. He let them still linger about His Person despite their false notions and their forgetfulness. They must often have grieved Him through their ignorance and through getting out of the way, especially when they got into the way of each desiring to be the greatest. But notwithstanding all, our Lord was never like Moses. Of him it is written that the people of Israel "provoked his spirit, so that he spoke unadvisedly with his lips." But never an impatient word came from those lips into which Grace was so abundantly poured! There was never such a meek, gentle and quiet spirit as our Divine Lord and Master possessed. I need not dwell on that, for you all know what compassion He had upon the ignorant sons of men.

Again, *He is One who can feel for grief because He has felt the same.* When I have explained compassion as implying meekness of disposition, I have not given you the full meaning of the expression. Not only has our Lord compassion on the ignorant by being gentle towards them, but He sympathizes with them by having a like feeling with them. They got out of the way and into the thorns. They wandered and fell into a maze. They were lost in the dark mountains, but He was "a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief." "In all their afflictions He was afflicted." Because of that fellow-feeling, He is always very tender and full of pity—and if He finds any of His children sorrowing, He has abundant compassion upon them.

Moreover, *He is One who lays Himself out tenderly to help such as come to Him.* He did so when He was here in body and He is the same now—all His life was given in tenderness. You never find Christ throwing bread and meat to the hungry crowd as we throw bones to the dogs. He has made them sit down on the green grass—and then He blessed the food, gave it to His disciples and they distributed it in a quiet, orderly way. And the Lord Jesus Christ has a very loving way of helping His people now. So tenderly does He do it, that the doing of it is almost as great a wonder as the thing that is done! He abounds towards us in all wisdom and prudence, and we may each say, "Your gentleness has made me great." Oh, He is a wonderful Savior! There is none like Him for sympathizing with us and dealing tenderly with us.

Another thing I have to say of Him that never can be said of anybody else is, that *He is One who never repelled a single person.* Not even the most ignorant or the most out of the way was ever turned back from Him.

It was always true—"This Man receives sinners." And this word is forever settled in Heaven, "Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out."

I have not time to go fully into this matter, but all who have read the life of Christ know what a gentle and tender High Priest He was towards men—

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

His heart is on earth, though He has ascended into the heavens. If anyone here groans after Him, He will hear that groan—and if the wish does not come to a vocal sound at all, but if your heart only aches after Him—He will feel that ache of your heart and know what it means. And if you do not know how to pray, the very desire to pray He will interpret! He can have compassion on the ignorant. And if you do not know what you need, but only know that it is something that you must have or die, He will give it to you, for He will interpret your wordless desires—and what you cannot read, yourself, He will read for you. But, oh, you must have Him! You must have Him! You cannot get to God without Him!

I pray that you will feel such confidence in His tenderness that you may come and take Him as your own High Priest. If you do, He will be yours at the moment of acceptance. He will never refuse the seeker. He will not hide Himself from His own flesh. He will never be distant and strange to any penitent sinner. If you desire Him, it is because He desires you! And if you have a *spark* of wish for Him, He has a *furnace* of desire for you! Come, and welcome! He can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way. God bless these words! I pray that He may do so to very many.

III. Now, I want to speak to those of you who are the people of God. I can imagine that some of you here are troubled, perhaps ill, and that you cannot get on as you would like in the world. You seem compassed with infirmities. I want to remind you that there may be a blessing even in your weakness—and so that this may be the more clearly seen, we will look, in the third place, at the SORT OF INFIRMITY WHICH MAY BE SANCTIFIED AND MADE USEFUL.

The High Priest of old was compassed with infirmities, but this was part of his qualification. "Yes," says one, "but he was compassed with *sinful* infirmities. But our Lord Jesus had no sin." That is quite true, but please remember that this does not make Christ less tender, but more so. Anything that is sinful, hardens—and inasmuch as He was without sin—He was without the hardening influence that sin would bring to bear upon a man! He was all the more tender when compassed with infirmities, because sin was excluded from the list. We will not, then, reckon sin in any form as an infirmity likely to be turned to a great use, even though the Grace of God abounds over the sin. But, beloved Friends, let me try and speak to some of you who wish to do good, and set forth some of the things which were sore to bear at the times, and yet have been rich in blessing since.

First think of *our struggles in finding mercy*. Years ago you had a hard time of it when you were seeking the Savior. I had and I have always been very glad of it ever since. It was a long while before I could perceive the eternal Light of God and cast myself on Christ. I thank God that it was so because I have had to deal with hundreds—I might say thousands—in a similar case! And if I had found Christ, as many dear friends do, very readily and very easily, I could not have guided them! But now I can sit down by the side of them and say, “What? Have you got into the dark? I have been in the dark, too! You are down in the lowest dungeon, are you? Well, I was in the lowest dungeon of all. I can show you the way to where the jug of water stands and the bit of brown bread. I know the way, for I have been there.” If you have not had a certain experience, you cannot so well help others who have—but if you were compassed with infirmity in your first coming to Christ, you may use that in helping others to come to Him.

Again, *our grievous temptations* may be infirmities which shall be largely used in our service. “What a blessing it would be to live without temptations!” says one. I do not believe it would be a blessing at all. I think that being without temptation is more of a temptation than having a temptation! There is no devil that is equal to no devil, for when there seems to be none, we get so very quiet and so very easy—and think that everything is going on well—when it is not! Be glad if you have been tempted. Remember that temptation is one of the best books in the minister’s library. To be tried, to be afflicted, to be downcast, to be tested—all this helps you to deal with others. You cannot be unto others a helper unless you have been compassed with infirmities! Therefore accept the temptations which trouble you so much as a part of your salvation to make you useful to others.

Our sickness may turn out to be in the same category. Of course we would like to be always well. I think that health is the greatest blessing that God ever sends us, except sickness, which is far better! I would give anything to be perfectly healthy, but if I had to go over my time, again, I could not get on without those sick beds and those bitter pains—and those weary, sleepless nights. Oh, the blessedness that comes to us through smarting if we are ministers and helpers of others, and teachers of the people! I do not say that too much of it is to be despised, but the Lord knows how much is too much—and He will never afflict us beyond that which He will enable us to bear! But just a touch of sickness now and then may help you mightily. I have heard some Brothers preach the Gospel, but it was as hard as a Brazil nut—little children could never get at the kernel! These Brothers had never had any trouble or affliction—and if you have never had any, you may try to be very tender, but it will be like an elephant picking up a pin—you may try to be patient and sympathetic, but you will not be able to manage it! Glory in your infirmities, then, and in your sicknesses, for they shall be made useful in you for the comfort of God’s sick people.

Our trials, too, may thus be sanctified. He that has had no troubles and no trials—what mistakes He makes! He is like the French lady in the time

of famine who said that she had no patience with the poor people starving because of the price of bread. You can always buy a penny bun for a penny, she said—and therefore she thought there need not be any poverty at all! She was one of the rich ones of the earth. I do not suppose that she had ever had a penny bun in her life, or a penny, either. Ah, dear Friends! You must, if you are ready to help others, be, yourself, compassed with infirmity!

Our depressions may also tend to our fruitfulness. A heart bowed down with despair is a dreadful thing. “A wounded spirit who can bear?” But if you have never had such an experience, my dear Brother, you will not be worth a pin as a preacher. You cannot help others who are depressed unless you have been down in the depths yourself. You cannot lift others out of despondency and depression, unless you, yourself, have sometimes needed to be lifted out of such experiences. You must be compassed with this infirmity, too, at times, in order to have compassion on those in a similar case.

Herein I think that every one of us should try to make use of all his weaknesses. *Our whole nature as feeble men* may be turned to the noblest use if it calls forth our compassion towards others. Thank God that you are not a man of iron. We had the Iron Duke, once, who did famous things, but in a different fight from ours. An iron preacher would need to have iron hearers—and then, I am afraid, that there would come a crash before long. No, no, we *must* have our weaknesses and infirmity consecrated to God and laid at His feet.

Let us go, in all our weakness and infirmity, and try to help others who are as ignorant and as out of the way as we once were and, God blessing us, when we are weak, we shall be strong! When we are less than nothing, the all-sufficiency of God will be all the more manifested. Here I must stop, for our time has gone. May the Lord bless the word, both to the sinner and to the saint, for His name’s sake! Amen.

Portion of Scripture Read before Sermon—Hebrews 4:15, 16:5.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—326, 367, 376.

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COMPASSION ON THE IGNORANT NO. 2529

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*“Who can have compassion on the ignorant,
and on them that are out of the way.”
Hebrews 5:2.*

THE ignorant have need of compassion. “That the soul is without knowledge, it is not good.” Every kind of ignorance, like darkness, is evil, and knowledge, which is light, is, according to its kind, good, or better, or best. For a man to be ignorant of Divine things is a very sorrowful piece of business. To be going into eternity and not to know anything about it—yes, and even to be passing through this life and yet to not know the way everlasting which leads to Glory, but to be stumbling upon the dark mountains of mere thought and vain imagination—this is a very dreadful thing! Ignorance of God, ignorance of the right, ignorance of Christ, ignorance of mercy, ignorance of Heaven—these are things for which men are to be blamed, but for which they are also to be pitied. Wherever we see ignorance about the things of God, let our hearts go forth in tenderness, but let our prayers arise to God in love—and let our efforts be made in true benevolence that the ignorance may be removed, for, if we are men of God like our Great High Priest, it will be true, also, of us that we “have compassion on the ignorant.”

Now, dear Brothers and Sisters, it becomes every man to have compassion on the ignorant because the ignorant man is still a man! However little he knows, he is still a man, and you and I need not be excessively modest if we put ourselves, also, down among the ignorant, for what if we are better instructed than others? How little do we know, after all! The most intelligent, the most experienced—the man who has dwelt nearest to his Lord—yet how much there remains even for him to know! He knows the love of Christ, but it passes his knowledge. He knows many things, yet he is obliged to confess that here he only knows in part—and it is not till the hereafter that he shall know even as he is not. Therefore, seeing you are a man and, in your measure ignorant, you are to have great compassion upon your fellow man and upon his ignorance.

And inasmuch as the ignorance here meant is the ignorance of sin, which is constantly described in the Old Testament as folly, so that every sinner is declared to be a fool—yet concerning this, you and I may well have compassion because we are sinners, too! If God has made us to differ, yet that difference is all the result of His Grace and, therefore, not to be taken to ourselves as a reason for pride and lifting ourselves up above others. No, a sinner yourself, you should be very tender to all other sinners. Yourself indebted—oh, how deeply—to Infinite Love, you should be

very gentle to others who need that love! What if you are cleansed from the pollution of sin? It was a fountain filled with blood in which you were washed! Therefore, be you anxious that your fellow man should be washed there, too! What if the power of your sin is conquered? It was the Holy Spirit who worked this victory in you! Should you not desire that other captives should be set free, that other rebels should be subdued, that others who are under the domination of sin should be brought under the rule of your Divine Lord? If you are a man, a gracious man, a man of God, a chosen man, a blood-washed man, you should “have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.”

But, dear Friends, under the old dispensation, there were some who were chosen of God to take up a peculiar relationship to their fellow men. These were the priests and especially the High Priest—the one man who, alone, of all Israel, might once in the year enter into the Most Holy Place with the blood of the atonement. He who has to deal with men for God must be, above all others, very tender and very patient. It was a most trying experience for Hannah, when she went up with her sorrowful spirit to the house of the Lord, that God’s High Priest was not a man of tender and compassionate spirit, for Eli spoke very sharply to the good woman, and well-near broke that heart which God would have to be healed! It is a very sad thing when a man who is ordained of God to speak to men for God, is hard, cold and cruel—as if he were a judge rather than a father, or as if he were a butcher to slay the sheep rather than a shepherd to fetch it back from its wandering!

The Lord Jesus has made all His saints to be priests—we offer no sacrifice of blood—but He has made us kings and priests unto God, and we have to deal with men for God, all of us, I mean, not ministers, alone, but *all of you who are the Lord’s own people!* And it ought to be said of all of you who are kings and priests unto God that you “can have compassion on the ignorant.” A Christian without compassion seems to me to have missed a very vital part of the Christian character. A hard-hearted Christian—is not that a complete contradiction? Must not our hearts have been broken before we could, ourselves, be penitent? And He who bound them up and healed them, did not harden them with His gentle touch! I reckon that He gave them an additional tenderness by the very act of binding them up with His own dear pierced hands! And we ought to be very gentle—as a nurse with her child, as a mother with her darling—in dealing with the ignorant and those that are out of the way. Our sympathy ought to be always flowing, like a crystal fountain that is never dried up in summer, nor frozen in winter. The Lord has chosen us and called us to this office, that we should “have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way,” not only because we are men, but because God has made us priests—not only because we are, ourselves, children of God, but because we are now *servants* of God, set on purpose to look after the lost sheep and bring them into the fold.

But, Brothers and Sisters, our text concerns our Lord Jesus Christ. So now let me say that I speak not merely of what ought to *be*, but of what is true of Him. He is a Man, a Brother to every man! He is a Man, the Friend of all mankind. Yes, the friend of His bitterest foe—and He is always tender towards all the sorrows and the griefs of men. Then He is

also a Priest in a sense in which you and I are *not*, a Priest above Aaron and all mere earthly priests, the Great High Priest in whom all the types unite and from whom our priesthood is derived. He, above all others, “can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.” It is to that one point that I have to call your attention, namely, our Lord Jesus Christ, as God’s ordained High Priest, having compassion upon the ignorant. I pray that the words I speak may help some trembling, clouded spirit, with its eyes blurred by the mist of earth and sin. May there strike out of this starry text a living beam of light for you! He can have compassion on you who mourn your ignorance! May He have that compassion even now—plentifully, practically, permanently, savingly—and may many who, until now, knew Him not, learn to know Him and never to forget Him throughout eternity!

I. So, first let us ask, WHAT IS THIS IGNORANCE here mentioned?

Well, *it is common enough in all ranks of society*. I read, the other day, the opinion of a good man that most preachers give their congregations credit for knowing a great deal more than they do. And I think that it is very likely true, for there are sermons which are preached upon various Truths of the Gospel in which certain other Truths of God, necessary to the understanding of the whole, are not explained because it is taken for granted that they are already known. Yet in any large number of people there must be some who are entirely strangers, even to the most elementary Truths of Revelation. I am sure that it is so! There is, perhaps, nothing more amazing in this century than the ignorance of men about the things of God. It is certain that a knowledge of Scripture does not keep pace with the growth of knowledge of other things and that the understanding with regard to eternal realities is not so instructed as it is with regard to politics, to science and to other matters which are of temporary importance for this present life.

This ignorance is to be found among the poorest of people. They have had very little or no education, but that is of small consequence comparatively. They have forgotten what they learned in the Sunday school. Perhaps they never grasped what they heard preached because they did not understand it. As I heard one say, the other day, “I went to the place of worship near my house, but it was no good to me. There was not a single sentence of the sermon that I understood, for the words were all novel to me.” I am afraid that is the case in very many places—the talk of the theological hall is not understood in the cottage—and common phrases which reading people understand at once, are not understood by multitudes of people. But the pity is that there are also thousands of reading people who are totally ignorant of the things of God—some of the wealthiest, some of the best educated, yes, some, even, of those who have been to the university—and some who put the, “D.D.,” after their names! “No,” you say, “that cannot be!” I say that it is and if you, yourself, know the way of salvation, you have but to talk with some of these people to find that what I say is true! This is a Truth of God that is learned by the teaching of the Holy Spirit—not by the teaching of theological professors!

A man might spend a century under the best ministry, or in the best school that ever existed on earth and yet, at the end of one hundred years, he might not know the things of God, for these Truths must come

as a revelation to each man and God, the Holy Spirit, must teach them to each one, or they will never be learned. This is the standing miracle in the Church of God—and unless we see it continually worked, we have not the clearest evidence that our religion is supernatural and Divine! Every man who really receives it, receives it not because it suits his taste or his palate, but because the Spirit of God sends it home to his heart! Every man who truly knows Christ, knows Him not because with his own faculties he found Him out, but because it pleased God to reveal His Son in him. And, apart from this, there is and must be, to the end of human life, an absence of all real knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. First, “You must be born again.” And then, being born again, you must be taught of the Spirit of God. And, if we are not, as the strongest light cannot make a blind man see, and the greatest heat cannot make a dead man warm, so, neither can anything that we *do*, as long as the soul is unrenewed, ever cause it to know God and His Grace aright! It is a common ignorance, then, in all ranks of society.

It is also an ignorance concerning the most important matters, for the men of whom I am now speaking are, first, *ignorant of themselves*. They are ignorant of their own ignorance and, perhaps, there is no ignorance that is so hard to deal with as the utter ignorance of men as to their own ignorance. “What? You call me ignorant?” a man asks. “I know everything! I have read from Genesis to Revelation and I understand it all! I could preach as well as anybody.” Yes, but that kind of talk shows that you do *not* know, for he that knows, knows that he does not know—and there is no man less inclined to boast of his knowledge than the man who has a good deal of it! Whenever I find the men of the modern school of thought, as they are continually doing, sneering at the orthodox because we are all uncultured, and so forth, I think to myself, “And if you only had a little culture, you would not sneer so often.” It is a mark which will never mislead you, that he who thinks that he knows is a fool! And he who says that he knows more than anybody else and can afford to deal out his sneers liberally to others is a gentleman who, if justice were dealt out to him, would be, himself, sneered at! Those who are strangers to themselves do not know their own ignorance—and that is lamentable ignorance, indeed.

They are also unaware of their own depravity—they do not think that their heart is corrupt, or depraved at all. No man can long know anything of himself without discovering that he has a *bias toward evil*—that if let alone, quite alone, his thoughts go the wrong way! He finds that he needs to school himself to be right, kind and loving, but that he needs no effort to be proud, domineering, and revengeful! He finds that sin is indigenous to the soil of his heart, while everything that is good needs cultivation, watching and tender care. He finds, in fact, that his heart is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” But the ignorant who are described in our text, do not know that—and do not believe it.

They are also ignorant of the heinousness of their sin. They have never done much amiss, nothing very greatly wrong. They have not been all they ought to have been, but they have been within a shaving of it—and if they have fallen a little short, they can pick up, again, and make up for all deficiencies, by-and-by! They do not feel that there is much amiss

about their characters—in fact, if they have to seek another place and have to give themselves the character they feel that they deserve—it will be a very fine one, indeed! Ah, But this is gross ignorance, for he who knows himself will say, “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. And we do all fade as a leaf and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”

These ignorant people are also ignorant of their present and eternal danger. They do not suppose that sin puts them into any perilous condition with regard to God. Truly, He is very merciful, but they ignore the fact that He is as *just* as He is merciful, and they put aside all idea of any judgment to come, or of the wrath of God that abides on the wicked. Though these solemn Truths of God are clearly revealed in Scripture, they have left all such old-fashioned notions far behind, for they are “abreast of the times.” So they go on and, though often reproved, they harden their necks and persevere in the way which will surely lead them to everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord and the Glory of His power. Surely, this is utter ignorance of the worst kind!

Yet these people vainly imagine that they can turn from sin whenever they like! They have only just to will it and they shall certainly become Christians, if that is necessary, before they die. They do not know their inability, or their weakness—and while they are naked, poor, blind and miserable, they content themselves with believing that they are rich, increased in goods and have need of nothing! May God, in His infinite mercy, save such ignorant persons from the terrible consequences of their folly before it be too late!

While ignorant of themselves, they are equally *ignorant of the way of salvation*. But they hear it, do they not? Yes, they hear it, but they do not understand it. It is to me a very curious thing—often an amazing thing—when I am seeing persons lately converted. I have known those who have heard the Gospel in its simplicity from their childhood and yet, as soon as ever they are awakened to a sense of sin, they try to save themselves by their good works! They know better, yet they turn to that delusive system and, if they get weaned from that, then they think they must be saved by their *feelings*. They have been warned against such a folly thousands of times, yet they run to it! That simple principle, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved,” is an enigma, a perfect riddle. to any man until he is born again. He thinks he knows all about the Gospel, yet he does not. And though we try, by explanation and illustration, to make it as plain as possible, and put it into easy Saxon words, and say that salvation comes by a simple trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, yet, as far as they are concerned, we might just as well have spoken it in Hebrew, or in Dutch! They do not comprehend what we mean, but still fumble about after something of their own, instead of looking altogether out of themselves unto Him who is able to save them by what is in Himself—not by what is in them! Ah, dear Friends, these people I am trying to describe are ignorant of the very way of salvation!

And specially sad is it that they are *ignorant of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself*. They hear of Him, yet do not know Him. They do not know how loving, how kind and how full of Grace and power He is, but they think of

Him as though He were austere and unwilling to receive them. They are so ignorant of Him that they do not come to Him that they may have life!

They are also *ignorant of the Holy Spirit* and of His power to change the heart, renew the mind and deliver us from the thralldom of sin. They have heard about regeneration—they know a little about the doctrine—but what it is to come savingly under the power of the Holy Spirit, they do not know.

This ignorance is *most ruinous in its consequences* and ought, therefore, to excite the compassion of all good men! Even now it robs the mind of joy and deprives the spirit of the best of blessings—but the *future* consequences will be still more terrible. Alas, this ignorance is often willful! No man is so blind as the man who will not see. No man is so deaf as he who refuses to hear. And there are none so ignorant as those who do not want to learn and will not submit themselves to the teaching of God.

II. Here comes in the mercy that the Lord Jesus Christ can have compassion on the ignorant. So now, very briefly, I want to answer a second question, which is this—WHAT IS THERE IN THIS IGNORANCE WHICH IS SO PROVOKING TO US AND, THEREFORE, DEMANDS COMPASSION?

I reply, first, *its folly*. If you have ever taught children, or if you have ever taught young men who have been very careless and indifferent and, by no means anxious to learn, you have sometimes been provoked even by their ignorance, itself. You have said, “What? Don’t you know *that*?” Have you never heard a teacher speak very sharply concerning some point upon which a young man ought to have been well-informed and he has found him a very dolt, and he has said, “What? Not know *that*?” and he has seemed to look at him almost with contempt for not knowing such a simple thing!

Ignorance is also usually accompanied with a great deal of pride. There is nobody who thinks he knows so much as he who knows nothing. He is always sure, positive, certain—he does not need you to tell him anything. In his own conceit, he is wiser than seven men that can render a reason—roll seven clever men of reason together, and you have not as much knowledge as this one poor feel fancies he has! That silly pride is very provoking to the man who is trying to instruct a fool, while the fool thinks that his instructor is the one who lacks wisdom.

And then, with ignorance, there generally goes *prejudice*. A man has imbibed certain ideas and he does not want to know anything contrary to them. He says, in his boorish brogue, “What’s the good of it? I don’t want to know nothing about it. I knew a man once who did know something about it, and it was no good to him.” Well, just what the countryman says about some branch of teaching, the natural man says about the things of God! “I don’t want to know. I already know enough. My father and mother always went to such-and-such a place and they said, ‘You do your best and Jesus Christ will make up the rest.’ And I don’t want to know about your Gospel” Now, this foolish and wicked prejudice is a very provoking thing—and you may say to the man—“Why will you not listen and hear for yourself, and let me tell you about it?” “No,” he says, “I don’t want to know,” and you turn away sad and grieved.

There also generally goes with ignorance a great deal of obstinacy. The man will not believe what you tell him. You say to him, "Why, it is as plain as the nose on your face!" "Yes," he says, "but I can't see my nose," and he does not mean to see this particular Truth of God that you are bringing under his notice. You may prove it as plainly as two times two make four, yet, as he never did see it, so he never will see it! This is provoking to anybody who is anxious to give instruction upon matters that are really vital.

Sometimes ignorance is attended with a degree of very gross *unbelief*. When the man is made to know after a certain sense, yet he says that he cannot believe it. I am always grieved when I heard anybody say, "I cannot believe in Christ." It does seem shocking. If you cannot believe in me, I do not at all wonder! You may know something about me that may lead you to distrust what I say. But to say, "I cannot believe in Christ," is a very horrible thing! Did *He* ever lie? Is there anything untrue about Him? Is there anything about our blessed Master that savors of a sham? Surely you can believe in Him—may God give you the spiritual power to believe in Him, now, and to say, "I do believe. I will believe in Christ who died for me. I will come to Him and trust in Him." But that unbelief which goes with ignorance is full of provocation.

This is, I think, the most striking thing of all, men are ignorant through sheer *willfulness*. They will not know any better. How many men fight against knowledge that troubles them! "Oh," says one, "I do not want to go to hear that man again! He touches upon some point that will not let me sleep at nights." I have read a great many accounts of myself that have been far from true, but, the other day, I met with one which greatly pleased me, because it said, "He is a man who stands up on a Sunday and troubles more people's consciences than anybody else does." "Oh," I thought, "that is exactly what I meant to do and what I always want to do—to trouble people's consciences when they ought to be troubled." There are some of you who know that you could not go and drink again if you gave your hearts to God. If you came and learned the way of salvation, you could not be found in that company which now pleases you. Perhaps there is one who has beguiled you into sin, from whom you would have to separate if you were joined to Christ.

And there is many a man who says, "No, no. Not just yet, not just now. I will think of it, by-and-by." And, meanwhile, just behind you stands Death, the skeleton king, stretching out his bony hand and, perhaps, tonight, he will lay it on your shoulder and chill you to a corpse! What day you will be buried is not known, just now, on earth, but it is known above! Oh, that you and I, and all of us might have Grace to wish to know everything that makes for our peace! Especially would I ask you to wish to know the very worst about yourself. Pray God that you may never have anything kept from you, but that you may know that which shall lead you at once to Christ, that you may find salvation through the blood of the Lamb!

III. Now I must conclude by answering a third question—How DOES OUR LORD SHOW HIS COMPASSION TO THE IGNORANT?

He does it, first, by *offering to teach them*. If there is anybody here who desires to be taught, the Lord is willing and waiting to teach you! Is it a

Mary? She may come and sit at Jesus' feet and He will not upbraid her, but He will say that she has chosen the good part. Is it a Zacchaeus? Would you steal into the House of God, as he climbed up into the sycamore tree, that, among the foliage, he might not be seen, but yet might hear? Well, the Lord Jesus Christ is willing to teach you and to bid you make haste and come down, that He may abide in your house and your heart! He keeps a school which is always open and there is no charge for admission. The poorer and the more ignorant you are, the more welcome are you to the school of Christ—and this is how He proves His compassion to the ignorant. An ancient philosopher in Greece put over his door, "He that is ignorant of arithmetic must not enter here." He required some amount of knowledge before he would take a pupil, but the Lord Jesus Christ puts over His door, "He that is simple, let him turn in here. As for him who is void of understanding, let him come and learn of the Great Teacher!" Come, then, my poor ignorant Friend, for He will have compassion on you!

And His compassion is shown, next, *by actually receiving all who come to Him*. There is never one who comes to Christ but He takes him in to lodge and tarry with Him till he is instructed in the things of God. Come along with you, for Jesus said, "Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out." If you know nothing except that you know that you know nothing, He will instruct you unto eternal life!

Our Lord also shows His gentleness *by teaching us little by little*. If you Christian people look back upon your past history, you will be delighted to note how the Lord let the Light of God in gradually upon you. The blind man, whose eyes are opened, cannot bear the full light of noonday. And the Lord abounds toward us in all wisdom and prudence, teaching us "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little." I sometimes bless God that He does not give to some comers such a sight of sin as they get afterwards. A full sight of sin, my Brothers and Sisters, without a sight of the precious blood of Christ, would drive any man or woman among us mad! But we get a little glimpse of sin and we are appalled by it, and then we get a larger view of the Atonement, and we are comforted.

Perhaps no man has such a knowledge of the heinousness of sin as that man who is just going into Heaven. The Lord reveals our danger to us by degrees—we stand on a dreadful slope where a single slip means eternal destruction! And if the Lord were to let us see where we are, it might cause our destruction. But He *first* lifts us out of it and then lets us see where we used to be—shows us our disease by our remedy—and lets us know, when we are getting well, how near to death's door we once were. Oh, what a compassionate Teacher of the ignorant is the Lord Jesus Christ!

He also shows His compassion by *teaching us the same thing over and over again*. "Why," said one to a mother, "you teach that child the same thing 20 times." "Yes," she said, "and do you know the reason?" "No," said the other. "Why, it is because 19 times will not do!" Ah, how does the Lord teach us the same thing 20 times over and still we forget it! And then He teaches us again, and again, and again, and again till, at last, we learn it!

Another great proof of His compassion is seen in His *never casting off those He has once taken into His school*, even if they are very dull and slow to learn and, perhaps, after 20 years, do not know much. The Lord had to say to one of His Apostles, “Have I been so long a time with you, and yet have you not known Me, Philip?” But He did not turn Philip out as a dull boy and He will not turn us out! But, having once received us into His school, He will continue to use this means, and that, and the other, and still another, till at last we drink in the eternal Truth of God and it becomes part of ourselves! And He permits us to go where the Truth of God shall be seen in all its brightness and our heart shall be prepared to receive it. This is the substance of all I have said—Christ Jesus has compassion on the ignorant and I do entreat you, if you feel as if you do not understand Divine things, to come to Him to give you an understanding heart that you may receive the Truth of God!

“Oh, but I do not know!” says one. Then come to Him who does know, and say, “What I know not, my Lord, teach You me.” “Oh, but I feel so empty!” Just so and you are, therefore, all the fitter to be filled. “Oh, but I am so ignorant!” A sense of ignorance is the doorstep of knowledge! If you have come so far, I bless God that you are on the way to something higher and better. Come to Christ! You know, sometimes, when a boy who is a little dull goes to school, his master may not notice him among so many. And the older boys may slight and despise him—and he feels very miserable. But what if his master, noticing him, shall at once feel great tenderness for him and say, “Come here, child. I must make you the special objective of my labor and care”? That boy will surely get on, I think, and so, if you come into Christ’s school, our compassionate Lord will say, “Come here! Come here! I will teach you more than others, I will teach you privately. I will give you lessons in your bed, at nighttime will I instruct you. In your sickness I will talk with you. Because you are so dull in your own esteem, therefore I pity you and will take more care with you than with others.”

The promise is, “All your children shall be taught of the Lord.” Not one of the whole family shall go without an education—and the very dullest shall still be “taught of the Lord.” Will you go home, if you have never been instructed by Him, and seek Him in prayer? Ask Him to teach you. If the Gospel seems all a maze and a mist to you, go and say, “Lord, will You explain it to me?” One touch of Christ is better than years of study! You may try for many an hour to see in the dark, and yet see nothing. But if you go to Him who is the Morning Star and the Sun of Righteousness, you shall soon see. God grant that it may be so, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: HEBREWS 4:14-16; 5.

Hebrews 4:14. *Seeing, then, that we have a Great High Priest, who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.* Why should we let it go? Jesus has triumphed, He has entered into Glory on our behalf—the victory on our account rests with Him! Therefore let us follow Him as closely as we can. May He help us,

just now, if we are in the least dispirited or cast down, to pluck up courage, and press on our way!

15. *For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* How this ought to draw us to the Savior—that He was made like ourselves, that He knows our temptations by a practical experience of them and though He was without sin, yet the same sins which are put before us by Satan were also set before Him!

16. *Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need.* We have a Friend at court! Our Bridegroom is on the Throne of God! He who reigns in Heaven loves us better than we love ourselves! Come, then, why should we hesitate? Why should we delay our approach to His Throne of mercy? What is it that we need at this moment? Let us ask for it. If it is a time of need, then we see clearly from this verse that it is a time when we are permitted and encouraged to pray!

Hebrews 5:1. *For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.* The high priest of old was “taken from among men.” Aaron was chosen and then his son; an angel might have been sent to perform Aaron’s duty, but it was not so. And, glory be to our blessed Lord and Master, He is “One chosen out of the people,” “taken from among men.”

2. *Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that He, Himself, is also compassed with infirmity.* Christ was not compassed with *sinful* infirmity, but He was compassed with sorrowful infirmity. His were true infirmities or weaknesses—there was no evil about Him, but still He had the infirmity of misery—and He had it even to a greater extent than we have. The high priest of old was a man like those for whom he stood as a representative. And our Great High Priest is like unto us, though without sin.

3. *And by reason hereof he ought.*—That is, the ordinary high priest, chosen from among men ought.

3. *As for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.* But our Lord had no sins of His own. Do not, therefore, think that He is less sympathetic with us because He had no sins—far from it! Fellowship in sin does not create true sympathy, for sin is a hardening thing. If there are two men who are guilty partners in sin, they never really help each other, they have no true heart of kindness, either of them! When the time of difficulty comes, each man looks to his own interest. The fact that Christ is free from sin is a circumstance which does not diminish the tenderness of His sympathy with us, but rather increases it.

4, 5. *And no man takes this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest but He that said unto Him, *You are My Son, today have I begotten You.* The text is quoted from the second Psalm and it proves that Christ did not arrogate to Himself any position before God. He is God’s Son, not merely because He calls Himself so, but because the Father says, “You are My Son, today have I begotten You.” He took not this honor upon Himself, but He was “called of God, as was Aaron.”

6. *As He says also in another place.*—In the 110th Psalm.

6. *You are a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.* He does not assume the office on His own account, but it is laid upon Him. He comes not in as an amateur, but as an authorized Priest of God!

7. *Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared.* This is to prove His infinite sympathy with His people and how He was compassed with infirmity. Christ prayed. How near He comes to you and to me by this praying in an agony, even to a bloody sweat, with strong crying and with weeping! Some of you know what that means, but it did, perhaps, seem to you that Christ could not know how to pray just so. Yet He did. In the days of His flesh, He not only offered up prayer, but “prayers and supplications”—many of them, of different forms and in different shapes—and these were accompanied with “strong crying and tears.”

Possibly you have sometimes had a dread of death. So had your Lord—not a sinful fear of it, but that natural and perfectly innocent, yet very terrible dread which comes to a greater or less extent upon every living creature when in expectation of death. Jesus also comes very near to us because He was *not* literally heard and answered. He said, “If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me.” But the cup did *not* pass from Him! The better part of His prayer won the victory, and that was, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” You will be heard, too, if that is always the principal clause in your prayers. But you may not be heard by being delivered from the trouble. Even the prayer of faith is not always literally heard! God, sometimes, instead of taking away the sickness or the death, gives us Grace that we may profit by the sickness, or that we may triumph in the hour of death. That is better than being literally heard, but even the most believing prayer may not meet with a literal answer. He “was heard in that He feared.” Yet He died and you and I, in praying for ourselves, and praying for our friends, may pray an acceptable prayer and be heard—yet they may die, or we may die.

8. *Though He were a Son.*—Emphatically and above us all, “a Son,”

8. *Yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.* He was always obedient, but He had to learn *experimentally* what obedience meant, and He could not learn it by the things which He did—He had to learn it “by the things which He suffered”—and I believe that there are some of the most sanctified children of God who have been made so, by His Grace, through the things which they have suffered. We may not all suffer alike. We may not all need the same kind of suffering. But I question whether any of us can truly learn obedience except by the things which we suffer.

9. *And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.* “Being made perfect.” “What?” asks one, “did Christ need to be *made* perfect?” Not in His Nature, for He was always perfect in both His Divine and His Human Nature, but perfect as a Savior, perfect as a Sympathizer—above all, according to the context—perfect as a High Priest. “Being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.” Christ will not save those who refuse to obey Him, those who will not believe in Him. There must be

an obedient faith rendered unto Him, or else the virtue of His passion and death cannot come to us.

10. *Called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.* It is a glorious mark of our Lord Jesus that He was “called of God an High Priest.” He did not assume this office to Himself, but this high honor was laid upon Him by God Himself.

11, 12. *Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing you are dull of hearing. For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which are the first principles of the oracles of God.*—I hope it is not true of any of you, dear Friends, but it is true of many Christians that they learn very little to any purpose and always need to be going over the A B C of the Gospel. They never get into the classics, the deep things of God! They are afraid of the Doctrine of Election, of the Doctrine of the Eternal Covenant, and of the Doctrine of the Sovereignty of God, for these Truths of God are meant for men of full age, and these poor puny babes have not cut their teeth yet! They need some softer and more childlike food. Well, it is a mercy that they are children of God! It would be better, however, for them to grow so as to become teachers of others—“You have need that one teach you again which are the first principles of the oracles of God.”

12-14. *And are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the Word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.* Do not be frightened, you who have lately been brought into the Lord’s family! We are not yet going to feed you with meat! We shall be glad enough to serve you with milk for the present. At the same time, let us all be praying to the Lord to make us grow, that we may know more and *do* more, and *be* more what the Lord would have us to be! A child is a very beautiful object. An infant is one of the loveliest sights under Heaven, but if, after 20 years, your child were still an infant, it would be a dreadful trial to you. We must keep on growing till we come to the stature of men in Christ Jesus! God grant that we may do so, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—371, 509, 869.

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

OUR SYMPATHIZING HIGH PRIEST

NO. 1927

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 31, 1886,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplication, with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered and, being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.”
Hebrews 5:7-10.

THE Holy Spirit, in this chapter, reminds us that two things were necessary in a High Priest. First, he must be suitable for the men for whom he stood and next, he must be acceptable with God. “Every High Priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God.” He must be fit from both points of view, both man-ward and God-ward. Our Lord Jesus Christ was ordained of God from of old and did not, of Himself, assume the position of High Priest. The Prophets spoke of Him as the Messiah of God and Jehovah, Himself, declared, “You are a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.” When He came into the world, the Holy Spirit bore witness to His being the Son of the Highest. At His Baptism there came a Voice from Heaven saying, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” and that same Voice was thrice heard declaring the same fact. The Father has given further testimony to the mission of Christ, “in that He has raised Him from the dead,” and has caused Him to enter into the heavenly places on our behalf. Moreover, He has given Him a pledge that as Melchisedec, being both King and Priest, He shall sit at His right hand until He has made His enemies His footstool. Our Lord Jesus has been chosen, ordained and glorified as our “Great High Priest, that has passed into the heavens.” This is the groundwork of our comfort in our Lord Jesus, for we know that He is One with the Father and that all things are done by Him as the Messenger of the Covenant, the authorized Representative of Jehovah our God.

That is not the point to which I call your attention this morning—I would have you follow the text and consider *the pre-eminent suitability of our Lord Jesus to be a High Priest for us, viewed from the human side.* A

High Priest must be one “who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way; for that he, himself, also is compassed with infirmity.” He must be one who has learned compassion in the school of suffering, so that he can succor the afflicted. There is no learning sympathy except by suffering. It cannot be studied from a book, it must be written on the heart. You must go through the fire if you would have sympathy with others who tread the glowing coals. You must, yourself, bear the cross if you would feel for those whose life is a burden to them.

Beloved Friends, we live in a world of sin and sorrow and we are sinful and sorrowful—we need one who can put away our sin and become a sharer in our sorrow. If he cannot go with us through all the rough places of our pilgrimage, how can he be our guide? If he has never traveled in the night, himself, how can he whisper consolation to us in our darkest hours? We have a fully qualified High Priest in our Lord Jesus Christ—He is perfect in that capacity. I desire to speak of Him, this morning, in that light. Oh for help from on high, for I feel that it needs the Inspiration of the Holy One to enable a man to speak of Jesus as He should be spoken of. No careless utterance must attempt to describe the Great High Priest of our profession! It needs a perfect preacher to fully describe a perfect Redeemer and where is he to be found? To preach a crucified Savior in a crucified style is no easy task! I take it that a lip needs as much to be touched with a live coal from off the altar to speak of the lowly sympathy of Jesus as to describe His Glory. Of the two I had rather venture to speak of the Garden of Paradise than of the Garden of Gethsemane—apart from the help of the Holy Spirit. Oh that the Divine Instructor would direct our meditations at this time so that we may glorify Christ and may, with increased confidence, repose in Him!

I have this further objective, also—while trying to comfort the people of God, I would persuade others to approach our Great High Priest. Oh how I long that many of you who have, until now, never known the love of Christ, may now be touched with a sense of it and may be sweetly drawn to Him! By the very fact that He is able to sympathize with you in your griefs, I hope that those of you who are afflicted may be induced to draw near to Him. Oh that upon this spot and at this hour, you who have been halting and hesitating for years may at once find a shelter with the Compassionate One! He waits to give you everlasting comfort! Oh that you would believe in Him and enjoy it! We shall pray for this and look for it—and may God grant us our desires so that His Son, Jesus, may be glorified!

The great suitability of Christ for His work will be seen as we view Him in three Characters. Let us first consider Him as *a Suppliant*—this is set forth in the seventh verse—“Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared.”

Next we would view Him as *a Son*—“Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.” And then we shall close by regarding Him as *a Savior*—“He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.” Come, Holy Spirit, and take of the things of Christ and show them to us!

I. First, then, that we may see the suitability of our Lord to deal with us in our cares and sorrows, we shall view Him as A SUPPLIANT.

The text begins with a word which reveals *His weakness*—“Who in the days of His flesh.” Our blessed Lord was in such a condition that He pleaded out of weakness with the God who was able to save. When our Lord was compassed with the weakness of flesh, He was much in prayer. It would be an interesting exercise for the younger people to note all the times in which the Lord Jesus is said to have prayed. The occasions recorded are very numerous, but these are, no doubt, merely a few specimens of a far greater number. Jesus was habitually in prayer—He was praying, even, when His lips did not utter a sound. His heart was always in communion with the Great Father above. This is said to have been the case “in the days of His flesh.” This term is used to distinguish His life on earth from His former estate in Glory. From of old the Son of God dwelt with the Father, but He was not, then, a partaker of human nature, and the eternal ages were not “the days of His flesh.” Then He could not have entered into that intimate sympathy with us which He now exercises since He has been born at Bethlehem and has died at Calvary. “The days of His flesh” intend this mortal life—the days of His weakness, humiliation, labor and suffering. It is true that He wears our nature in Heaven, for He said to His disciples after His Resurrection, “Handle Me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have.” But yet we should not call the period of His exaltation at the right hand of the Father, “the days of His flesh.” He still prays—in fact He continually makes intercession for the transgressors. But it is in another style from that in which He prayed “in the days of His flesh”—

***“With cries and tears He offered up
His humble suit below,
But with authority He asks,
Enthroned in Glory now.”***

Among the days of His life on earth there were some which peculiarly deserved to be called “the days of His flesh”—days in which His feebler Nature pushed itself to the front. Then men saw less of His greatness as a Teacher and more of His suffering as Man. I should call that one of the days of His flesh when He went to Gethsemane and “was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.” He was very heavy because the shadow of His Cross fell upon Him with a denser darkness as He drew nearer to His death upon it. When the dread desertion by God, which was the center of His grief, began to startle Him and when men esteemed Him “stricken, smitten of God and afflicted,” then were, “the days of His flesh!” Prostrate

under the olives, pouring out His inmost soul in plaintive entreaties, even to a bloody sweat, you see your Lord a Suppliant in weakness—"in the days of His flesh."

Brothers and Sisters, I beseech you to think of our Lord's pleading, "in the days of His flesh," as a matter of fact. Do not dream of Him as though He were a phantom and of His prayers as if they were part of a mere show. He was a real Man and His prayers were as real as yours can be. Believe in Jesus as Man. You would be indignant at anyone who would diminish the Glory of His Godhead and most justly so, but oh, do not, yourself, take away from Him the truth of His Humanity! He was, in very deed, made flesh and dwelt among us! This was the case even when His Apostles beheld His Glory, "the Glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth!" We must get a firm grip of the true Humanity, or otherwise we lose the Sacrificial death, the Resurrection and all the rest—and the Brotherhood of our Lord, which is a grand source of consolation, also disappears. Remember that He who sits at the right hand of God was once here in the likeness of sinful flesh! He who shall shortly come to judge the quick and dead passed through a period of limitation, weakness, suffering, weariness since He was in human flesh. "The days of His flesh" were, to Him, days of poverty, sickness, weariness, reproach and temptation—though in Him was no sin, yet He was tempted and tried in all points like as we are. Inasmuch as He has passed through such days as these, He is fitted to be the High Priest of Believers who also are passing through the days of *their* flesh. Brothers and Sisters, we know too well that we are partakers of flesh and blood—and it is no mean comfort that our Lord Jesus, Himself, took part in the same!

In the days of His flesh, our Divine Lord felt *His necessities*. The words, "He offered up prayers and supplications," prove that He had many needs. Men do not pray and supplicate unless they have greater needs than this world can satisfy. Men work for what they can get by working, but pray for that which can by no other means be obtained. The Savior offered no petitions by way of mere form—His supplications arose out of an urgent sense of His need of heavenly aid. It is difficult to realize it, but so it is, that our Divine and innocent Savior placed Himself in such a condition for our sakes that His needs were manifold. Of course, as God, He could come under no necessity, but being Man, like ourselves, He did not permit the power of His Godhead to destroy the man-like weakness of the flesh! Therefore He endured such necessities as we do and resorted, as we must, to the one all-sufficient Source of supply, approaching His Father by prayer! He sought for blessings with prayers, He pleaded against evil with supplications. His approaches to God were many—both words are in the plural—"prayers and supplications"—and they were manifold in their character, for He presented prayers and supplications of all kinds. Espe-

cially in the Garden He cried again and again, "If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me."

Now, trite as the observation may be, yet it is one that needs to be often repeated, that our Savior did really pray. When you, in your heaviness, shut the door of your chamber and kneel down in prayer—when that prayer gathers strength and you fall flat upon your face in agony—when you cry and weep before the Most High, under a sinking sense of need, it is hard for you to think that Jesus ever did the same! But He did. He asked as really as you ask. He implored and besought, He entreated and wrestled even as you must. He knows that solitary place on Carmel where Elijah bowed his head between his knees and cried seven times unto the Lord! He knows the turning of the face to the wall and the weeping of the sorrowful eyes, even as Hezekiah knew them! He can have pity upon you in your loneliness, your distraction, your apparent desertion, your sinking of heart, your sorrowfulness even unto death. Look to Him, then, in your night of weeping and be of good cheer!

Those of you who are only now beginning to pray, I would encourage you to remember Jesus as your Example of praying. If your prayers have but few words in them and are mainly made up of crying and tears, yet in this they are like those of your Savior and so you may hope that they will be accepted. If you are afraid that your prayers are shut out from Heaven, remember how the Savior complains in the 22nd Psalm, "O My God, I cry in the daytime but You hear not; and in the night season, and am not silent." He was heard in the end, but, at the first, He seemed to plead in vain. Jesus prayed under discouragements—what He did, Himself, He will help you to do. He knows what the agony of prayer means and He will cast a Brother's eyes on you when, in the bitterness of your repentance, you seek the Lord. How clear it is that we have a suitable High Priest, of tender heart and loving soul!

Further, let us see how like the Son of God was to us in *His intensity* of prayer. I wish I knew how to preach upon a theme so sacred. One had need take his shoes off of his feet upon this doubly-consecrated ground. The intensity of His prayer was such that our Lord expressed Himself in "crying and tears." The Evangelists do not record His tears, but the Holy Spirit, here, reveals what human eyes could not have seen. He pleaded with God until His pent-up grief demanded audible utterance and He began to cry! He said, so that the disciples heard Him a stone's cast away, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me." His voice grew louder as the stream of His sorrows forced a channel for itself! There was great strength in His cries—there was "strong crying"—there was deep, plaintive, touching, heart-breaking crying. "If it is possible—if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me."

We may be thankful that we did not hear the cries of that sore distress which fell upon our great Substitute. Cries are weak things, but His was

strong crying—strong with the heart of the Great Father. When He ceased His crying and was silent, His tears took up the strain. The Lord heard a voice in His tears and who shall say which spoke the more loudly, His crying or His tears? When a Man so courageous, so patient as Jesus, betakes Himself to cries and tears, we may be sure that the sorrow of His heart has passed all bounds. His soul within Him must have been bursting with grief! We know it was so by another sign, for the life-blood forgot to course in its usual channels and overflowed its banks in a *sweat of blood*. I do not think, as some do, that it was merely a sweat such as is common to labor. I believe it was a sweat of *blood*, or the expression would not have been used, “as it were. great drops of blood.” A sweat of blood has now and then been seen upon men in great and fatal alarm, but the Savior’s was more amazing than any of these cases, for so profuse was this bloody sweat that there was, as it were, great drops of it “falling down to the ground.” This was prayer, indeed—supplication which exhausted His whole Manhood! Body, soul and spirit were now upon the rack of anguish and upon the strain of agony! He pleaded with God after a more piteous, painful, terrible, and powerful sort than you and I will ever attain.

But, Brothers and Sisters, here is the point—if it comes to your case to be in a dark, dark hour and to be praying with the heavens like brass above your head. And if you are obliged to cry aloud and weep your soul away, then remember Jesus in the days of His flesh! Usually it may be you are very quiet and, perhaps, wordless in prayer. But now you cannot refrain yourself—as Joseph cried so that the Egyptians in the house of Pharaoh heard him—so do you give vent to your agony! Be not ashamed of your weakness—your Lord did so before you. Strong man as you are, you weep like a child. Do not apologize lest you seem to accuse your Savior! Behold, you are not alone! Jesus is passing through the deeps with you. Can’t you see the blood-stained footprints of your Lord? Your utmost anguish is known to Him. Fear not! Commit your way unto the Lord, even in this worst part of it. Trust Him when the iron enters into your soul. Leave all in His experienced hands.

You poor souls who have never as yet trusted my Lord, are you not attracted to Him? If He suffered all this, can He not meet your case? By all this He was made perfect as a High Priest—oh, can you not trust Him? Is He not able to enter into your misery? Oh, darkened hearts, is there not light here for you? When you pray with anguish, Jesus perfectly understands the situation. Oh, you that loathe yourselves! Oh, you that wish you had never been born! Oh, you daughters of melancholy and children of despair—can you not see, in the marred visage of your Redeemer, a reason for trusting Him? Since from His lips you hear strong crying and from His eyes you see showers of tears, you may well feel that His is a sympathetic spirit to whom you may run in the hour of danger, even as the chicks seek the wings of the hen!

Still, to proceed with the text, we have seen our Lord's needs and the intensity of His prayer, now note His understanding in prayer. He prayed "unto Him that was able to save Him from death." The expression is startling! The Savior prayed to be saved! In His direst woe He prayed thoughtfully and with a clear apprehension of the Character of Him to whom He prayed. It is a great help in devotion to pray intelligently, knowing well the Character of God to whom you are speaking. Jesus was about to die and, therefore, the aspect under which He viewed the great Father was as "Him that was able to save Him from death." This passage may be read in two ways. It may mean that He would be saved from actually dying if it could be done consistently with the glorifying of the Father. Or it may mean that He pleaded to be saved from death, though He actually descended into it. The word may be rendered either *from* or *out of*. The Savior viewed the great Father as able to preserve Him in death, from the power of death, so that He should triumph on the Cross—and also as able to bring Him up, again, from among the dead.

Remember how He said in the Psalm—"You will not leave My soul in Hell, neither will You suffer Your Holy One to see corruption." Jesus had faith in God concerning death and prayed according to that faith. This brings our blessed Lord very near to us—He prayed in faith even as we do! He believed in the power of God to save Him from death and even when cast down with fear, He did not let go His hold on God! He pleaded just as you and I should plead, impelled by fear and encouraged by faith! Let us imitate His intensity, His intelligence and His faith. He has condescended to set us an example which we can copy—He has come into living companionship with us in our most urgent supplications. He has had His Jabbok. Therefore, O you seed of Jacob, trust in Him!

It will further help you if I now call your attention to *His fear*. I believe our old Bibles give us a correct translation, much better than the Revised Version, although much can be said for the latter, "With strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared." That is to say, He had a fear, a natural and not a sinful fear—and from this fear He was delivered by the strength brought to Him from Heaven by the angel. God has implanted in all of us the love of life and we cannot part from it without a pang—our Lord felt a natural dread of death. If it is said that the Savior was too courageous to know the fear of death, I beg to remark that He was the more courageous because He so calmly encountered that which He feared. Martyrs have died without the preceding dread which fell upon our Lord, but remember that the help of God which sustained *them* was taken away from Jesus! And consider, also, that His death was special and differed from that of all others of our race, for in that death there was condensed the penalty due to sin.

To the righteous man, death is not now a penalty, but a mode of going Home—to Jesus it was, in the fullest sense, the penalty of death for hu-

man guilt! He saw before Him, as we do not, all the pains and torments of death—He knew what He had to bear and foretasted in the Garden, the smart involved in being a Surety for sinful man. The vials of God’s wrath were about to be poured upon Him and Jehovah was heard saying, “Awake, O sword”—as if it had never awoke before—“Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd and against the Man that is My Fellow, says the Lord of Hosts.” He saw the abyss into which He must fall! If no dread had come upon Him, why, I think the very essence of the atoning suffering would have been absent! Fear must take hold upon Him—not that of a coward, but that of one terribly oppressed! His soul was “exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.” So when you tremble after sipping your cup of bitterness, think of Jesus trembling, too. When you, in entering into the valley of death’s shade, feel yourself greatly disturbed at the prospect before you, think of Jesus who was heard in His fear! Come, you that fear, and find help in One who also feared! Borrow courage from One who, out of fear, prayed Himself into victory! Think of Him who cried unto God, “Be not You far from Me, O Lord: O my Strength, hasten You to help Me!” Trust your souls with Him who, in the days of His flesh, cried out in anguish, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

But then notice another thing in the text, namely, *His success* in prayer which also brings Him near to us. He was heard “in that He feared.” O my Soul, to think that it should be said of your Lord that He was heard, even as you, a poor suppliant, are heard! Yet the cup did not pass from Him, neither was the bitterness thereof in the least abated. When we are compelled to bear our thorn in the flesh and receive no other answer than, “My Grace is sufficient for you,” let us see our fellowship with Jesus and Jesus’ fellowship with us! Jesus came forth from His agony saying, “You have heard Me from the horns of the wild oxen! I will declare Your name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise You.” Oh what a Brother Christ is, since He, too, cried and wept and had power with God and prevailed! When God has sent from above and drawn us out of many waters, the Lord Jesus is there to sing with us and rejoice with us—the constant companion of all our experiences. Can we not trust Him? Brothers and Sisters, if Jesus rises with us to the highest note of the scale and if He also comes down with us to the deepest bass that the human voice can reach, then we may conclude that all along He is in unison with us in all the intervening notes! So let us, today, feel that Jesus is like ourselves in all but our sin and that we may fearlessly come and trust Him as we would trust a father or a brother, or as a fond wife confides in the husband of her love.

II. Let us now spend a few moments in beholding our Lord as A SON. His prayers and pleas were those of a son with a father—“though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.”

The Sonship of our dear Savior is well attested. The Lord declared this in the second Psalm—"You are My Son; this day have I begotten You." Thrice, as we have already noticed, did the Voice out of the excellent Glory proclaim this truth and Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the Resurrection from the dead." Yes, He that cried, He that wept, He that pleaded until He came to a bloody sweat and He from whom the cup could not pass till He had drained it to the dregs, was, nevertheless, the only-begotten Son of God! So, my Brothers and Sisters, when you are put to great grief, do not doubt your sonship! What son is there whom the father chastens not? When you are in heaviness through manifold trials, do not listen to the insinuations of the enemy—"If you are the Son of God." Yes, if you should have to ask, "Why have You forsaken me?" do not doubt your sonship! Your faith should not be founded upon your own enjoyments, but upon the promise and the faithfulness of God! You are as much a son or daughter when you walk in the dark as when you rejoice in the light of Jehovah's Countenance!

Being a Son, the text goes on to tell us that *He had to learn obedience.* Is not that an amazing thing? As Man, our Savior had to learn! He was of a teachable spirit, and the Lord, Himself, instructed Him. All God's children go to school, for it is written, "All your children shall be taught of the Lord." The lesson is practical—we learn to obey. Our Lord took kindly to this lesson—He always did the things which pleased the Father. This is our time of schooling and discipline and we are learning to obey, which is the highest and best lesson of all. How near this brings our Lord to us, that He should be a Son and should have to learn! We go to school to Christ and with Christ—and so we feel His fitness to be our compassionate High Priest.

Jesus must *learn by suffering.* As swimming is only to be learned in the water, so is obedience only learned by actually doing and suffering the Divine will. Obedience cannot be learned at the university unless it is at the College of Experience. You must suffer the Commandment to have its way with you and then it will educate you. We think, when we are first converted, that we have learned obedience and assuredly we have, in a measure, received the spirit by which we obey, but no man knows obedience till he has actually obeyed, both in an active and a passive sense. Even the Lord Jesus must come under the Law of God, honor the Law and suffer the Law, or else He cannot learn obedience. Who knows what it is to obey God to the fullest until he has had to lay aside his own will in the most tender and painful respects? To plead with God for the life of a beloved child and yet to see that dear child die—but to kiss the rod—this is to learn obedience! To get alone and plead with God for the life of a husband or wife and agonize with Him for the gift—and then to be compelled to weep at the new-made grave, but yet to say, by His Grace, "The Lord gave,

and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord”—this is to learn obedience! Our Lord, as Man, was made to know, by His sufferings, what full obedience meant—His was practical, experimental, personal acquaintance with obedience—and in all this He comes very near to us. A Son learning obedience—that is our Lord. May we not joyfully walk with Him in all the rough paths of duty? May we not safely lean on the arm of One who knows every inch of the way?

The Lord Jesus Christ learned this obedience to perfection. The text speaks of Him as “being made perfect.” As a High Priest He is perfect because He has suffered to the end, all that was necessary to make Him like His brethren. He has read the book of obedience quite through. He was not spared one heavy stroke of Divine discipline. You and I never go to the end of grief—we are spared the utmost depth—but not so our Lord. The Lord sets us a service proportioned to our strength, but what a service was exacted of the Son of God! Ours is a lightened burden, but the Well-Beloved was not spared the lest ounce of crushing sorrow. “For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

Our Lord learned by suffering much with prayer and supplication. His was no unsanctified sorrow. His griefs were baptized in prayer. It cost Him cries and tears to learn the lesson of His sufferings. He never suffered without prayer, nor prayed without suffering. Supplication and suffering went hand in hand and, in this way, our Lord became perfected as the High Priest of our profession.

The practical point I am trying to drive at in my poor way is this—let us trust ourselves with Him who, as a Son, knows the training and discipline of sons. Being yourself a son, look up and see what the elder Brother endured and know that, “in that He has suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” You who are afraid that you never will be the children of God, come and hear your Savior cry as He rises from prayer, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Sons of men, why do you wander? Why not come to Him who is made like yourselves? Which way are you looking? Look to Him that suffered in your place—and suffered both as a Suppliant and a Son! If you have never trusted Him before, I think that you should begin this morning, now that you see His fellowship with you, His sympathy with you. I do not, at this time, set Him forth to you in His Power and Glory—that I will do on another occasion—but I bring Him before you in His weakness and humiliation, hoping, thereby, to attract to Him the poor and needy who need such a Helper.

III. Time fails me and, therefore, we can do no more than spend a brief time in beholding the Lord Jesus as A SAVIOR. It is to this end that He pleaded as a Suppliant and learned obedience as a Son.

As a Savior He is perfect. Being made perfect through suffering, He is fully able to discharge His office. Nothing is lacking in the Character and Person of Christ in order to His being able to save to the uttermost. He is a Savior and a great one. You are wholly lost, but Jesus is perfectly able to save. You are sorely sick, but Jesus is perfectly able to heal. You have gone, perhaps, to the extreme of sin—He has gone to the extreme of Atonement. In every office essential to our salvation, Jesus is perfect. Nothing is lacking in Him in any point. However difficult your case may seem, He is equal to it. Made perfect by suffering, He is able to meet the intricacies of your trials and to deliver you in the most complicated emergency.

Therefore *He is the Author of salvation.* What a suggestive word—the *Author* of salvation! Author! How expressive! He is the Cause of salvation; the Originator; the Worker; the Producer of salvation! Salvation begins with Christ; salvation is carried on by Christ; salvation is completed by Christ! If a man is the author of a book and not a mere compiler, it is all his own writing. Salvation has Jesus for its Author! Do any of you wish to write a little of the book, yourselves? Then Jesus would not be the author of it—it would be Jesus and you. But because our Lord has assumed our Nature and entered into fellowship with us, He has become the Author of salvation and we must not intrude into His office. Let the Author of salvation complete His own work. Come and accept the salvation which He is waiting to give to you. He has finished it and you cannot add to it—it only remains for you to *receive* it.

Observe that *it is eternal salvation*—“The author of *eternal* salvation.” Jesus does not save us, today, and leave us to perish tomorrow! He knows what is in man and so He has prepared nothing less than eternal salvation for man. A salvation which was not eternal would turn out to be no salvation at all. Those whom Jesus saved, are saved, indeed! Man can be the author of temporary salvation, but only He who is “a High Priest forever” can bring in a salvation which endures forever. This reminds us of the word of the Prophet—“Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.” Surely I know that whatever the Lord does shall be forever. An eternal salvation is worth having, is it not? Jesus does not give a salvation which will let you fall from Grace and perish, after all, but a salvation which will keep you to the end—though you should live to be as old as Methuselah! Salvation *to* eternity and *through* eternity is provided by Jesus. Oh, love the Lord, all you His saints, since by His stooping to be perfected as a High Priest, He has been able to bring in for you such a salvation as this!

Furthermore, inasmuch as He has learned obedience and become a perfect High Priest, *His salvation is wide in its range*, for it is unto “all them that obey Him.” Not to some few, not to a little select company here and there, but “unto all them that obey Him.” One of His first Command-

ments is “Repent.” Will you obey Him in that and quit your sin? Then He is the Author of eternal salvation for you! His great command is, “Believe and live.” Will you trust Him, then? For if you do, He is the Author of eternal salvation for *you*. He whom I have tried to describe with all my heart—this blessed sympathetic fellow-sufferer of ours—He is willing and able to save all of you who will obey Him at this moment by trusting Him!

Come, my Hearers, let Jesus be your Master and your Lord! Come, you runaways, return to Him! Come, you castaways, hope in Him! Be His, for He has made Himself yours. Seek Him, for He has sought you. Obey Him, for He obeyed for you. He is “the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.”

Note, that *He is all this forever*, for He is “a Priest forever.” If you could have seen Him when He came from Gethsemane, do you think you could have trusted Him? Oh, trust Him today, for He is “called of God to be an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec,” and that order of Melchisedec is an everlasting and perpetual Priesthood! He is able, today, to plead for you, able, today, to put away your sins! Oh that God the Holy Spirit may lead many of you to come and obey Him at once!

A heavy atmosphere fills this Tabernacle this morning, making it difficult to speak and more difficult to hear, but yet, if some sudden news came to you, as the burning of your house, or the death of a dear child, you would shake off all lethargy and wake up from all dullness and heaviness of spirit! And, therefore, I claim your liveliest thoughts for the solemn subject which I have introduced to you. Think much of the Son of God, the Lord of Heaven and earth, who, for our salvation, loved and lived and served and suffered! He that made man was made Man! As a Suppliant, with cries and tears He pleaded with God—even He before whom the hosts of Heaven bow adoringly! He has still that tenderness to which He was trained by His suffering! He bids you come to Him now! You that love Him, approach Him, now, and read the love which is engraved on His heart! You who have not, until now, known Him, come boldly to Him and trust Him who has come so near to you. The Man is very near akin to us! Behold how He loves us! He bends down to us with eternal salvation in His hands! Believe in Him and live! God grant it! Amen.

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THE EDUCATION OF SONS OF GOD NO. 2722

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, APRIL 14, 1901.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 10, 1880.

*“Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience
by the things which He suffered.”
Hebrews 5:8.*

WERE you ever in a new trouble, one which was so strange that you felt that a similar trial had never happened to you and, moreover, you dreamt that such a temptation had never assailed anybody else? I should not wonder if that was the thought of your troubled heart. And did you ever walk out upon that lonely desert island upon which you were wrecked and say, “I am alone—*alone*—ALONE—nobody was ever here before me”? And did you suddenly pull up short as you noticed, in the sand, the footprints of a man? I remember right well passing through that experience—and when I looked, lo, it was not merely the footprints of a man that I saw, but I thought I knew whose feet had left those imprints. They were the marks of One who had been crucified, for there was the print of the nails. So I thought to myself, “If He has been here, it is no longer a desert island. As His blessed feet once trod this wilderness-way, it blossoms now like the rose and it becomes to my troubled spirit as a very garden of the Lord!”

My objective, in this discourse, will be to try to point out the footprints of Jesus in the sands of sorrow so that others of the children of God may have their hearts lifted up within them while they observe that “though He were a Son, yet learned He,” as well as the rest of us who are in the Lord’s family, “obedience by the things which He suffered.”

I. I ask your attention, first of all, to that which, I doubt not, you would have observed in the text without any help from me, namely, that OUR REDEEMER’S SONSHIP DID NOT EXEMPT HIM FROM SUFFERING.

“Though He were a Son.” It is put as if this might have been a case where the rod of the household could have been spared. That there should be suffering for enemies, that there should be sorrow for rebels against God is natural and proper, but one might have thought that He would have spared His own Son and that, in His case, there would be no learning of obedience by the things which He suffered. But, according to the text, Sonship did not exempt the Lord Jesus Christ from suffering. I want you to notice that, *in His case, the Sonship was very emphatic.* It

was a relationship which was enjoyed by Him by Nature. He was the Son of God before the worlds were made, or time began. We know not how it was, neither may we attempt to explain the Doctrine of the Eternal Filiation, but, assuredly, as long as there was a Father, there was a Son—and Jesus Christ has always been “the Son of the Highest.” Yet, though He were a Son, when He came and took upon Himself our nature and appeared on earth, He was not exempted from learning obedience by the things which He suffered. In person He was august—He was the Heir of all things, the King of all kings, the King’s Son as well as King, Himself—and yet, notwithstanding the loftiness of His Nature and the unspeakable majesty of His rank, He “learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” He was *the* Son of God in a very special sense even by His earthly birth, for the angel said to Mary, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you: therefore that Holy Thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God.”

You and I are the children of men, but Christ was the Son of God. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and nothing better—and the best of parents have only fleshly, carnal children. There is not a word of Scripture to support the novel notion that some children are born so good that they do not need regeneration or conversion. I do not wonder that to patch up the figment of infant sprinkling, that lie should have been forged—and it is nothing but a lie—there is not an atom of truth at the back of it! Our Lord said to Nicodemus, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” And Paul reminded the Ephesian Christians that they “were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” Men are not the children of God by any universal fatherhood—they must come to be so by being begotten again “unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” This is not with us a matter of nature, but the gift of Grace. “As many as received Him, to them gave He power (the right or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” But our Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God by birth and He is spotless in His Nature. There is no corruption, no bias towards evil, no original sin, no taint of birth—nothing of the kind. He is the second Adam, but He has not participated in the evil of the first Adam. In Him there was nothing that even the prince of this world could discover with the keenest glance of his malicious eyes. And yet, though He was, in this respect, God’s Son above us all, born absolutely pure, “yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.”

Further, *Christ was always God’s well-beloved Son*. Let us never forget that He was always a Son without any fault, concerning whom the Father’s testimony always was, “This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” We who have been made by Grace the sons of God, are yet, alas, forgetful children, disobedient children, naughty children that deserve the rod. But He never transgressed His Father’s command at any time. The Law of God was always in His heart and never did He turn aside from the path of right. His walk was perfect in all respects—no fault could be found with Him and yet, though He was a perfect Son, a

well-beloved Son, a Son who caused His Father no anger and no anxiety by anything that He did—He did not escape the rod. He must smart, must bleed, must even die! He must endure the utmost that human nature can endure. God had one Son without sin, but He never had a son without sorrow. God had one Son without any taint in His Nature, but He never had a Son without the smart which all nature feels. Even with the Son whose Sonship was of a far loftier kind than ours, the Son in whom was no imperfection whatever, it was still true that He “learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” And we may rest assured that it will be so with us, also.

Further, *Christ was a Son whom God intended to honor beyond all His other sons.* After He had tarried awhile, here, and descended lower and lower till He came even to the Cross and to the tomb, yet God had decreed to lift Him up high above all the sons of men and to give Him a name which is above every name, and to set Him on the Throne at His own right hand, that before Him principalities, powers and every living thing should bow. Yet, though He was destined to such a place of honor, in the meantime He must learn obedience by the things He had to suffer! Those many crowns which were to adorn His brow could not exempt that head from a crown of thorns—no, they entailed it. That scepter, the emblem of His universal sovereignty, could not keep His hands from the nails. No, those hands must bear the print of the nails before they could finally wield that scepter. Though He lived such a life as He did, continually going about doing good and, though His life now is glorious beyond all conception, yet between those two lives He must die—and He must be able to say of Himself, “I am He that lives, and was dead and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of Hell and of death.”

Now, as there could be, even for Christ, no exemption from suffering, I gather that *there will be no exemption for any other child of God.* If the Lord has been pleased, in great mercy, to make us His children, to let us know that we are His children, and to give us a sweet sense of our adoption into His family, we must not, therefore, conclude that we shall never suffer again. Oh, no! Our adoption does not take away from us the rod of the Covenant. You may not say, because you are certain that the Lord loves you, that, therefore, He will not allow you to be tried—that is clearly contrary to the Scriptures. He Himself says, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” And Paul wrote to the Hebrews, “Whom the Lord loves, He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.” Do not go upon a wrong tack, lest, by-and-by, you have to turn back and, perhaps, to pierce yourself through with many unnecessary sorrows. Do not say, “I may hope that I shall escape from trial because, through Divine Grace, my character has been kept clean.” Dear Friend, look well to your goings, for you are on a slippery path!

Pray that you may be perfect in every good work to do the Lord’s will, but even if you are, do not conclude that you shall, therefore, have a life of ease. Your Master’s footsteps were surer than yours are, yet the stones were sharp to His dear feet. He was purer in heart and conversation than you are, yet many arrows pierced His soul and reproach broke His heart.

God may, in His mercy, give you a long exemption from any severe affliction, but that will not be because your character is better than that of others, for it is written, "Every branch that bears fruit, He purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit." If there are some others that He does not prune, He is sure to deal thus with the fruit-bearing branches, so, perhaps, the more pure you are in your life and the more you are doing for the honor of His name, the more you may feel the cutting of that sharp knife which takes away that excess of wood to which we are apt to run—

***"Did I meet no trials here,
No chastisement by the way,
Might I not, with reason, fear
I should prove a castaway?"***

Do not imagine that any amount of prayer will have the effect of staving off all trouble, for surely never did anyone pray like our Lord Jesus Christ did! He was a Son who held much communion with His Father—

***"Cold mountains and the midnight air
Witnessed the fervor of His prayer."***

His agony in Gethsemane was a time of the mightiest prayer that was ever heard in Heaven, yet it was followed very closely by His death upon the Cross! You may abound in prayer, in thanksgiving, in patience and yet, for all that, all God's waves and billows may roll over you and you may be brought into the depths of soul-trouble.

Neither may you conclude, because you enjoy much of the Divine favor and love, that therefore you will be screened from sorrow. You have, perhaps, dear Friend, been honored in the Church of God and there are many who love you for your works' sake, yet you may not, therefore, conclude that you will be without the rod. No, you may be certain that you will have it if nobody else does! You have been rendered very useful in your own family and have seen your own children grow up in the fear of the Lord. That is a great blessing, but do not get into a fool's paradise and suppose that God has set a hedge about you so that the devil cannot come in to attack you. Remember that where Satan sees the hedge, he likes to try to break it down—and the case of Job has been a type of what has happened to many others. Their children have been all round them and God has greatly prospered them and, therefore, for that very reason, they have been the objects of Satan's most malicious regard—and, by-and-by, they have had to feel that the Lord tries the righteous—and that He puts the pure gold into the furnace, that He places the wheat on the threshing floor and treads out the precious grain. And that He does not leave those whom He loves to suffer by perpetual prosperity, as fine silver and gold would canker and corrupt if left to themselves.

So I leave that point with you, dear Friends. The Sonship of our blessed Lord and Savior did not screen Him from suffering, therefore we cannot expect that our sonship, however clearly it may be proven and whatever honor it may have brought to us, will screen us from sorrow and suffering.

II. My second thought is, perhaps, more pleasant than the former one, though, indeed, the first is like Samson's dead lion, full of honey to those who know how to get at it. The second lesson I learn from the text is that

CHRIST'S SUFFERING DOES NOT MAR HIS SONSHIP, for, though He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, yet He was a Son all the while. Ah, and as much a Son in His deepest sorrow as He was before the Eternal Throne when every angel bowed before Him and delighted to do Him homage. His sufferings never affected His Sonship—He was still, always, as He must be forever and ever, the Son of God!

First, *His poverty did not disprove His Sonship*. Our blessed Lord was here in deep poverty. He said, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head." Yet He was the Son of God for all that! And you, dear Friend, may be poorly clad, and worn out by toil. You may not know where you will get shoes to cover your feet. You may be going home to a miserable, ill-furnished room and, as you look about you, you may feel as if you could say with Job, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return," for you seem to have nothing left. But, Beloved, if you are a child of God, your poverty does not affect that relationship. He who loves the Lord when in rags is as much the child of God as he will be when he shall put on the white raiment and stand among the shining ones above. "The Lord knows them that are His" as much in their rags as in their robes.

Next, *Christ's temptations did not affect His Sonship*. You remember how He was tempted by the devil. I will not dwell on the other temptations He had to endure, but there were the three in the desert. Satan knows how to tempt us and he usually begins at the most favorable moment for his evil purpose. When our Lord was hungry, Satan came to Him and tempted Him to turn stones into bread. Did you ever notice that when you are hungry, Satan comes to you? He has a way of trying to strike us when we are down, the old coward that he is! He never gives us a fair opportunity of fighting with him. He takes every mean advantage that he possibly can. So, when our Lord was faint with hunger, then Satan came to Him and had the impudence to tempt Him in three ways, each of the three comprehending various forms of temptation. In the wilderness, Christ was tempted in all points like as we are, yet He was without sin, there, as well as everywhere else.

But do you think that He was not a child of God because He was tempted? I want some of you to take this thought home to yourselves. When the devil was standing there and saying to Christ, "If You are the Son of God," was there really any doubt about His Sonship? No. The answers which Jesus was giving to the tempter were among the strongest proofs that He was, indeed, the Son of God, for no one else could have answered the fiend as He answered him. Now, dear Friend, don't you ever say, "Because I am so much tempted, I cannot be a child of God." Why, a child of God may be tempted to suicide, for Satan said to our Lord, when he had set Him on a pinnacle of the Temple, "If You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down." A child of God may be tempted even to worship the devil, for Jesus Christ was the Son of God when Satan said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You will fall down and worship me." Yet all those temptations were in vain, for there was in His heart no tinder which the Satanic sparks could ignite. He was still the Son of God!

So you, poor tempest-tossed, devil-driven heir of Heaven, need not be dismayed, for the tempter's malice cannot destroy your sonship any more than it destroyed your Lord's!

Next, *Christ's endurance of slander did not jeopardize His Sonship*. Our Lord, in addition to being poor and tempted, was shamefully slandered. They said—only think of it—they said that He was “a gluttonous Man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.” Yet this slander never made Him cease to be the Son of God—all the venom that they spat from their black mouths could not affect His Sonship in the least! They went so far as to say, “He casts out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils,” as if He were in league with the arch-fiend! Oh, how could their foul hearts conceive such a thing? How dared their false lips utter such a calumny? It did not, however, hurt Him—He was just as much the Son of God as ever. Though they mocked Him even in His dying agonies, yet their jests and jeers did not tear Him from His Father's heart nor lead Him to question His Sonship.

And I want you, who, perhaps, have been cruelly slandered and have had all manner of evil spoken against you falsely for Christ's name's sake, to feel that, notwithstanding all that may be said, the Lord knows them that are His and He can see their beauties through the mud with which the world spatters them and, in due time, He will clear their character of all that is now laid to their charge. Our Lord Jesus does not think any the worse of His people because of what is said against them. But He says to them, “Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.”

Further, *the desertion of all Christ's friends did not invalidate His Sonship*. Our blessed Master found the man who had eaten bread with Him lifting up his heel against Him. Judas betrayed Him, Peter denied that he knew Him, John and all the rest of the Apostles forsook Him and fled. If we have to endure such painful experiences, we are very apt, at such times, to begin to say, “Have all these good men turned against me—those who used to pray with me, who walked to the house of God with me—do they all give me the cold shoulder and all believe ill reports against me? Surely, then, I cannot be a child of God.” Ah, my dear Friend! You may be none the less dear to the heart of God, none the less accepted in the Beloved though all this should come upon you! It is a very bitter thing to have to bear if you have walked in uprightness and kept your footsteps from the way of the destroyer, but your Master had to bear it before you—and His Sonship was not affected by it, nor will yours be.

Even the felon's death on the Cross cast no doubt upon Christ's Sonship. Crucifixion was the most shameful and disgraceful mode of execution then practiced, yet He was the Son of God even upon the Cross! Did not the centurion, who was on duty there, say of Him, “Truly this was the Son of God”? And you and I know that He was never more seen to be the Son of God than when He surrendered Himself to His Father's will that

He might bear our sins in His own body on the tree, being made a curse for us, as it is written, "Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree." Well, now, if it should ever come to pass that a child of God should die under reproach. If wicked men should put him to a death of shame and his name should be cast out as evil, that will not mar his sonship in the least! No, I think that God never had any children that were more precious in His sight than those who died at the stake or the block for Him! How fair their faces must have looked to Him when they were scorched with the flames! Such love as theirs which led them cheerfully to burn to death—and none of us can imagine what the pain of that form of martyrdom must have been—the love which enabled them to rejoice in God, even then, must have been most acceptable to their Lord!

Do not let us think, then, that any degree of poverty, or pain, or temptation, or slander, or shame, or even death, itself, can affect the sonship of one who is really a child of God. Let us lay hold of this sweet reflection and never let it go. Thus we have seen that Christ's Sonship did not exempt Him from suffering, but that His suffering did not mar His Sonship.

III. So I follow with my third observation, which is, that OBEDIENCE IS A THING WHICH HAS TO BE LEARNED EVEN BY SONS. Though Jesus was a Son, yet He learned obedience. As God, our Savior knew everything. As God, however, He did not obey. It was in His complex Character as our Mediator that He learned to obey.

Perhaps some of you are asking, "But why can we not obey without learning obedience?" The reason is, first, *because obedience has to be learned experimentally*. If a man is to thoroughly learn a trade, he must be apprenticed to it. A soldier, sitting at home and reading books, will not learn the deadly art of war. He must go to the barracks, the camp and the field of battle if he is to win victories and become a veteran. The dry land sailor who never went in a boat would not know much about navigation, study hard as he might—he must go to sea to be a sailor. So, obedience is a trade to which a man must be apprenticed until he has learned it, for it is not to be known in any other way. Even our blessed Lord could not have fully learned obedience by the observation in others of such an obedience as He had personally to render, for there was no one from whom He could thus learn.

"Why," somebody says, "He might have learned obedience from the angels, who do God's commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His Word." Ah, but angels had never suffered! They have not bodies like ours, full of infirmities. And that kind of passive obedience, which our Savior had mainly to render, is not required of them. Angels could not be "obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross," so that our Lord Jesus could not see in them such an obedience as He had covenanted to render on behalf of His people when He engaged to stand in their place, and to keep the Law of God which they could not keep. He could not learn obedience by observation—He must learn it by experience. What was to be done, what was to be suffered—He must learn by doing it and suffering it.

It was in the doing of it that He became actually, personally, experimentally acquainted with what was meant by perfect obedience to the will of God. And He did it, Brothers and Sisters. He went right through with that lesson until He had learned obedience. He was getting near to the end of His great task when He said, "Not as I will, but as You will." But He had fully learned it when He said, "It is finished!" He had come to the last line of His lesson—He knew it thoroughly. He had learned obedience. He had to learn obedience in order that He might save us, for it was God's "righteous Servant" who was to "justify many."

Why have you and I, dear Friends, to learn obedience? *Because there is no way of obtaining true happiness but by obedience.* Sin always has sorrow at the tail of it. Happiness is obedience and obedience is happiness. If we do the will of the Lord thoroughly, then are we delivered from all evil, and enter into the joy of our Lord. We also have to learn obedience because there could be no Heaven without it. We hope to go on obeying our Lord forever and ever. Up yonder, in the Heaven of glorified spirits, there is perfect obedience to the will of God—and you and I expect to go there, so we need to learn the music here until we know it and can join the choirs above without creating discord. We are going through our practice and rehearsals now. It takes a great deal of time and patience to teach even some Christian people obedience, for so many of them like to be masters rather than servants. There are some bodies of professing Christians who give no heed to Paul's injunction, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account."

Church discipline and the duties of the pastoral office, they ignore, though they are clearly enjoined in the New Testament. They all like to be masters and everybody must have his say—but as to submission to authority, they will not hear of it! There are some people who would be excellent Christians if Christianity consisted in having their own way and gaining honor for themselves, but as to making themselves the servants of others for Christ's sake, or watching over others for their good—and being content to be made of no reputation in order that other people might be lifted up—they do not go in for that sort of thing! Clearly, they have not learned obedience.

I fear that we have, none of us, learnt it as we ought—we are too masterful, too big, too proud. We cannot say, with David, "My soul is even as a weaned child." Many of us are more like a weaning child, crying, fretting, rebelling. We have not laid all our wishes at Jesus' feet and said to Him, "Not my will, but Yours be done." But it is essential that we should come to this point—we would not be fit for Heaven if we did not, for all the spirits before the Throne of God bow submissively to the will of God. They have neither wish nor desire apart from God's will. They have no wandering ambitions, no selfish aims. Their every thought is brought into captivity to the will of God. Let us pray for this—"Your will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven. And let it be done in our hearts, good Lord, or else we shall never be fit to enter there."

IV. My last observation upon the text is this—THE OBEDIENCE WE HAVE BEEN SPEAKING OF IS NOT TO BE LEARNED EXCEPT BY SUFFERING. Though Christ was the Son of God, yet even He learned obedience through suffering. Not even through His silent studies by night, nor His active engagements by day did He learn it—suffering had to be superadded to all this before He could become proficient in obedience. What was the reason for this?

I suppose it must be *because suffering touches a man's own self*. Satan thought so, for when God said of Job that he was a perfect and an upright man, Satan answered, "Have not You made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Your hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse You to Your face." Satan was mistaken in the result, but he was wise in his suggestion that personal losses do come home to us. And the arch-enemy knew what he was doing when he said to God, "Put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse You to Your face." He knew what is the weak point in most men. There are some who can obey God actively—it is their delight to be almost day and night engaged in His service—but when their flesh and bone are touched, their patience is sorely tried, and it is a hard lesson for them to learn to obey God's will.

Have we all, Beloved, learned obedience yet? Have we not been trying to pick and choose our own way? It is not the cry of obedience to say, "Lord, give me health and strength, and I will be Your servant." But can you truly say, "Give me weakness and ill-health and I will still be Your servant"? Have you not said, "Lord, let me run on Your errands, uphill and downhill, I will be Your servant"? And will you not as readily say, "If You break all my bones, and lay me for half a century upon a bed of pain, I will still be Your servant—anywhere, everywhere, I make no reserve—I am but flesh and blood, yet do as You will with me though it may mean great suffering"?

I think obedience is never fully learned until, in suffering, *our graces are put into the fire and tested*. Neither love, nor faith can very well be tried to the fullest until there is a bitter medicine to drink. Then we take it in love and believe that it will work for our good—and thus we prove that our love and our faith are genuine. Suffering goes to the very root of our religion. Some people think they have a great deal of love, joy and spiritual-mindedness, and they look down on some of God's poor tried saints. Yes, yes, but you get where they are and see whether you will not, then, look up to them and wish you were half as good as they are.

I have heard brethren talk about their own perfections and of the tried child of God who has a hard struggle between flesh and spirit—and they have reminded me of that passage in the Book of Ezekiel where we are told that the fat cattle pushed with horns and shoulders, and hurt the weak cattle, and God said that He would judge them for this. I am glad if you, dear Friend, enjoy unbroken peace. You have, however, a strong constitution and you owe a good deal more of the sanctity you talk of to

health and to prosperity in business than you imagine! Perhaps if you were as sick, as tried, and as poor as some of your fellow Christians, you would not find that you had any more Grace than they have. Perhaps you might have even less!

A man who has never been on board ship, says, "I am a splendid sailor." I have often heard such boasting, but I have seen that same gentleman, when we had sailed only a quarter of an hour, learn that there is not so much of the sailor in him as he thought! In a similar manner, some people are fine Christians until they are tried and proved. They never have any doubt or fear whatever—but put them in the circumstances of others of God's children and they are the very first to show signs of weakness! Peter said to his Lord, "Though I should die with You, yet will I not deny You." Bravo, Peter! But wait till you hear that cock crow! What a change between Peter weeping bitterly outside the door and Peter bragging a little while ago! Which Peter do you prefer? I like the one with the tears in his eyes far better than the other—there is more tender, genuine truth about him. Trials blow away the chaff and the froth. They let a man know how much of the metal is tin and how much is gold. They reveal what is the work of God and what is mere nature. They make a man see whether he really is all that he thinks he is. And, consequently, we shall never come to a perfect obedience until we have passed through suffering, for so only is it to be learned.

Perhaps *the last moments before our death will teach us something concerning obedience which is not to be learned in the rest of life.* I know not, but it may be that those last hours before the spirit shall be severed from the body will teach us, once and for all, what is the casting of the soul on God in all its fullness and the entering of the soul into communion with God in all its blessedness. At any rate, whatever it costs us to learn obedience, it will never cost us so much as it cost our Lord—"Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." Go, then, Brothers and Sisters, back to your school to learn until, like your Master, you can say, "It is finished." And bless God for every suffering that comes to you, for it will be part of your preparation for the happinesses of eternity. God bless you, for Christ's sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON:
JOHN 7:1-13; HEBREWS 5.**

John 7:1-5. *After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for He would not walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. His brothers therefore said unto Him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You do. For there is no man that does anything in secret, and he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world. For neither did His brothers believe in Him.* It is a very painful truth, that those who were the near relations of the Savior were not believers in His Divine mission—at any rate, at first. He was truly a Prophet who was without honor in His own country and among His own

kindred. And, on this occasion, they half taunted Him concerning His claims. In effect, they said to Him, “If indeed You are a Prophet, get out into the world and prove it! We hear that You profess to work miracles, then, why do You hide Yourself away in this country place down here in Galilee? Be gone to Jerusalem and perform Your wonders before the crowds in the capital”—half hoping, perhaps, that His claims might prove to be true, yet not, at that time, at any rate, being themselves willing to become His disciples.

See how perverse is the human heart! These men might even live in close companionship with Christ and even be nearly related to Him after the flesh, and yet not be converted to Him. So the best of men need not wonder if they have unconverted relatives. And we may not feel certain that there is any fault to be found in their example if others are not converted by it, for, certainly, there was no fault in the example of Christ, yet “neither did His brothers believe in Him.” Mark, also, that no earthly relationship is of any use in the Kingdom of Heaven—“for neither did His brothers believe in Him.” So that, although I may be the child of godly parents and one born of a long line of saints, yet I am, because of that, no nearer to the Kingdom unless I become a believer in Christ myself. Remember what Peter said on the day of Pentecost. You have often heard that passage of Scripture half-quoted, let me quote the whole of it to you—“For the promise is unto you, and to your children.” If you stop there, you do not get the true sense of it. “The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as *the Lord our God shall call.*” Therefore, that text teaches that there is no distinction between the children of Believers and any other children. We must be *called* by the Grace of God like the far-off ones, or else we shall not inherit eternal life!

6-8. *Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but Me it hates, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go you up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for My time is not yet fully come.* Our Lord Jesus Christ did everything, as it were, by the clock. His life was an orderly one. It was all arranged in the eternal purpose of God. The very day in which He should go up to Jerusalem was marked down and He took care that He did not go before the right time. Now, half the power of a Christian life depends upon its being timely. The bringing forth of fruit in due season is one of the marks of the tree planted by the rivers of water. And one of the signs of the Son of Man, who delighted in the Law of the Lord, was that He said, “My time is not yet fully come.” When it did come, then He went.

9, 10. *When He had said these words unto them, He abode still in Galilee. But when His brothers were gone up, then went He also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.* Not with the great caravan that traveled, sometimes, with tens of thousands of people together going up to the feast, but with His own disciples in a quieter way.

11-13. *Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, Where is He? And there was much murmuring among the people concerning Him: for*

some said, *He is a good Man: others said, No; but He deceives the people. Howbeit no man spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.* There was a general fear of violence that would come upon any who professed themselves to be His followers. Now turn to Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, the fifth chapter.

Hebrews 5:1-5. *For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man takes this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest; but He that said unto Him, You are My Son, today have I begotten You.* What a comfort this is to us, that we have a High Priest through whom we can come to God, who is full of compassion toward us and who, though He had no sinful infirmity about Him, was subject to the infirmities to which flesh is heir!

6-9. *As He says also in another place, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, That is, in His official Character.*

9-14. *He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him; called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing you are dull of hearing. For when, for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again what are the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

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

***“And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal
salvation unto all them that obey Him.”
Hebrews 5:9.***

THE great folly of awakened sinners lies in looking to *themselves* when they are convinced that they are lost. When the Law condemns them—when they have the sentence of death ringing with its dolorous knell through their consciences—they nevertheless turn to themselves for help. As well might they search for life within the ribs of death, or dig for light in the dreary vaults of outer darkness! First, they try what *outward* reformation can do and they are amazed when they discover their own impotence. Then they turn their eyes towards their *feelings* and either they labor after tears and mental tortures till they grow conceitedly miserable, or else they yield to hopelessness, because they find their heart to be as an adamant stone. They frequently fly to ceremonies and go far in formalism but find no peace.

And often they turn to the belief of orthodox doctrines and seek salvation in mere head knowledge of the Word of God, forgetting that Jesus once said, “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; but you will not come unto Me that you might have eternal life.” In some shape or other, all natural men seek refuge in self and fly there, again and again and again, though often driven from it. Their so doing is useless and foolish, dishonoring to God and defiling to themselves. If men would but believe the Truth of God they would know that they can no more save themselves than they can turn evil into good, or Hell into Heaven!

It would be a grand thing if they could be made to understand that they have abundant power to *destroy* themselves, but that all their help for salvation lies wholly in Jesus Christ! When they are convinced of this, they will cast themselves upon the Redeemer, and peace and joy will fill their spirits. This is the stern labor which utterly baffles the preacher—it is a work which only the Holy Spirit can accomplish. To wean the sinner from the breasts of self, to rescue him from his proud delusions, to make him see that salvation must come from above as the pure gift of Divine Grace—this, though it appears simple enough, requires a miracle of Divine Grace! God the Holy Spirit generally uses as a cure for this foolish looking to self the exhibition of Christ Jesus. Christ supplants self. Looking unto Jesus puts an end to looking to self and feelings and works.

I shall now endeavor to preach Jesus Christ in the fullness of His perfection as a Savior, that poor sinners may not look for perfection in themselves, nor search for any fitness or strength in themselves, but may flee to Jesus, in whom everything requisite for their salvation is so richly provided.

I. Five thoughts grow out of the text and the first is this—beloved seeker after peace, believe in THE UNDOUBTED WILLINGNESS OF JESUS CHRIST TO SAVE. Where do I find this in the text? I find it just below its surface and here it is. As God, the Lord Jesus is and always was perfect in the most emphatic sense. As Man, Christ's Character is also perfect from the first, having in it neither deficiency nor excess. But as Mediator, High Priest and Savior, He had to undergo a process to make Him perfectly qualified, for the text says, "Being *made* perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation." Now, if we find that He was willing to undergo the process which made Him completely fit for the office of a Savior, we may certainly conclude that He is willing enough to exercise the qualifications which He has obtained!

Suppose that we have before us a person who is anxious to wait upon the sick. She is a woman of most excellent character, in all respects, faultless, but not yet fitted for a nurse till she shall have walked the hospitals. To do this she must give up the comforts of home, undertake a world of drudgery and see much that will cause her pain, for she must, herself, see and understand what sickness means or she will be of no use. Now, if this person is willing, for the sake of becoming a nurse, to undergo personal discomfort and physical weariness—to put herself to much self-denial and to exercise much anxious thought. And if, indeed, all the preparatory process has been already undergone, who doubts her willingness, afterwards, to exercise the office of a nurse for which she has taken so much pains to fit herself? Does not the case speak for itself?

Then transfer it to the Lord Jesus. He has undergone all that was necessary to make Him a complete Savior, in all points qualified for His work and none may dare insult Him by saying that He is unwilling to exercise His office and save the sons of men. Remember that what the Son of God underwent to fit Him for a Savior was extremely humiliating and painful. He left the Throne for the *Cross*, the adoration of angels for the mockery of menials. He came from yonder bright world, where they need not the light of the sun, to visit those who sit in darkness and in the valley of the shadow of death. He was so poor that He had not where to lay His head, so despised that even His own received Him not, but hid, as it were, their faces from Him. He endured *death*, itself, in the most cruel circumstances of ignominy and pain.

All this was necessary before He could be made perfect as a Priest and a Savior—and all this He has undergone and has cried concerning it all, "It is finished." What are yon scars on His hands? What but the tokens of His fitness for His office? What is that gash in His side? What, but the warrant that the work is complete which renders Him a perfect Savior?

And will you tell me, after all this, that He declines to save? That He turns a deaf ear to a sinner's cry? That you have pleaded with Him by the month together and yet have not been answered? That you are willing to come and fling yourself at His feet, but He is unwilling to receive you? Oh, utter not a falsehood at once so groundless, so dishonoring to Him and so defiling to yourself!

Jesus must be willing to save, or else He never could have submitted to so painful a preparation in order that He might be installed in His office as Mediator! He would not have toiled so sternly to reach that high position in which He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, if He had not a hearty goodwill towards sinners and a readiness to receive them. Trembling Sinner, if you conclude that Jesus Christ is not willing to save, you must suppose that He prepared Himself deliberately and with painful cost, to do nothing! For if He does not save men, then He came without an errand and died without a purpose! He certainly did not come to condemn them—"For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

If, then, He does not save that which is lost, He has prepared Himself for nothing, has lived in vain and shed His blood without purpose. If you can think this of Him and of His work, I marvel at your unbelief and tremble to think how fatally sin has blinded your eyes! Moreover, if you think Jesus is unwilling to save, you will have to suppose that, having spent a life in obedience and endured a death of agony, He has, after all, changed His mind and renounced the object once so dear to Him. You will have to believe that the heart which bled, and even after death poured out both blood and water, has suddenly become petrified! That the eyes which wept over Jerusalem retain no longer any pity for the sons of men and that He who prayed for His murderers, "Father, forgive them," has now become stern in spirit and will have nothing to do with sinners when they seek His mercy.

Oh, do not dishonor my Lord so greatly as to think thus of Him! Lo, He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever"! Interrogate those scars and see if there is a change in Him. Look into His face and see if love has departed! He is in Heaven at this day, ever living to make intercession for sinners—and I ask you, would He continue to intercede if He had ceased to love? Would He not throw up the office in disgust if His Nature were so transformed that He no longer cared to save the lost? Away with your dishonoring fears! Do you dream that Jesus has saved all He designed to bless and that the full count of His redeemed is made up? Do you imagine that the merit of His blood has come to an end, that His power and willingness to forgive have gone clean from Him? It cannot be so, for is it not written, "Ask of Me and I will give You the heathen for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession"? And, remember, that has not been fulfilled yet.

It is written, "By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many," but as yet the many have not been justified, for the number of the saved is small compared with the multitude descended to Hell. Will not Jesus have the pre-eminence? Will He not redeem unto Himself a number that no man can number? When the whole poem of human history has been written, will it not be found to be in honor of Divine Grace abounding over sin, Christ victor over Satan, Mercy triumphant over Wrath? Will not Jesus and His seed outnumber the seed of the serpent? How else would it be true that His bruised heel shall break the serpent's head? Instead of believing that Jesus has ceased to save, I look for a fuller display of His power in glad days when nations shall be born at once!

The Fountain flows on with undiminished stream—O Sinner, drink and live! You must not imagine, poor, trembling Sinner, that the dear Redeemer has undergone all His agonies to prepare Him to save men, and yet is unwilling to perform His sacred office! Such a wicked fancy will be ruinous to your soul and grievous to His Spirit. Oh, that you would go and try Him! You would find Him ready to save you!

II. The second thought will bring us nearer to the text. Consider, I pray you, in the second place, THE PERFECT FITNESS OF THE SAVIOR FOR HIS WORK. We will view the fitness both *Godward* and *manward*. View it *Godward*. Sinner, if anyone is to deal with God for you so as to avail on your behalf, he must be one of God's choosing, for "no man takes this honor upon himself, but he that was called of God, as was Aaron. So, also, Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest, but He that said unto Him, You are my Son, today have I begotten You." Christ was ordained of God from all eternity to stand as the Representative of His people before the Throne of God.

"It pleased the Father to bruise Him." "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." He from old eternity was set apart to be the High Priest and the Redeemer of His people. Can you not, in this, see grounds for resting upon Him? What God appoints, it must be safe for us to accept. In order that Jesus Christ, being appointed, should be fit for His office, it was necessary that He should become man. Man had sinned, and man must make reparation to the broken Law. God would not accept an angel as a substitute, for the Law had to do with *man*. And as the race had revolted, it must be through one of the race that God's justice should be vindicated.

But Jesus was God—how, then, could He become our Savior? Behold the mystery! God was manifest in the flesh. He descended to the manger of Bethlehem. He nestled in a woman's bosom, for as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He, Himself, also took part in the same. Sinner, behold your Incarnate God! The Eternal One dwells among dying men, veiled in their mortal flesh, that He may save men! This is the greatest fact ever related in human ears. We hear it as a common thing, but the angels have never ceased to wonder since they first sang of it and charmed the listening shepherds. God has come down to man to lift man

up to God! Surely it is the sin of sins if we reject a Savior who has made such a stoop in order to be perfectly qualified to save!

“Being found in fashion as a Man,” it was necessary towards God that Jesus should fulfill the Law and work out a perfect obedience. The obedience of an angel would not have met the case—it was from *man* that obedience was required—and a man must render it. Behold, then, this second Adam, this new Head of our race, rendering to God the complete obedience which the Law demanded, loving God with all His heart and His neighbor as Himself. From the time when He said to His mother, “Know you not that I must be about My Father’s business?” till the time when He exultingly cried, “It is finished,” He was in all things the obedient Servant of the great Father! And now His righteousness stands for us and we are “accepted in the Beloved.” The High Priest who is to intercede for us must wear upon His forehead, “Holiness unto the Lord,” and truly such a High Priest we have, for Jesus is, “holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.”

Nor was this all towards God. The High Priest who should save us must be able to offer a sufficient sacrifice, efficacious to make atonement, so as to vindicate Eternal Justice and make an end of sin. Oh, hear this, you Sinners, and let it ring like music in your ears—Jesus Christ has not offered the blood of bullocks nor of goats, but He has presented His own blood upon the altar! “He, Himself, bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” “This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified.” The blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sin, but the blood of the Son of God has infinite efficacy—and for every one for whom the great Surety died—all sin was put away since He bore its penalty. The Law could ask no more.

Pitiful, indeed, is the man’s case who has no interest in the atoning sacrifice! His sin lies heavy upon him and wrath hangs over him. Wretched is the sinner who, being conscious of his guilt and being bid to believe in Jesus, yet continues to look to *himself*—and so does dishonor to this Sacrifice, so precious in the sight of the Lord. The blood of Jesus speaks better things than that of Abel, and woe to the man who despises its gracious cry—

***“How they deserve the deepest Hell,
That slight the joys above!
What chains of vengeance must they feel,
Who break such cords of love.”***

Godward, then, Christ became perfect as our Savior. And when He had finished His work, the Lord certified the completion and acceptance of it by raising Him from the dead and giving Him a place at His right hand. He who, as Judge, was offended by our sin, is now well-pleased in His Son, and has established a Covenant of Peace with us for His sake.

Is God satisfied with Jesus and are you dissatisfied? Is Infinite Justice content and do your doubts and fears prevent your being reconciled? Do you stand by and say that Jesus cannot save you, when God's Word declares that He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him? Do you set up your prejudices and unbelief under the pretence of humility, in opposition to the declaration of God, who cannot lie? The Lord declares His approbation of His dear Son—why, then, do you quibble? God forbid that you should indulge in such a sin any longer! Rather end your opposition and where God finds rest, there find rest yourself! If the Lord is content to save those who obey Jesus, be obedient by the help of God's blessed Spirit.

But, Beloved, I have said that Christ Jesus, as our High Priest, needed to be perfected *manward*. O Sinner, consider His perfections as they concern yourself! That He might save us He must have power to pardon and to renew our hearts. These He has to the full, for all power is given unto Him in Heaven and in earth. He gives both repentance and remission. But, alas, we are afraid of Him! We shrink from approaching Him and, therefore, to make Him a perfect Savior He must be tender of heart, willing to come to us when we will not come to Him, compassionate to our ignorance and ready to help our infirmities. It needs One who can stoop to bind up gaping wounds which cannot heal themselves. One who does not mind touching the leper, or bending over the fever-stricken, or going to the grave where corruption pollutes the air. One who does not ask the leper to first make himself clean, but comes into contact with him in all his foulness and abomination—and saves him!

Now, Brothers and Sisters, Jesus bids us come to Him because He is meek and lowly in heart. It is said of Him, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them." He was called "A friend of publicans and sinners." His name is love and His heart is pity. To make tenderness practical, a man must not only have a gentle nature, but he must have undergone the sufferings which he pities, so as to sympathize with them. We may try, dear Friends, to sympathize with persons in certain afflictions, but the attempt does not succeed unless we have walked in the same paths. Now, Sinner, have you a broken heart? So had Christ, for He said, "Reproach has broken My heart." Are you trembling under Divine anger? He, also, cried, "Why have You forsaken Me?"

What burden do you bear? His load was far heavier than yours! Are you wounded? He was *nailed* to the Cross! Do you feel exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death? So did He, until the bloody sweat stood on His brow! He is a brotherly Savior, well trained in Sorrow's school, deeply versed in the science of Consolation. Jesus knows the ins and outs of our nature. He knows what is in man. Now, this is a grand qualification. If you go to a physician, and yours is a very peculiar case, you are doubtful as to his skill. But when he shows that he knows all about you by describing the symptoms exactly as they occur, and adds, "I was once afflicted with this

same sickness, myself," you say to yourself, "This man will suit me." Just so is it with Jesus—

***"He knows what fierce temptations mean,
For He has felt the same."***

So far as it is possible for a sinless one to do so, He sympathizes with the whole of your condition. He knows the struggles within, the fears, the bitter tears, the groans which cannot be uttered. He knows every jot and tittle of your experience and is, therefore, eminently qualified to cope with your case.

If you were on board a vessel and had lost your bearings, you would be glad enough to see a pilot in the offing. Here he is on board, and you say, "Pilot, do you know where we are?" "Yes," he says, "of course I do. I can tell you within a yard." "It is well, Mr. Pilot, but can you bring us to the port we want to make?" "Certainly," he says. "Do you know the coast?" "Coast, Sir! I know every bit of headland, rock and quicksand, as well as I know the cut of my face in a looking-glass. I have passed over every inch of it in all tides and all weathers. I am a child at home here." "But, pilot, do you know that treacherous shoal?" "Yes, and I remember almost running aground upon it once, but we escaped just in time. I know all those sands as well as if they were my own children."

You feel perfectly safe in such hands. Such is the qualification of Christ to pilot sinners to Heaven. There is not a bay, or a creek, or a rock, or a sand between the maelstrom of Hell and the fair havens of Heaven but what Christ has sounded all the deeps and the shallows, measured the force of the current and seen the set of the stream. He knows how to steer so as to bring the ship right away by the best course into the heavenly harbor. There is one delightful thing in Christ's perfect qualification to save, namely, that He "ever lives to make intercession for us." If Jesus Christ were dead and had left us the blessing of salvation that we might freely help ourselves to it, we should have much to praise Him for. But He is not dead, He is alive! He left us a legacy, but many a legacy is left which never gets to the legates! Lo, the Great Maker of the will is alive to carry out His own intentions!

He died and so made the legacy good. He rose again and lives to see that none shall rob any one of His beloved of the portion He has left! What do you think of Christ pleading in Heaven? Have you ever estimated the power of that plea? He is day and night pleading for all them that obey Him—pleading for sinners—pleading with God that pardon may be given to the greatest of offenders! And does He plead in vain? Is He unacceptable with the Father? It cannot be imagined! Why, then, O Sinner, do you continue to look to *yourself*? How much wiser would it be for you to turn your eyes to your Lord. You say, "I am not perfect." Why, do you want to be? The perfection is in Him. "But, alas, I am not this and I am not that." What has that to do with it? Jesus is all that is needed. If you were to be your own savior, you would be in a bad case, indeed, for you are all faults and failings!

But if *He* is the Savior, why do you talk about what *you* are? *He* is fully equipped for the world. He never asked your help. It is an insult to suppose that He wants it. What if you are dead in sin, yes, and rotten in vice and corruption? He is able to raise you from the dead and to make you sit at His own right hand in the heavenly places, for He is a perfect Savior and is able to save to the uttermost!

III. The third point is this. I want you to notice THE HIGH POSITION WHICH OUR LORD JESUS TAKES IN REFERENCE TO SALVATION. According to the text, “He became *the Author* of eternal salvation.” He is the Designer, Creator, Worker and Cause of salvation. By Him salvation has been accomplished—“His right hand and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory.” “He has trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him.” He is the Author of salvation in this sense, that every blessing comes through Him. All the various departments of salvation, whether they are election, calling, justification, or sanctification—all bless us through Him, according as the Father has chosen us in Him from before the foundation of the world.

In him we are called, in Him preserved, in Him accepted—all Grace flows from Him. Christ is All and in all. Salvation within us is all His work. He sought us as well as bought us! His Spirit gives us the first sense of sin and leads us to faith. He Himself draws us to Himself. His name is Jesus, for He saves His people from their sins! Let me compare salvation to a book, of which Jesus is the sole Author. No one has contributed a line or a thought to it. He has never asked any human mind to write a *preface* to His work—the first word is from His pen. Some of you are trying to preface Christ’s work, but your toil is fruitless! He will never bind up your wretched introduction with His golden lines of love. Come to Him without a preface, just as you are, steeped up to the throat in the foulness of sin, begrimed with the slime of Sodom!

Come to Him without previous preparation and lay your heart’s tablets before Him that He may write on them. He is an Author so skillful that none have ever discovered the smallest error in His work, for there are no mistakes—and no amendments are ever needed. When He saves, He saves completely. He does not ask us to revise and perfect His writing, it is perfected by His own hand. He is an Author to whose writing there are no addendum—it is finished and he is accursed who shall add a line! We have to take the finished salvation and rejoice in it—but we may never add to it. Christ is an Author who needs no man’s *imprimatur*—He, Himself, has dignity and authority enough to make His work illustrious without the patronage of man. Christ is the Author of salvation!

What you have to do, Sinner, is to take it—not preface it, improve it, or add to it—but to take it just as it is. There it is for you! It is to be had for the taking—hold out your trembling hand and receive it! Bring your empty cup and hold it under the Divine Fountain and let it be filled. Faith to accept it is all that is required. Why is it that you delay? You need to make yourself better before you believe in Jesus? That is to say, *you* want to be

the author of your salvation and so elbow Christ out of His place! “Oh, but,” you will say, “I cannot *pray* as I want.” If you could pray as you ought, would Christ *then* be able to save you? He needs *your* prayers to help Him, does He? “Oh, but I do not *feel* as I ought.” Your *feelings* are to help Christ, are they? “Oh, but I want to be different.” And if you were different, *then* Christ would be able to save you—but as you now are He cannot save you?

Do you mean that? Do you dare to say that He cannot forgive you this very moment, while the word is coming out of my mouth? Do you mean that this very instant, just as you are—a sinful and all but damned sinner—that He cannot forgive you *now* if you trust Him? If that is what you mean, you are deceived, for He is able to save you *now*! Having been made perfect, He is the Author of eternal salvation to everyone that obeys Him, and He is able at this moment to speak peace to the conscience of anyone and everyone who now obeys Him. God grant you Grace to catch the thought which I try to make plain, but which only the Spirit of God can lead you to understand.

IV. My next thought is this. Dwell for a few minutes in devout meditation upon THE REMARKABLE CHARACTER OF THE REVELATION WHICH CHRIST HAS WORKED OUT. He is the Author of *eternal* salvation. Oh, how I love that word, “*eternal*.” “Eternal salvation!” When the Jewish high priest had offered a sacrifice, the worshipper went home satisfied, for the blood was sprinkled and the offering accepted. But in a short time he sinned again and he had to bring *another* sacrifice. Once a year, when the high priest entered within the veil and came out and pronounced a blessing on the people, all Israel went home glad. But next year there must be the same remembrance of sin and the same sprinkling with blood—for the blood of bulls and of goats could not really put away sin—it was only a type.

How blessed is the Truth of God that our Lord Jesus will not need to bring another sacrifice at any time, for He has obtained eternal salvation through His one offering. It is an *eternal* salvation as opposed to every other kind of deliverance. There are salvations spoken of in the Bible which are transient, for they only deal with temporal trouble and passing distress. But he who is once taken out of the horrible pit of unforgiven sin by the hand of Christ will never lie in that horrible place again! Being raised from the dead, we die no more! We are effectually delivered from the dominion of sin when Jesus Christ comes forth to save us.

It is eternal salvation in this sense, that it rescues us from eternal condemnation and everlasting punishment. Glory be to God, everlasting punishment shall never fall on the Believer, for everlasting salvation puts it far away! It is eternal salvation as opposed to the risk of falling away and perishing. Some of our Brethren seem very pleased with a salvation of a *temporary* character whose continuance depends upon their own behavior. I do not envy them and shall not try to rob them of their treasure, for I would not have *their* salvation if they were to press me ever so much. I am

a great deal more satisfied to have *eternal* salvation—a salvation based upon a finished work, carried on by Divine power—and undertaken by an unchangeable Savior!

“Oh, but,” I hear some say, “you may have eternal life today, and lose it tomorrow.” What do words mean? How can that life be *eternal* which you can *lose*? Why, then, the life could not have been *eternal*. Your doctrine is a mistake in language, a contradiction in terms. “He that believes in Him has *everlasting* life.” “I give unto My sheep *eternal* life, and they shall *never* perish, neither shall *any* pluck them out of My hand.” “Because I live you shall live also.” Sinner, if you believe in Jesus, He will not save you today and let you perish tomorrow! He will give you *eternal* salvation, which neither death nor Hell, nor time, nor eternity shall ever destroy, for, “who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?” The man who believes in Jesus is not as happy, but he is as safe from final condemnation as if he were already in Heaven—

**“His honor is engaged to save
The meanest of His sheep.
All that His heavenly Father gave,
His hands securely keep.
Nor death nor Hell shall ever remove
His favorites from His breast.
In the dear bosom of His love
They must forever rest.”**

If this doctrine is not taught in Scripture, nothing is taught there at all and words have no meaning! On the very forefront of Scripture is written, “He that believes shall be saved.” God grant us Grace to realize that promise. When the text says, “eternal salvation,” it means that it will ripen into eternal bliss! You are saved from eternal misery. You are preserved by eternal life from falling back upon your old life—and you shall be brought to eternal bliss. Whoever Christ saves shall see the face of God with joy forever, as surely as he is born! Christ was made perfect on purpose that He might be the Author of eternal salvation.

V. The last thought is THE PERSONS CONCERNED IN THIS SALVATION. “To all them that obey Him.” The word, “obey,” here, according to Dr. Owen’s admirable translation, signifies “obedience upon hearing.” And he very rightly says that this indicates *faith*. To obey Christ is, in its very essence, to *trust* Him or believe in Him. And we might read our text as if it said, “The Author of eternal salvation to all them that *believe* in Him.” If you would be saved your first act of obedience must be to trust Jesus wholly, simply, heartily and alone! Recline your soul wholly on Jesus and you are saved *now*.

“Is that all?” Certainly, that is all! “But it says ‘obey.’” Precisely so. And do you not know that every man who trusts Christ obeys Him? I gave just now the illustration of a pilot. The pilot comes on board and says, “If I am to steer you into harbor you must trust me with the command of the vessel.” That is done and he gives orders, “Reef that sail!” Suppose the captain says to the sailor, “Leave that sail alone, I tell you!” Is it not clear that

he does not trust the pilot? If he trusted him he would have his orders carried out. Suppose the pilot cries out to the engineer, "Ease her!" and the captain countermands the order? The pilot is evidently not trusted and if the vessel runs ashore it will be no fault of his.

So is it with regard to our Lord. The moment you put yourself into His hands you must obey Him, or you have not trusted Him. To change the figure—the doctor feels your pulse. "I will send you some medicine," he says, "that will be very useful, and besides that, you must take a warm bath." He comes the next day. You say to him, "Doctor, I thought you were going to heal me. I am not a bit better." "Why," says he, "you do not trust me." "I do, Sir. I am sure I have every faith in you." "No," he says, "you do not believe in me, for there is that bottle of medicine untouched. You have not taken a drop of it. Have you had the bath?" "No, sir." "Well, you are making a fool of me. The fact is, I shall not come again. You do not believe in me. I am no physician to you."

Every man who believes Christ obeys Him—believing and obeying always run side by side. Do you not know that Christ does not come merely to blot out the past, He comes to save us from being what we are, to save us from a bad temper, from a proud eye, from a wanton look, from a corrupt heart, from covetous desires, from a rebellious will and an indolent spirit? Now this cannot be done unless we *obey*, for if we are to continue to live in sin, salvation is a mere *word* and to boast of it would be ridiculous! How can we be saved *from* sin if we are living *in* sin? A man says, "Christ saves me, and yet I get drunk." Sir, you lie! How can you be saved *from* drunkenness when you are living *in* drunkenness?

"But Christ saves *me*," says another, "although I am worldly and wild and frivolous." How does He save you? Man alive! Do you tell me the doctor has healed you of the leprosy while yet it is white on your brow? How can you say he has healed you of chills while you are, even now, shivering with it? Surely you do not know what you are talking about! Christ comes to save us from living as we once did. He comes to make new men of us. To give us new hearts and right spirits. And when He does this He will not let us go back to our old sins again, but leads us onward in the path of holiness. Mark well that every man who obeys Christ shall be saved, whatever His past life may have been. Every one of you, whatever your present condition may be, shall be saved if you obey the Redeemer, for, "He is the Author of eternal salvation to *all* them that obey Him."

But mark, not to one more—no soul that refuses to obey Christ shall have any part or lot in this matter. Men may make what professions they please, but they shall never gain eternal salvation unless they obey Jesus. Those gates which open to let in the obedient close fast to shut out the unbelieving and disobedient. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have everlasting life." The extent of God's love to the world is this—He loves it so as to save all who believe in Jesus—but He will never save a soul which dies unbelieving and disobedient. If you reject Christ, you shut

in your own face the only door of hope, “for he that believes not is condemned already.”

I am sometimes confronted with this statement—that faith is the gift of God and is worked in man by the power of the Spirit of God—therefore I have no business to command and entreat men to believe. I am not slow to answer my opposers, for in my inward soul I know that saving faith always is the gift of God and is in every case the work of the Holy Spirit! But I am not, yet, an idiot, and therefore I also know that *faith is the act of man*. The Holy Spirit does not believe *for* us. What has He to believe? The Holy Spirit does not *repent* for us. What has He to repent of? You must, yourself, believe, and it must be your own personal act or you will never be saved! I charge you before God, do not let the grand Truth of God that faith is the gift of God ever lead you to forget that you never will be saved unless you personally believe in Jesus!

If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ you shall be saved, for here is the Gospel—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” And here is the solemn penalty appended to it, “He that believes not shall be damned.” Sinner, there was never such a Savior as Christ is! He is the very Savior for you—He is both willing and able to save—and knows how to do it! He has promised to save all that trust Him. Go and try Him and, if, this morning, you shall trust Him and He repels you, come and tell me—and I will leave off preaching. When I find my Master casts out those that come to Him, I will put my shutters up and have done with the business of the Gospel! I can only speak as I find. I went to Him trembling and dismayed, and I thought He would never receive me. But I received as my welcome “Come in, you blessed of the Lord, why do you stand outside?” He washed me from my sins in the same hour and sent me on my way rejoicing!

And here I have been, these 23 years, preaching Free Grace and dying love, and never have I yet lighted upon a sinner whom Jesus has cast out! And when I do meet with such a case, I must have done preaching for very shame. I am not afraid, however, for such a case shall never be heard of in this world. No, nor in the infernal deep does there lie a single soul condemned for sin who would dare to say, “I sought the Lord and He would not hear me. I trusted in Christ and He would not save me. I pleaded the promise but it was not fulfilled.”

No, it shall never be! While God is true no Believer shall perish! Here is the promise, “Him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out.” Happy is the preacher who has such a Gospel to preach as I have preached to you! But I cannot *make* you receive it. I can bring the horse to the water, but I cannot make him drink. God must do this. Oh, that He may lead you to receive eternal salvation by Jesus Christ, to the glory of His name. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Hebrews 5, 7.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—327, 468, 395.**

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STRONG MEAT

NO. 506

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL, 19, 1863,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age,
even those who by reason of use have their senses
exercised to discern both good and evil.”
Hebrews 5:14.*

IN most large houses we shall find humanity in all its stages. We shall see the infant in its cradle, children laughing in their play, young men working with vigor, and the old man resting in peace in such a mansion. If a careful Martha is in charge, provisions will be made for all the different ages. There will be milk provided for the babes, and the pantry will not be without solid meat for the full grown men.

Now in our Father's great house, His family is always so large that you will always find Believers in all stages of growth. Perhaps there is never a moment in the year in which there is not a new birth unto God by the Holy Spirit. The sighing of repentance, and the crying of simple faith are always in our heavenly Father's ears, giving Him delight. He has men, babes, and for these He has abundance of nourishing food. But we bless His name that they are not all babes in the house. Some are young men, who are strong, and have overcome the Wicked One. And there are a few fathers who have known Him, that is, from the beginning.

For the young men and for the hoary sires there is as plentiful and as fitting a provision as for the infants. He opens His hands, and supplies the want of every living thing. This is true, not only of the temporals which He gives to man and beast alike, but also of the spirituals which He dispenses liberally to all the new creatures in Christ Jesus. Now it were unfitting to give milk to the man of full age, and equally improper to present the strong meat to those who are but infants. Our Lord has, therefore, been pleased to dictate directions as to the persons for whom the various provisions of His table are intended.

Our text talks of *strong and solid meat*, and it describes *the persons who are to feed thereon*. The context *gives a mild rebuke to those who, by reason of indolence and sloth, have not attained to years of discernment, and cannot, therefore, feed on substantial diet*.

I. Let us, first of all, BRING FORTH SOME OF THIS STRONG MEAT AND SET IT UPON THE TABLE BEFORE YOU.

A careful examination of the context will inform you that one form of strong meat which is only fit for full grown Christians is the *allegorical* exposition of Scriptural history. You will mark that the Apostle was about to allegorize upon Melchizedek. He had intended to set forth that that venerable and priestly king was, so far as Scriptural information goes, without father, without mother, without descent—having neither beginning of years nor end of life—and that he was superior to Levi seeing that Levi's progenitor paid tithes to him, and received his blessing.

The Apostle was about to show that Melchizedek was a type of Jesus, who, as a Priest, is without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of years, but is a Priest forever according to the power of an endless life. But the Apostle paused, for he felt that this allegory of Melchizedek was too strong a meat for those who were not full grown men. Beyond a doubt, the historical parts of Scriptures are intended to be instructive allegories, setting forth heavenly mysteries. See how the Apostle Paul used several of them. There is the case of Hagar and Sarah.

Since the promise was not performed to Sarah, and no offspring had been born to Abraham, Sarah suggests that Abraham should take to himself a concubinary wife, Hagar. He does so, and she brings forth according to the flesh, and by the power of the flesh, Ishmael. Now the Apostle goes on to show that Ishmael was not the seed which God had promised and that, consequently, in after years, Isaac was born—not according to the power of the flesh—since his father and mother were past age—but according to the promise fulfilled by the power of God alone.

He then goes on to show that this is an allegory. That the children of the flesh, that is, those who are the seed of Abraham, by *natural* birth, like Ishmael, are not the true seed. But that those who, like Isaac, are the fruit of God's promise, and having been once as dead, are given to Abraham, as Isaac was on the mountain in a figure—that these are the true seed, concerning whom the Covenant was made. And as Sarah said concerning Hagar—"Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." So the Gospel says—"Cast out the Law, for the children of the Law, those who hope to be saved by legal works, shall not be heirs with My sons, even with those who are saved by the promise of Grace."

Now this allegory is meat for instructed Believers. Jacob and Esau—born of the same parents, at the same birth, and yet separated in destiny by that memorable sentence, "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated"—were a type of the election of Divine Grace. And with many other instances, these go to prove that Holy Scripture is to be received not only as a literal description of facts which really did occur, but as a picture in which souls taught be Divine Grace, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, may see, portrayed in express characters, the great Gospel of the living God.

Those of you who are well instructed will have found out by this time that the Book of Genesis is the *History of Dispensations*—that in all its types it sets forth, from Adam to Joseph—the various dispensations of primeval innocence. It depicts man without Law, under Law, in Covenant, and apart from Covenant—and many other things of which we cannot now speak particularly. You will have discovered that Exodus is the *Book of Redemptions*. Here is redemption by blood when the paschal lamb was slain, redemption by power when He broke the chivalry of Egypt, smiting Pharaoh in the midst of the Red Sea. The Book of Leviticus is the *Handbook of Communion*, the *Guide to Access*, opening to us the way in which God can come to man, and man can go to God.

And I am sure the least observant of you must have discovered that the Book of Numbers is the *Record of Experience*. All those journeys of the children of Israel to and fro when they lived in the wilderness, sometimes by Marah's bitter fountain, and at other times by Elim's spreading palms,

all describe the constant marching of the sacred army of God to the Promised Land. The Books of Joshua and Judges typify the history of the people who have entered into the land of Canaan, who are saved, but who have to fight with their corruptions—with the Canaanites that are still in the land—and to drive them out despite their chariots of iron.

I believe that every book of Scripture has some special lesson beyond its historical import. And perhaps when the history of the world shall have been fully worked out, we shall see that the books of the Bible were like a prophetic roll sealed to us, but yet fulfilled to the letter. I sometimes think that we live in the days of the Judges. God raises up one mighty minister after another, some Shamgar, Jephthah, Gideon, or Samson—and when these die the Church relapses into its former state of coldness and indifference. But the time is coming when David the King shall come, and when Solomon shall reign from the river, even to the ends of the earth.

The Millennial age shall hasten its glories. And what if it should be succeeded by a time of falling away, as under the kings of Israel, and then the winding up of the dispensation of the carrying away of the wicked into their long and last captivity, and the setting of the chosen in another and a better land? If these things are so, I am not wrong in the remark, that these allegories are only fit for strong men, who, by reason of use, have had their senses exercised. See, I set the meat before you.

I feel persuaded that the Apostle also more particularly referred to those mysterious Truths of God which have respect to *the relationships of our Lord Jesus Christ and to His complex Person*. The very simplest Believer understands that Christ is God and Man—that Christ stood as the sinner's Surety and paid his debt. But, Brothers and Sisters, when we come to meditate much upon the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall soon discover that there are depths of mystery in which an elephant might swim, as well as shallows where a lamb might wade. His complex Person suggests a thousand thoughts—all of which are too high for comprehension or even consideration—until our senses have been exercised.

The doctrine of Christ's ancient Covenant. The striking of hands between Jesus—Jehovah, the Surety, and Jehovah of Hosts, who accepted Him as the Substitute for His people—who but the perfect man can grasp this? Christ's frequent appearances upon earth, too, before His incarnation, when His delights were with the sons of men—when He talked with Abraham, communed with Moses, spoke to Joshua, and trod the coals of fire with the three holy children—what a theme! Christ's eternal Sonship, the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. The conception of Jesus as to His humanity in the womb of the Virgin, and others of a kindred nature, are all great mysteries.

I do not believe that these are fit topics for babes in Grace. These Truths of God are as high above us as the heavens are above the earth. But if ever we do come to consider these sublimities, we must remember that they are only food for full grown men. I might go on to show that our union to Christ, that wonderful doctrine of our being members of His Body, of His flesh and of His bones, is also a mystery not to be trifled with by children. I might show, too, that even in Christ's Second Advent there are lofty questions—mighty difficulties which need the full grown intellect

of the Believer to grapple with them. And, therefore, here again you have another dish loaded with solid meat.

The *doctrines of Grace* are also generally esteemed to be very strong meat. He that is not full grown in the faith will discover much in the doctrine of predestination that will stagger him. No doubt many young Believers have felt God's foreordination to be like a stone rolled in their way over which they can scarcely climb. They have looked upon this glorious Truth of God as a mountain blocking up their path. They have not understood that though it is a mountain, it is one upon whose summit God communes with man.

How many have been distressed with the precious doctrine of election? It is meat. It is hallowed meat—meat fit for the priests of God, and for the Lord's mightiest warriors—but many there are who have been so scandalized by it, that they have been glad to write bitter things against themselves on account of it. So with the doctrine of the immutability of God, and the consequent safety of the Lord's people—seeing that because He changes not, the sons of Jacob cannot be consumed. This, though sweet as honey dropping from the honeycomb, is not a doctrine for every man. Only they who do business upon the great waters, and have learned the need of solid food can usually feed on these things with satisfaction.

Oh, dear Brothers and Sisters, what a mercy it is that there are such things as the grand old Truths which men nickname Calvinism, but which are the very marrow of the Gospel. I find when the heart aches, and the spirit is heavy, there is nothing like reading the eighth and ninth chapters of Romans. And when things go amiss with me, and everything is perversely disappointing my hopes, it is very delightful to throw oneself back upon the soft couch of God's eternal purpose, to pillow one's head upon the certainty that what He said He will perform, and that what He has commanded shall stand fast. Here are royal dainties! Costly cheer for fainting pilgrims!

If you want the wings of eagles, study these doctrines and they shall bear you aloft. If you would creep along the ground and be full of doubts, fears, miseries, and distractions, live on baser food. But if you would walk in the strength of a giant, and fight with the valor of a David, live on these loaves of Heaven's best bread, and your youth shall be renewed. Yet these things are strong meat and are not for babes, but for men.

Scarcely need I mention that other dish—the *more advanced and inwrought forms of Christian experience*. I believe there are saints, for instance, who hardly comprehend that passage where the Apostle speaks of the contest within—"When I would do good, evil is present with me." You know there are many little saints who do not comprehend the fight within. The conflict is there, but they have not a clear idea of what that conflict is. They do not understand, with Paul, that, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me." The doctrine of the *two natures*, and of their constant struggle with each other, is not at their fingertips.

Then, again, communion with Christ is a high mystery that is never learned in the dame school of repentance, not often in the grammar school of faith—we must go the university of repentance to learn it—leaning our head on Jesus' bosom, and having foretastes of the fellowship which makes Heaven what it is. This is one of those rare experiences which can only belong in its frequency to the full grown Believer. I do not

wonder that some people cannot read Solomon's Song. We do not expect that they should. If I put a book of algebra or a table of logarithms into the hand of a child who has just learned the multiplication table, I do not marvel that he should not understand it.

The fact is that the Song is to the whole Bible what the Holy of Holies was to the Temple. You may walk into the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospels and say, "Here I am in the outer court of the Temple." You may go to the Psalms and to the Epistles, and say, "Here I am in the Court of the Priests." But the Canticles are the Holy of Holies. And he that has not learned to enter with the High Priest into that which is within the veil will never be able to read Solomon's Song. These experiences, I say, are for men of full age, who have had their senses exercised.

I have thus set before you the various sorts of strong meat. Before we leave the table *let me utter a word of caution*. Milk you may use as you will. You cannot take too much of it. It will not do strong men any great amount of good, but it will certainly do them no harm. But the strong meat must always be accompanied by a word of caution when it is placed before the uninstructed and feeble—since such are very apt to do mischief, both to themselves, and to others with this strong meat.

As for the *allegories*. What a world of nonsense have people talked about the allegories of Scripture, trying to make things run on all fours that were meant to walk erect. Alas, for those silly compounders who without the genius of old Origen, imitated his worst faults. What can I say that would be censure severe enough upon Origen himself, who never could read a chapter but he must needs twist it from its plain sense to make a mystery of it. We have all heard, I dare say, of the Divine who was foolish enough to take the three baskets full of sweet meats that were upon the head of Pharaoh's baker, and to say that they represented the Trinity.

I have heard of another who preached from this passage in Ezra—"Nine-and-twenty knives," and went to show that they were types of the four-and-twenty elders. What he did with the surplus five I don't know! Was God's Book ever meant to be a toy for the amusement of childish imagination? Surely not! The strong meat of allegory must be for half-inspired saints like John Bunyan, and those masters in Israel who are not to be carried away upon the back of every figure, but who can ride their figures like good horsemen with a bit in the mouth of the allegory, and make it keep in a straight road, and bear them safely on to their destination. How many weak men are like boys on unbroken colts? The sooner they are off, the better, for they will hurt their steed, and do themselves no good.

So must it be with *the good things concerning the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ*. The mysterious doctrine of the Trinity, and the equally mysterious and sublime doctrine of eternal generation are best let alone by feeble minds. I do not think there are half-a-dozen men alive who ought to meddle with the last. There has been a controversy lately, in a magazine, which I sometimes read for amusement rather than for instruction, between certain self-considered great and able Divines of modern times, who think they are *the men*, and that wisdom will die with them. They have been denouncing each other most heartily—and this seems the only thing

they can do thoroughly well. They have been denouncing each other heartily because one believes this, and the other believes that, about a subject which not one of them knows anything at all about.

The Sonship of our Lord is a great and marvelous mystery, to be meekly and reverently received. It is never to be disputed about, except by those gigantic minds which belong to the past, rather than the present. We might like to see two titanic Puritans enter the field of controversy—two such men, for instance, as Dr. John Owen, and Charnock—one might travel a thousand miles to see them grapple one of these lofty subjects. But when the little men of these days meddle with them, it saddens the humble-minded and affords enlightenment to none.

In a measure it is so with *the doctrines of Grace*. The doctrines of Grace are to be handled with caution, for there are some folks who are not of full age, and have not, by reason of use, had their senses exercised so that they can discern both good and evil. Many love high doctrine, but then they want it higher than the Bible. Have we not known some who thought themselves very wise, but whose senses, I am certain, have never been well exercised? They were so fond of the doctrine of justification by faith that they have denied sanctification by the Holy Spirit—and have taught imputed sanctification—which is a doctrine of men, indeed.

Some have so exaggerated Free Grace that they have denied the practical precepts. This is partly through wickedness, and partly through folly. It is the sure result of little minds losing their way in the great Truths of God, and, slipping from the high road, and falling to flounder in the ditch of error. Oh, my dear Brothers and Sisters, I would sooner you would leave these doctrines alone, than that you should fall into Antinomianism! Among the most damnable things which Satan ever sent is that which shall lead you to deny the practical precepts, and to forget that, “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.”

Unholy fatalism is a deep ditch, and the abhorred of the Lord shall fall in. Those persons, too, who push the doctrines of election, and make it into the doctrine of reprobation show that they are foolish. They are not fit to deal with sublime Truth. If some persons who are renowned for preaching the doctrines of Grace would only hold their tongues till they understood them, their admirers would wait upon a dumb oracle. Oh, it is a grand thing to be able to receive the whole Truth of God—to learn human responsibility as well as Divine Sovereignty. To see God doing as He wills, but man bound to obey. To see Jehovah exalted on His Throne, King of kings and Lord of lords, with man’s will His subject and bound to do what God bids, simply and only because God commands it!

I am sure if we can couple the two things, free-agency and predestination, together, we shall be saved from Antinomianism on the one hand, and from infidelity on the other. It is not holding half the Truth of God that marks the man, that is the attainment of a babe. But to hold *all*—and to be afraid neither of high doctrines nor of low doctrines—neither of Calvinism nor of Arminianism, nor any other *ism* so long as there is the Truth of God in it. To pick the Truth of God out, and to hold fast that which is good—this is the conduct of a full grown, well-developed Believer. May you have Divine Grace, dear Friends, as touching these Truths, to feed upon them as men and women who are of full age.

I shall not say anything upon the other point, except that it is just the same *as to advanced experience*. There are some who have run to the extreme of despondency, and others to the verge of levity through not knowing that strong meat is only for men of full age. But I have said enough and, therefore, I now leave this point to turn to a second.

II. Secondly, let me INVITE THE QUALIFIED PERSONS TO COME TO THE FEAST. Who are they? They are here described as being persons of *full age*. Understand, dear Friends, that there is no reference here at all to the age of a person as to human life. The Greek word is, "Men that are perfect." It signifies, therefore, *spiritual* men and women who have attained to the highest degree of spiritual development. Now this is not the result of years, for there are some gray heads that have no more wisdom than when they first began. And, on the other hand, there are some youthful Believers who are worthy to be called fathers in Israel, through the progress which they have made in Divine Grace.

Growth in Grace does not run side by side with growth in years. As old Master Brooks says, "There are some few Believers who seem to be born with beards." They are ripe Christians at a very early stage of their spiritual existence. And there are some who, if they tarry at Jericho till their beards are grown, will be long in seeing the King's face. They are always babes, needing the spoon and the rocking chair, even in old age. The expression in the text, then, has no reference to *age*, but is used in a *spiritual* and *metaphorical* sense.

But what is meant by men that are full grown? Well, you know a babe has the same parts as a man. The babe is perfect in its measure, but it is not perfectly *perfect*. Those limbs must expand. The little hand must get a wider grasp. The trembling feet must become strong pillars for ripening manhood—the man must swell and grow and expand and enlarge and be consolidated. Now when we are born to God, we have all the parts of the advanced Christian. Faith, hope, love, patience—they are all there, but they are all little, all in miniature—and they must all grow. And he is of full age whose faith is vigorous, whose love is inflamed, whose patience is constant, whose hope is bright, who has every Grace, in full fashion.

Nor is it only development. The full grown man is *stronger* than the babe. His sinews are knit. His bones have become more full of solid material. They are no longer soft and cartilaginous, there is more solid matter in them. So with the advanced Christian—he is no longer to be bent about and twisted—his bones are as iron, and his muscles as steel. He moves himself in stately paces, neither needs he any upon whom to lean. He can plow the soil, or reap the corn. Deeds that were impossible to infancy are simplicities to the full grown man. Now you understand what the full grown Christian is. He can do, and dare, and suffer what would have frightened him before.

He can fight with dragons though once he would have fled before a grasshopper. He can now endure to pass through deep waters, though once a little brook would have swept him away. There is as much difference, in fact, between the full grown Christian and the newly-born convert as between the strong, hale, hearty man of forty, and a babe of three or four. We must, then, before we can venture upon things hard to be understood, labor to arrive at full age.

But then our text tells us *that they have had their senses exercised*. The soul has senses as well as the body. Men who have had their senses exercised know how to choose between good and evil. Now, what are these senses? Well, there are our spiritual *eyes*. When the babe first sees, it has little idea of distances. I suppose that to a babe's eyes everything appears as a flat surface. It is the result of experience which enables the man to know that such a thing is so many yards off, and that another is so many miles distant.

Travelers who go to Switzerland for the first time soon discover that they have not had their eyes exercised. You think that you can reach the peak of yonder mountain in half-an-hour. There is the top of yonder rock. You dream that a boy might fly his kite to the summit, but it shall take you hours to climb there, and weary limbs, alone, can bear you to the dizzy height. At a distance young travelers scarcely know which is mountain, and which is cloud. All this is the result of not having the eyes exercised upon such glorious objects. It is just precisely so in spiritual things—unless Christians have their eyes exercised. I hope dear Friends, you know what it is to see Christ. Your eyes, by faith, have looked upon the King in His beauty. You know what it is, too, to see self. You have looked into the depravity of your own heart and have been amazed.

Your eyes have seen the rising and the falling of many deceptions. Your eyes have been tried in waiting for God in many a dark night, or in beholding Him in the midst of many a bright Providence. Thus your eyes have been exercised. Now, when a doctrine is put before you, a strong doctrine, you look at it and say—"Ah, yes, my eye of faith tells me, from what I have seen before, that that is healthy food upon which I may feed." But if you detect something in it that is too high, or too low, you at once say—"No, that won't do for me," and you put it away. Hence it is that the man, the eye of whose faith has been tried with bright visions and dark revelations, is qualified to discern between good and evil in those great mysteries which would be too high for unexercised Believers.

Then there is *the ear*. We hear it said of some that they have no ear for music. We sometimes hear it said of others that they have an ear for music and they can tell when people are singing half a note amiss. How shocked they would sometimes be with some of you who will persist in running away from our good leader, and getting a whole note amiss! But there are some who cannot tell one note from another. So is it in spiritual things, "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound," but many do not know the difference between the joyful sound, and that which is half a note lower. Why, dear Friends, when a Christian is well taught, he knows when a note goes too high and he says—"No, no, no. That jars."

Or when it goes too low he says—"No, that is out of tune." He wants to have the keynote of the Gospel constantly before him, and any divergence from the grand old tune of orthodoxy, which he has learned from the Word of God, at once makes him feel wretched. He has a fine, keen, discerning ear. He can tell at once any mistake, and is not to be led astray by it. Hence it is that such persons are fit to hear the solid doctrines of the Gospel preached, because they have listened to the voice of God. They have heard the charms of evil, and, by God's Grace, have despised them. They have heard the conversation of educated saints, they have been taught in the ways of the Lord, and knowing, therefore, the difference be-

tween this and that, they can discern between good and evil, and are not to be led astray.

Now, I know that there is always a tendency in our large congregation for us to lose a driblet every now and then of two sorts of people. One sort, when they hear an earnest sermon to sinners. When the wanderers are exhorted to flee to Jesus and are told that if they perish it will be their own fault. "Oh," these people say, "that is Arminian doctrine!" And off they go to some place where they can have the hyperism undiluted. And, then, if on another morning God's predestination is proclaimed, and men are told that God has chosen His people, that "it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy," then certain people say, "Ah, I did not get on this morning. It was too high for me."

The fault is not in either of the doctrines, for they are both Scriptural—the evil lies in these people's ears. They do not know the note which is the happy medium between the two systems—the note which takes in both, which shows the sinner his own responsibility—and yet shows to both saint and sinner, God's real Sovereignty. Happy is he whose ear is well tuned to discern both good and evil. Then, dear Friends, comes *the nose*, the intention of which sense is to smell things afar off. True Christians have smelt the fragrance of Christ's fellowship. "While the king sits at his table, My spikenard sends forth the smell thereof."

Advanced Christians know the fragrance of Heaven. The angels have brought them bundles of myrrh from the other side of the stream. They have had their nostrils exercised, and you know the nostrils are of very essential use in reference to food. The nostrils can soon detect decay or that spiciness which the crafty trader employs to conceal it. There are certain persons whose ministry is putrid, but they lay on thick, very excellent spice about the safety of the Believer, and the joy and peace that there are in Christ—so that the putridity is somewhat checked. And some Christian people eat the nauseous morsels, forgetting, or not knowing what they really are, because of the sweet smell and flavor in which the whole is wrapped up.

But our nostrils are given us on purpose to detect the craft and mischief of designing men. And the spiritual nostril that has been made to perceive the difference between the righteous and the wicked will soon be able to perceive what is true food and what is carrion. Then, you know, there is *the taste*. And this sense needs educating, too. Some men have no taste. To them flavor is no luxury. There are many who have no taste spiritually. Give them a cup of mingle-mangle—"perhaps," "ifs," "buts," "maybe," creature willings, and creature doings—and if it is only warm, they will drink it down and say, "Oh, how delightful!"

If you give them a cup, on the other hand, that is full of Divine purposes, precious promises, and sure mercies of David—if you will only flavor it with a good style of oratory—they will drink that sweet potion, too, and relish it. The two things may contradict each other flatly, but these people have no discernment—they have not had their senses exercised. But those of you who have been made to taste the sweets of Covenant Grace, you, especially, who have eaten His flesh and drunk His blood—and you, too, who have been made to drink the wormwood, and the gall till your mouth knows every flavor, from the bitterness of death up to the

glory of immortality—you may taste the strong meat without any fear, for your senses are exercised.

Lastly, there is the sense of *touch*, and you know how in some men this has been developed to a very high degree. Men who are deficient in sight, for instance, have acquired by touch the knowledge which would, if they had not been blind, have been derived from their eyes. So Believers have been made to touch the hem of Jesus' garment. They have exercised the sense of feeling by joy, by rapture—perhaps by doubt and by fear—and their touch has become so acute, so keen, that though their eyes were shut, as soon as they touch a doctrine they would know what was of God and what of man.

Now our text says that this comes as the result of use, and that use generally comes to us through affliction. Have you ever noticed how men get their senses clear through affliction? I read in the life of good Dr. Brown, that when he first preached he heard two women at the door talking to one another about his sermon. One of them said to the other—"Ah, 'twas very well, but 'twas almost all tinsel." A short time after, the good preacher lost his wife. His heart was broken, and his whole nature affected. The roots went deeper down into the solid Truth of God, and when he preached again, the same woman said to her friend—"It is all gold now."

Afflicted Christians come to know the difference between tinsel and gold. I love a people who do not care always to have great garlands of fine flowers handed out to them. Oh, that running after oratory, that seeking after fine flowing sentences, that spread-eagle style which some adopt—why this is all folly! What the child of God wants is matter. He would like to have the matter given him in a good shape, but still it is the matter, the real solid food that he wants, and that ministry will always be the most acceptable to advanced Believers which has the most of Truth in it.

They do not care half so much about the style as about the food that is served up in the sermon. They want something upon which the intellect may meditate, which the soul can masticate, which the heart can assimilate, and upon which the whole being may be nourished and strengthened. Young Christians very frequently like Arminian doctrines. But as we grow older, as men who were radicals when they were young grow to be conservatives when they are old, so we grow to be Calvinistic, for Calvinism is the conservatism of Christianity. It is just the conservative principle, the old, solid, stiff, unyielding doctrine. Though I am a long way from being anything like old, and do not intend to be old if I can help it for another thirty years or so, yet still I do find a greater and more intense love for the doctrine of election, the doctrine of eternal union to Christ, final perseverance, and all those great Truths where saints in all ages have been custom to find a haven for their spirits.

III. And now we must conclude. I think our Apostle meant the text to be a GENTLE REBUKE TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT FULL GROWN MEN. The Apostle says that the Hebrew saints ought to have been teachers, but that they still remained infants.

It is very pleasant to see the infant in the house. What joy there is in its tender cry! But suppose that our children were always to remain infants—that would be no happiness to the parent. If you had a son twenty years of age who still needed to be carried, who required still to hang upon the

nurse's breast, would you not consider it one of the most serious of calamities? But you say you would pity the child. Ah, so you would, but suppose it was his own willful fault? Suppose the little one could, by some piece of willfulness, prevent itself from growing, and would not use the proper means for development?

I think you would then wisely use the rod as well as show your pity. Twenty years of age, and yet still in long clothes! Thirty years of age, and still uttering a babbling cry! Forty years of age, and still needing milk! Ah, you smile, but did any of you smile at yourselves? How long have you been converted to God? How long have you known the Savior? Why, I have known some converts that have been in long clothes for thirty years after they were converted and are babies still. If you asked them to speak for Christ, they could only say a word or two of mere babble.

And as for their confession of faith, it was not a reason. They did declare the hope that was in them, but they did not give a reason for it, for they could not give one. Then there are some who grow so slowly that their faith is just as weak now as it was twenty years ago. They go tottering along and cannot run yet. They will want always to have preached to them just the simple elements, and if you give them a piece of high doctrine they have not cut their wisdom teeth yet, and therefore they cannot masticate it, much less can they get any comfort out of it. Have I not seen some who ought to have been as patient as Job by this time, as fretful as they can well be?

Dear Friends, I must just give you a word of rebuke. It must be gently, for you are our Brothers and Sisters, and if you are but a babe, if you have life in you, you are saved. But why should you always be a babe, dear Brother? Is it not that you have been too worldly? You have made money—oh, I wish you had made an increase of Divine Grace! You have been very attentive to those carts and horses, and to that farm and to that speculation—you have attended very diligently to that saleroom and to that exchange—oh, if only you had been as diligent in prayer! If only you had been as diligent for your Bible as for your ledger—and if only you had ridden in the chariots of salvation as often as you have been riding your own horse about your farm—how much better a Christian you might have been!

Do you not see, Brothers and Sisters, you have been stinting yourself of food? You do not read the Scriptures, which are the food of the saints. You have stinted yourself of breath, and if a man is short of breath, he will not have much to boast of. If you want to grow, you need to pray more. My dear Brothers and Sisters, surely you have attached too little importance to these things. You have not considered them enough. Why not begin to search the Scriptures? Why not try to live nearer to God? Why not pant after a greater conformity to Christ's image? Why, what a Christian you might then be! I do ask my Lord often this one mercy, not only to make this Church, as it is, the largest Church in Christendom, but to be pleased to make us also strong men and women.

Oh, if I can have in this Church a body of strong men and women who know what they have received, and hold it fast, and grow in Grace—who have their eyes lit up with enthusiasm because hearts are burning with a Divine fervor—why, there is nothing impossible for you! You shall make

the Church tell upon its age. You shall move London, which is the heart of the world, until it shall send out deep heart throbs that shall reach throughout the universe! With such multitudes as God adds to us continually—what might not be done if we had but the Baptism of fire?

But we must be ready for the fire. We must tarry at Jerusalem and then, when the Holy Spirit comes down, we may speak each in his own tongue as the Spirit shall give us utterance—and who can tell how mightily we may serve the Master? Sunday school teachers, I would not have you ordinary teachers who merely set children reading. I would have you masters of the art of teaching, who are able to catechize with clearness and with power. You young preachers who stand in the streets—I would not have it said of you that you can talk but that there is nothing in it. You young men in our college—I hope it shall never be said of any of you, as you go forth, that you are deficient in spiritual intelligence, and that you are unenlightened.

May you be strong men, my Brothers and Sisters, all of you—and then it shall be my happiness to see you like the old guard of Napoleon—marching irresistibly into the battle, and this shall be your war cry, if bad and evil times shall come—“We can die, but we can never surrender.” For God and for His Truth you shall make your last charge over your enemies, and then enter into the victory which He reserves for all them that diligently serve Him.

I have said nothing to those of you who are unconverted. “One word,” says one, “one word. One word.” Well, here it is for you—I will give you more this evening, but I will give you one word now—“Prepare to meet your God!” “But how?” asks one. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. Taste and see that the Lord is good. He that believes on Him shall never perish, but have everlasting life. To believe is to trust. Trust Jesus and be saved. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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FINAL PERSEVERANCE (PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS) NO. 75

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 20, 1856,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

*“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.”
Hebrews 6:4-6.*

THERE are some spots in Europe which have been the scenes of frequent warfare, as for instance, the kingdom of Belgium which might be called the battlefield of Europe. War has raged over the whole of Europe, but in some unhappy spots, battle after battle has been fought. So there is scarcely a passage of Scripture which has not been disputed between the enemies of the Truth of God and the upholders of it—but this passage, with one or two others, has been the special subject of attack. This is one of the texts which have been trod under the feet of controversy and there are opinions upon it as adverse as the poles! Some assert that it means one thing and some declare that it means another. We think that some of them approach somewhat near the Truth of God—but others of them desperately err from the mind of the Spirit! We come to this passage with the intention to read it with the simplicity of a child and whatever we find therein, to state it. And if it may not seem to agree with something we have up to now held, we are prepared to cast away every doctrine of our own rather than one passage of Scripture!

Looking at the scope of the whole passage, it appears to us that the Apostle wished to push the disciples on. There is a tendency in the human mind to stop short of the heavenly mark. As soon as ever we have attained to the first principles of religion, have passed through Baptism and understand the resurrection of the dead, there is a tendency in us to sit still—to say, “I have passed from death unto life. Here I may take my stand and rest.” The Christian life was intended not to be a sitting still, but a *race*, a perpetual *motion*. The Apostle, therefore, endeavors to urge the disciples forward and make them run with diligence the heavenly race, looking unto Jesus! He tells them that it is not enough to have, on a certain day, passed through a glorious change—to have experienced, at a certain time, a wonderful operation of the Spirit. Rather, he teaches them it is absolutely necessary that they should have the Spirit *all their lives*—that they should, as long as they live, be progressing in the Truth

of God! In order to make them persevere, if possible, he shows them that if they do not, they must, most certainly be lost—for there is no other salvation but that which God has already bestowed on them and if that does not keep them—carry them forward and present them spotless before God—there cannot be any other! It is impossible, he says, if you are once enlightened and then fall away, that you should ever be renewed again unto repentance.

We shall, this morning, answer one or two questions. The first question will be, *Who are the people here spoken of?* Are they true Christians, or not? Secondly, *What is meant by, “falling away”?* And thirdly, *What is intended, when it is asserted, that it is impossible to renew them to repentance?*

I. First, then, we answer the question, WHO ARE THE PEOPLE HERE SPOKEN OF? If you read Dr. Gill, Dr. Owen and almost all the eminent Calvinistic writers, they, all of them, assert that these persons are *not* Christians. They say that enough is said here to represent a man who is a Christian *externally* but not enough to give the portrait of a true Believer. Now, it strikes me they would not have said this if they had not had some Doctrine to uphold—for a child reading this passage would say that *the persons intended by it must be Christians*. If the Holy Spirit intended to describe Christians, I do not see that He could have used more explicit terms than there are here! How can a man be said to be enlightened, to taste of the heavenly gift and to be made partaker of the Holy Spirit, without being a child of God? With all deference to these learned doctors, and I admire and love them all, I humbly conceive that they allowed their judgments to be a little warped when they said that! And I think I shall be able to show that none but true Believers are here described.

First, they are spoken of as having been once enlightened. This refers to the enlightening influence of God’s Spirit, poured into the soul at the time of conviction—when man is enlightened with regard to his spiritual state. When he is made to see how evil and bitter a thing it is to sin against God, made to feel how utterly powerless he is to rise from the grave of his corruption—and is further enlightened to see, that, “by the deeds of the Law shall no flesh living be justified,” and to behold Christ on the Cross, as the sinner’s only hope! The first work of Grace is to enlighten the soul. By nature we are entirely dark. The Spirit, like a lamp, sheds light into the dark heart, revealing its corruption, displaying its sad state of destitution and, in due time, also revealing Jesus Christ, so that in His light we may see light. I cannot consider a man truly enlightened unless he is a child of God. Does not the term indicate a person taught of God? It is not the whole of Christian experience—but is it not a part?

Having enlightened us, as the text says, the next thing that God grants to *us is a taste of the heavenly gift* by which we understand *the heavenly gift of salvation*, including the pardon of sin, Justification by the

imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, Regeneration by the Holy Spirit and all those gifts and Graces in which the earlier dawn of spiritual life convey salvation. All true Believers have tasted of the heavenly gift. It is not enough for a man to be enlightened—the light may glare upon his eyeballs—and yet he may die—he must *taste* as well as *see* that the Lord is good! It is not enough to see that I am corrupt—I must taste that Christ is able to remove my corruption. It is not enough for me to know that He is the only Savior—I must taste of His flesh and of His blood and have a vital union with Him. We most certainly think that when a man has been enlightened and has had an experience of Grace, he is a Christian. Whatever those great divines might hold, we cannot think that the Holy Spirit would describe an unregenerate man as having been enlightened and as having tasted of the heavenly gift! No, my Brothers and Sisters, if I have tasted of the heavenly gift, then that heavenly gift is mine. If I have had ever so short an experience of my Savior's love, I am one of His. If He has brought me into the green pastures and made me taste of the still waters and the tender grass, I need not fear as to whether I am really a child of God!

Then the Apostle gives a further description, a higher state of Grace—*sanctification by participation of the Holy Spirit*. It is a peculiar privilege to Believers, after their first tasting of the heavenly gift, to be made partakers of the Holy Spirit. He is an indwelling Spirit. He dwells in the hearts, souls and minds of men. He makes this mortal flesh His home—He makes our soul His palace and there He rests. We do assert (and, we think, on the authority of Scripture), that no man can be a partaker of the Holy Spirit and yet be unregenerate. Where the Holy Spirit dwells, there must be life and if I have participation with the Holy Spirit and fellowship with Him, then I may rest assured that my salvation has been purchased by the blood of the Savior! You need not fear, Beloved—if you have the Holy Spirit, you have that which ensures your salvation. If you, by an inward communion, can participate in His Spirit and, if by a perpetual indwelling the Holy Spirit rests in you, you are not only a Christian, but you have arrived at some maturity in and by Grace. You have gone beyond mere enlightenment—you have passed from the bare taste—you have attained to a positive feast and a partaking of the Holy Spirit!

Lest there should be any mistake, however, about the persons being children of God, the Apostle goes to a further stage of Grace. They “have *tasted the good Word of God*.” Now I will venture to say there are some good Christian people here who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have never “tasted the good Word of God.” I mean by that, that they are really converted, have tasted the heavenly gift, but have not grown so strong in Grace as to know the sweetness, the richness and the fatness of the very Word that saved them! They have been saved by the Word—but they have not come yet to realize, love and feed upon the Word as many others have. It is one thing for God to work a work of Grace in the soul—it is quite another thing for God to *show* us that work. It is one thing for the

Word to work in us—it is another thing for us really and habitually to relish, taste and rejoice in that Word! Some of my hearers are true Christians but they have not got to that stage wherein they can love Election and suck it down as a sweet morsel. They have not got wherein they can take the great doctrines of Grace and feed upon them. But these people had. They had tasted the good Word of God as well as received the good gift—they had attained to such a state that they had loved the Word, had tasted and feasted upon it. It was the man of their right hand. They had counted it sweeter than honey, yes, sweeter than the droppings of the honeycomb. They had “tasted the good Word of God.” I say again, if these people are not Believers—who are?

And they had gone still further. They had attained the summit of piety. They had received “*the powers of the age to come.*” Not miraculous gifts which are denied us in these days, but all those powers with which the Holy Spirit endows a Christian. And what are they? Why, there is the power of *faith*, which commands even the heavens, themselves, to rain and they rain, or stop the bottles of Heaven, that they rain not. There is the power of *prayer*, which puts a ladder between earth and Heaven and bids angels walk up and down, to convey our needs to God and bring down blessings from above. There is the *power* with which God girds His servant when he speaks by Inspiration, which enables him to instruct others and lead them to Jesus. And whatever other power there may be—the power of holding communion with God, or the power of patiently waiting for the Son of Man—they were possessed by these individuals. They were not simply children, but they were MEN—they were not merely alive, but they were entitled with power! They were men whose muscles were firmly set, whose bones were strong. They had become giants in Grace and had received not only the Light of God, but the power also of the age to come! These, we say, whatever the meaning of the text might have been, were beyond a doubt none other than true and real Christians!

II. And now we answer the second question, WHAT IS MEANT BY FALLING AWAY?

We must remind our friends that *there is a vast distinction between falling away and falling.* It is nowhere said in Scripture that if a man *falls* he cannot be renewed. On the contrary, “the righteous falls seven times, but he rises up again.” And however many times the child of God does fall, the Lord still holds the righteous! Yes, when our bones are broken, He binds up our bones again and sets us once more upon a rock. He says, “Return, you backsliding children of men, for I am married unto you.” And if the Christian does backslide ever so far, still, Almighty Mercy cries, “Return, return, return and seek an injured Father’s heart.” He still calls His children back again. Falling is not *falling away*. Let me explain the difference. A man who falls may behave just like a man who falls away and yet there is a great distinction between the two. I can use no better illustration than the distinction between fainting and dying. There

lies a young creature—she can scarcely breathe—she cannot, herself, lift up her hand and if lifted up by anyone else, it falls. She is cold and stiff, she is faint, but not dead. There is another one, just as cold and stiff as she is, but there is this difference—she is dead. The Christian may faint and may fall down in a faint, too. And some may pick him up and say he is dead—but he is not. If he falls, God will lift him up, again, but if he *falls away*, God, Himself, cannot save him. For it is impossible, if the righteous fall *away*, “to renew them again unto repentance.”

Moreover, *to fall away is not to commit sin* under a temporary surprise and temptation. Abraham goes to Egypt. He is afraid that his wife will be taken away from him and he says, “She is my sister.” That was a sin under a temporary surprise—a sin, of which, by-and-by, he repented and God forgave him. Now that is *falling*—but it is not *falling away*. Even Noah might commit a sin which has degraded his memory, even till now, and shall disgrace it to the latest time—but, doubtless, Noah repented and was saved by Sovereign Grace. Noah *fell*, but Noah did not *fall away*. A Christian may go astray once and speedily return again—and though it is a sad, woeful and evil thing to be surprised into a sin—yet there is a great difference between this and the sin which would be occasioned by a total falling away from Grace.

Nor can a man who commits a sin which is not exactly a surprise, be said to fall away. I believe that some Christian men—(God forbid that we should say much of it!—let us cover the nakedness of our brother with a cloak)—but I do believe that there are some Christians, who, for a period of time, have wandered into sin and yet have not positively fallen away. There is that black case of David—a case which has puzzled thousands! Certainly for some months David lived without making a public confession of his sin, but, doubtless, he had achings of heart, for Divine Grace had not ceased its work. There was a spark among the ashes that Nathan stirred up which showed that David was not dead, or else the match which the Prophet applied would not have caught light so readily. And so, Beloved, you may have wandered into sin for a time and gone far from God—and yet you are not the character here described, concerning whom it is said that it is impossible you should be saved. Wanderer though you are, you are still your Father’s son, and mercy cries, “Repent, repent! Return unto your first husband, for then it was better with you than it is now. Return, O Wanderer, return.”

Again, falling away is not even *a giving up of profession*. Some will say, “Now there is So-and-So, he used to make a profession of Christianity and now he denies it—and what is worse, he dares to curse and swear and says that he never knew Christ at all! Surely *he* must be fallen away.” My Friend, he has fallen, fallen fearfully and fallen woefully—but I remember a case in Scripture of a man who denied his Lord and Master before His own face! You remember his name—he is an old friend of yours—our friend, Simon Peter! He denied Him with oaths and curses and said, “I say unto you that I know not the Man.” And yet Jesus looked

on Simon. He had *fallen*, but he had not *fallen away*—for, only two or three days after that, there was Peter at the tomb of his Master, running there to meet his Lord, to be one of the first to find Him risen! Beloved, you may even have denied Christ by open profession and yet, if you repent there is mercy for you! Christ has not cast you away, you shall yet repent. You have not fallen away. If you had, I might not preach to you—for it is impossible for those who have fallen away to be renewed, again, unto repentance.

But someone says, “What is falling away?” Well, there *never has been a case of it* yet and, therefore, I cannot describe it from observation. But I will tell you what I suppose it is. To fall away would be for the Holy Spirit to entirely go out of a man—for His Grace entirely to *cease*—not to lie dormant, but to cease to be—for God, who has begun a good work, to leave off entirely doing it—to take His hand completely and entirely away and say, “there, Man! I have half-saved you, now I will damn you!” That is what falling away is. It is not to sin temporarily. A child may sin against his father and still be alive. Falling away is like cutting the child’s head clean off. Not merely falling, for then our Father could pick us up—but being dashed down a precipice where we are lost forever. Falling away would involve God’s Grace changing its living nature, God’s Immutability becoming variable, God’s faithfulness becoming changeable and God, Himself, being undeified—for all these things falling away would necessitate.

III. But if a child of God *could* fall away and Grace could cease in a man’s heart—now comes the third question—Paul says, **IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO BE RENEWED**. What did the Apostle mean? One eminent commentator says he meant that it would be very difficult. It would be very difficult, indeed, for a man who fell away, to be saved. But we reply, “My dear Friend, it does not say anything about its being very difficult—it says it is *impossible*—and we like to read our Bible just as a child would read it.” It says it is impossible and we say that it would be utterly *impossible*, if such a case as is supposed, were to happen—*impossible* for man and also *impossible* for God—for God has purposed that He never will grant a second salvation to save those whom the first salvation has failed to deliver! I think, however, I hear someone say, “It seems to me that it is possible for some such to fall away,” because it says, ‘It is impossible, if they shall fall away, to renew them, again, into repentance.’” Well, my Friend, I will grant you, your theory for a moment. You are a good Christian this morning. Let us apply it to yourself and see how you will like it. You have believed in Christ and committed your soul to God and you think that in some unlucky hour you may fall entirely away. Mark you, if you come to me and tell me that you have fallen away, how would you like me to say to you, “My Friend, you are as much damned as the devil in Hell! For it is impossible to renew you to repentance”? “Oh, no, Sir,” you would say, “I will repent again and join the Church!” That is just the Arminian theory all over—but it is not in

God's Scripture. If you once fall away, you are as damned as any man who suffers in the gulf forever. And yet we have heard a man talk about people being converted three, four, and five times—and regenerated over and over again! I remember a good man (I suppose he was) pointing to a man who was walking along the street and saying, "That man has been born-again three times, to my certain knowledge," (I could mention the name of the individual but I refrain from doing so) "and believe he will fall again," he said. "He is so much addicted to drinking that I do not believe the Grace of God will do anything for him, unless he becomes a teetotaler." Now, such men cannot read the Bible, because in case their members do positively fall away, here it is stated as a positive fact that it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. But I ask my Arminian friend, does he not believe that as long as there is life there is hope? "Yes," he says—

***"While the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return."***

Well, that is not very consistent—to say this—and in the very next breath tell us that there are some people who fall away and consequently fall into such a condition that they cannot be saved! I want to know how you make these two things fit each other? I want you to make these two Doctrines agree and until some enterprising individual will bring the north pole and set it on the top of the south, I cannot tell how you will accomplish it! The fact is you are quite right in saying, "While there is life there is hope"—but you are wrong in saying that any individual ever did fall into such a condition that it was impossible for him to be saved!

We come now to do two things—first *to prove the Doctrine*, that if a Christian falls away, he cannot be saved. And, secondly, *to improve the Doctrine*, or to show its use.

1. Now I am going to prove the Doctrine that if a Christian FALLS AWAY—not *falls*—for you understand how I have explained that—but if a Christian ceases to be a child of God and if Divine Grace dies out in his heart—he is then beyond the possibility of salvation and it is impossible for him ever to be renewed. Let me show you why. First, it is utterly impossible, if you consider the work which has already broken down. When men have built bridges across streams, if they have been built of the strongest material and in the most excellent manner and yet the foundation has been found so bad that none will stand, what do they say? Why, "We have already tried the best which engineering or architecture has taught us, the best has already failed. We know nothing that can exceed what has been tried. And we do, therefore, feel that there remains no possibility of ever bridging that stream, or ever running a line of railroad across this bog or this morass, for we have already tried what is acknowledged to be the best scheme." As the Apostle says, "These people have once been enlightened. They have once had the influence of the Holy Spirit revealing to them their sin—what now remains to be tried? They have once been convicted—is there anything superior to conviction? Does the Bible promise that the poor sinner shall have

anything over and above the conviction of his sin to make him sensible of it? Is there anything more powerful than the sword of the Spirit? If that has not pierced the man's heart—is there anything else which will do it? Here is a man who has been under the hammer of God's Law but that has not broken his heart—can you find anything stronger? The lamp of God's Spirit has already lit up the caverns of his soul—if that is not sufficient, where will you borrow another? Ask the sun—has he a lamp more bright than the illumination of the Spirit? Ask the stars—have they a light more brilliant than the light of the Holy Spirit? Creation answers, No. If that fails, then there is nothing else. These people, moreover, had tasted the heavenly gift—and though they had been pardoned and justified, yet pardon through Christ and justification were not enough (on this supposition) to save them. How else can they be saved? God has cast them away. After He has failed in saving them by these, what else can deliver them? Already they have tasted of the heavenly gift—is there a greater mercy for them? Is there a brighter dress than the robe of Christ's righteousness? Is there a more efficacious bath than that “fountain filled with blood”? No! All the earth echoes, “No!” If the one has failed, what else does there remain?

These persons, too, have been partakers of the Holy Spirit—if that fails, what more can we give them? If, my Hearer, the Holy Spirit dwells in your soul and that Holy Spirit does not sanctify you and keep you to the end, what else can be tried? Ask the blasphemer whether he knows a being, or dares to suppose a being superior to the Holy Spirit! Is there a being greater than Omnipotence? Is there a might greater than that which dwells in the Believer's new-born heart? And if already the Holy Spirit has failed, O, Heaven, tell us where we can find anything that can excel His might? If that is ineffectual, what next is to be tried? These people, who had “tasted the good Word of Life,” had loved the Doctrines of Grace. Those Doctrines had entered into their souls and they had fed upon them. What new doctrines shall be preached to them? Prophet of ages! Where will you find another system of Divinity? Who shall we have? Shall we raise up Moses from the tomb? Shall we fetch up all the ancient seers and bid them prophesy? If, then, there is only one Doctrine that is true and if these people have fallen away *after* receiving that, how can they be saved?

Again, these people, according to the text, have had “the powers of the age to come.” They have had power to conquer sin—power in faith, power in prayer, power of communion. With what greater power shall they be endowed? This has already failed—what next can be done? O you angels! Answer! What next? What other means remain? What else can avail, if already the great things of salvation have been defeated? What else shall now be attempted? He had been once saved—but yet it is supposed that he is lost—how, then, can he *now* be saved? Is there a supplementary salvation? Is there something that shall overtop Christ and be a Christ where Jesus is defeated?

And then the Apostle says that the greatness of their sin which they would incur, if they did fall away, would put them beyond the bounds of mercy. Christ died and by His death He made an Atonement for His own murderers. He made an Atonement for those sins which crucified Him once, but do we read that Christ will ever die for those who crucify Him twice? But the Apostle tells us that if Believers do fall away, they will “crucify the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame.” Where, then, would be an Atonement for that? He has died for me. What? Though the sins of all the world were on my shoulders, still they only crucified Him once and that one Crucifixion has taken all those sins away! But if I crucified Him again, where would I find pardon? Could heavens, could earth, could Christ, Himself, with His heart full of love, point me to another Christ—show to me a second Calvary—give me a second Gethsemane? Ah, no! The very guilt, itself, would put us beyond the pale of hope, if we were to *fall away!*

Again Beloved, *think what it would necessitate to save such a man.* Christ has died for him once, yet he has fallen away and is lost. The Spirit has regenerated him once and that regenerating work has been of no use. God has given him a new heart (I am only speaking, of course, on the supposition of the Apostle)—He has put His Law in that heart—yet He has departed from him—contrary to the promise that He would not. He has made him “like a shining light,” but he did not “shine more and more unto the perfect day”—he shone only unto blackness. What next? There must be a second Incarnation, a second Calvary, a second Holy Spirit, a second Regeneration, a second Justification, although the first was finished and complete—in fact, I know not what! It would necessitate the upsetting of the whole kingdom of Nature and Grace and it would, indeed, be a world turned upside down, if after the gracious Savior failed, He were to attempt the work again.

If you read the 7th and 8th verses, you will see that *the Apostle calls nature in to his assistance.* He says, “The earth which drinks in the rain that comes often upon it and brings forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receives blessing from God: But that which bears thorns and briars is rejected and is nigh unto cursing; whose end it is to be burned.” Look! There is a field. The rain comes on it and it brings forth good fruit. Well, then, there is God’s blessing on it. But there is, according to your supposition, another field on which the same rain descends, which the same dew moistens. It has been plowed and harrowed as well as the other and the farmer has exercised all his craft upon it and yet it is not fertile. Well, if the rain of Heaven did not fertilize it, what next? Already all the arts of agriculture have been tried, every implement has been worn out on its surface and yet it has been of no use. What next? There remains nothing but that it shall be burned and cursed—given up like the desert of Sahara and resigned to destruction. So, my Hearer, could it be possible that Grace could work in you and then not affect your salvation? That the influence of Divine Grace could come down, like rain from Heaven and yet return unto God void? There

could not be any hope for you, for you would be “nigh unto cursing,” and your end would be “to be burned.”

There is one idea which has occurred to us. It has struck us as a singular thing that our Friends should hold that men can be converted, made into new creatures, then fall away and be converted again. I am an old creature by nature. God creates me into a new thing. He makes me a new creature. I cannot go back into an old creature for I cannot be uncreated. But yet, supposing that new creatureship of mine is not good enough to carry me to Heaven. What is to come after that? Must there be something above a new creature—a new, new creature? Really, my Friends, we have got into the country of Dreamland—but we were forced to follow our opponents into that region of absurdity for we do not know how else to deal with them!

And one thought more. There is nothing in Scripture which teaches us that there is any salvation, save the one salvation of Jesus Christ—nothing that tells us of any other power, super-excellent and surpassing the power of the Holy Spirit. These things have already been tried on the man and yet, according to the supposition, they have failed, for he has fallen away! Now God has never revealed a supplementary salvation for men on whom one salvation has had no effect. And until we are pointed to one Scripture which declares this, we will still maintain that the Doctrine of the text is this—that if Grace is ineffectual, if Grace does not keep a man, then there is nothing left but that he must be damned! And what is that but to say, only going a little round about, that Grace *will do it*? So that these words, instead of militating *against* the Calvinistic Doctrine of Final Perseverance, form one of the firmest *proofs* of it that could be afforded!

And now, lastly, we come to *clarify this Doctrine*. If Christians can fall away and cease to be Christians, they cannot be renewed again to repentance. “But,” says one, “You say they cannot fall away. What is the use of putting this, ‘if,’ in, like a bugbear to frighten children, or like a ghost that can have no existence?” My learned Friend, “Who are you that replies against God?” If God has put it in, He has put it in for wise reasons and for excellent purposes. Let me show you why. First, O Christian, it is put in to keep you from falling away! God preserves His children from falling away. But He keeps them by the use of *means*—and one of these is the *terrors* of the Law—showing them what would happen if they were to fall away. There is a deep precipice—what is the best way to keep anyone from going down there? Why to tell him that if he did, he would inevitably be dashed to pieces! In some old castle there is a deep cellar where there is a vast amount of fixed air and gas which would kill anybody who went down. What does the guide say? “If you go down you will never come up alive.” Who thinks of going down? The very fact of the guide telling us what the consequences would be, keeps us from it. Our friend puts away from us a cup of arsenic, he does not want us to drink it, but he says, “If you drink it, it will kill you.” Does he suppose for a

moment that we will drink it? No. He tells us the consequence and he is sure we will not do it. So God says, "My child, if you fall over this precipice you will be dashed to pieces." What does the child do? He says, "Father, keep me. Hold me up and I shall be safe." It leads the Believer to greater dependence on God, to a holy fear and caution, because he knows that if he were to fall away he could not be renewed and he stands far away from that great gulf because he knows that if he were to fall into it there would be no salvation for him! It is calculated to excite *fear* and this *holy fear* keeps the Christian from falling. If I thought as the Arminian thinks, that I might fall away and *then return again*, I should pretty often fall away. For sinful flesh and blood would think it very nice to fall away and be a sinner—go and see the play at the theater, or get drunk—and then come back to the Church and be received again as a dear Brother who had fallen away for a little while! No doubt the minister would say, "Our Brother Charles is a little unstable at times." A little unstable?! He does not know anything about *Grace*—for Grace engenders a *holy caution* because we feel that if we were not preserved by Divine Power, we would perish! We tell our friend to put oil in his lamp, that it may continue to burn! Does that imply that it will be allowed to go out? No, God will continually give him oil to pour into the lamp. Like John Bunyan's figure—there was a fire and he saw a man pouring water upon it. "Now," says the Preacher, "don't you see that fire would go out, that water is calculated to put it out and if it does, it will never be lighted again?" But God does not permit that! For there is a man *behind* the wall who is pouring oil on the fire—and we have cause for gratitude in the fact that if the oil were not put in by a heavenly hand, we would inevitably be driven to destruction. Take care, then Christian, for this is a caution!

2. It is to excite our gratitude. Suppose you say to your little boy, "Don't you know, Tommy, if I were not to give you your dinner and your supper you would die? There is nobody else to give Tommy dinner and supper." What then? The child does not think that you are not going to give him his dinner and supper—he knows you will—and he is grateful to you for them. The chemist tells us that if there were no oxygen mixed with the air, animals would die. Do you suppose that there will be no oxygen and, therefore, we shall die? No, he only teaches you the great Wisdom of God, in having mixed the gases in their proper proportions. Says one of the old astronomers, "There is great wisdom in God, that He has put the sun exactly at a right distance—not so far away that we should be frozen to death and not so near that we should be scorched." He says, "If the sun were a million miles nearer to us, we should be scorched to death." Does the man suppose that the sun will be a million miles nearer, and, therefore, we shall be scorched to death? He says, "If the sun were a million miles farther off we would be frozen to death." Does he mean that the sun will be a million miles farther off, and, therefore, we shall be frozen to death? Not at all! Yet it is quite a rational way of speaking to show us how grateful we should be to God. So says

the Apostle. Christian—if you should fall away, you could never be renewed unto repentance—then, by His Grace, He keeps you—

***“See a stone that hangs in air, see a spark in ocean live,
Kept alive with death so near, I to God the glory give.”***

There is a cup of sin which would damn your soul, O Christian. Oh, what Grace is that which holds your arm and will not let you drink it? There you are, at this hour, like the bird-catcher of St. Kilda—you are being drawn to Heaven by a single rope—if that hand which holds you, let you go, if that rope which grasps you, breaks—you are dashed on the rocks of damnation! Lift up your heart to God, then, and bless Him that His arm is not wearied and is never shortened that it cannot save! Lord Kenmure, when he was dying, said to Rutherford, “Man! My name is written on Christ’s hand and I see it! That is bold talk, Man, but I see it!” Then, if that is the case, His hand must be severed from His body before my name can be taken from Him! And if it is engraved on His heart, His heart must be torn out before my name can be removed!

Hold on, then, and trust, Believer! You have an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, which enters within the veil—the winds are bellowing, the tempests howling—should the cable slip, or your anchor break, you are lost. See those rocks on which myriads are driving?—You, too, are wrecked there, if Divine Grace leaves you! See those depths in which the skeletons of sailors sleep?—You are there if that anchor fails you! It would be impossible to moor you again, if once that anchor broke, for there are no other anchors. There can be no other salvation—if that one fails you, it is impossible that you ever should be saved. Therefore thank God that you have an Anchor that cannot fail and then loudly sing—

***“How can I sink with such a prop,
As my eternal God
Who bears the earth’s huge pillars up,
And spreads the heavens abroad?
How can I die, when Jesus lives
Who rose and left the dead?
Pardon and Grace my soul receives
From my exalted Head.”***

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

THINGS THAT ACCOMPANY SALVATION

NO. 152

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, SEPTEMBER 20, 1857,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

“Things that accompany salvation.”
Hebrews 6:9.

I AM not quite certain that my text will warrant all I shall say upon it this day if read and understood in its connection. But I have taken the words rather by accommodation than otherwise and shall make use of them as a kind of heading to the discourse which I hope to be enabled to deliver. I sat myself down and I meditated on this subject—“Things that accompany salvation.” And after some period of meditation my thoughts assumed the form of an allegory in which I hope to present them to you this morning.

I compared Salvation to a rich and costly treasure which God in His infinite love and mercy had determined to send into the world. And I remembered that our Lord Jesus was so much interested in the bringing of this Salvation to this earth that He did send all that He had and came Himself to attend and to accompany this Salvation. I then pictured to myself a great march of bright ones through this land carrying in their midst the sacred jewel of Salvation. I looked forward and I saw a mighty vanguard who already had attained the shores of Eternity. I looked around Salvation and I saw it always in every case attended with different graces and virtues which seemed to be like troops and soldiers to guard it in the van, about its flanks and in the rear.

Before we begin, however, let us just make this caution. When the Apostle speaks of virtues and of graces, he calls them “things that *accompany* salvation,” not things which *cause* it. Our faith does not cause Salvation, nor our hope, nor our love, nor our good works. They are things which *attend* it as its guard of honor. The origin of Salvation lies alone in the sovereign will of God the Father—in the infinite efficacy of the blood of Jesus—God the Son—and in the Divine influence of God the Holy Spirit. There are, however, “things that *accompany* salvation.”

Picture, then, to yourselves the march of some ancient monarch through his territory. We read stories of eastern monarchs in the olden time that seem more like romance than reality. They marched with thousands of flying banners and with all kinds of riches borne with them. Now you are to take that as the basis of my figure and suppose Salvation to be the sacred treasure which is being carried through the world—with guards before and guards behind—to accompany it on its journey.

We will begin, then, with *the advance guard that has accompanied Salvation or rather gone before it*. We shall then come to *those who immediately precede it* and then we shall notice *those who accompany it by its side* and conclude by noticing *the rear guard attending upon this Salvation of our God*.

I. First, then, IN THE MARCHES OF TROOPS AND ARMIES THERE ARE SOME THAT ARE OUTRIDERS AND GO FAR AHEAD OF THE OTHER TROOPS. So in the march of Salvation, which have far preceded it to clear the way. I will tell you the names of these stupendous Titans who have gone before. The first is *Election*, the second is *Predestination*, the third is *Redemption* and the *Covenant* is the captain of them all. Before Salvation came into this world Election marched in the very forefront and it had for its work the lodging of Salvation.

Election went through the world and marked the houses to which Salvation should come and the hearts in which the treasure should be deposited. Election looked through all the race of man, from Adam down to the last and marked with sacred stamp those for whom Salvation was designed. "He must needs go through Samaria," said Election. And Salvation must go there. Then came Predestination. Predestination did not merely mark the house but it mapped the road in which Salvation should travel to that house.

Predestination ordained every step of the great army of Salvation. It ordained the time when the sinner should be brought to Christ. The manner how he should be saved. The means that should be employed. It marked the exact hour and moment when God the Spirit should quicken the dead in sin and when peace and pardon should be spoken through the blood of Jesus. Predestination marked the way so completely that Salvation does never overstep the bounds and it is never at a loss for the road. In the everlasting decree of the Sovereign God the footsteps of Mercy were every one of them ordained.

As nothing in this world revolves by chance—as even the foreknown station of a rush by the river is as fixed as the station of a king—it was not meet that *Salvation* should be left to chance. And therefore God has mapped the place where it should pitch its tent, the manner of its footsteps to that tent and the time when it should arrive there. Then came Redemption. The way was rough. And though Election had marked the house and Predestination had mapped the road—the way was so impeded that Salvation could not travel it until it had been cleared. Forth came Redemption—it had but one weapon—that weapon was the all-victorious Cross of Christ.

There stood the mountains of our sins. Redemption smote them and they split in half and left a valley for the Lord's redeemed to march through. There was the great gulf of God's offended—Wrath—Redemption bridged it with the Cross and so left an everlasting passage by which the

armies of the Lord may cross. Redemption has tunneled every mountain. It has dried up every sea, cut down every forest. It has leveled every high hill and filled up the valleys so that the road of Salvation is now plain and simple. God can be just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly.

Now this sacred advance guard carried for their banner the Everlasting Covenant. Election, Predestination and Redemption—the things that have gone before, beyond the sight, are all rallied to the battle by this standard—the Covenant, the Everlasting Covenant—ordered in all things and sure. We know and believe that before the morning star startled the shades of darkness God had covenanted with His Son that He should die and pay a ransom price. And on God the Father's part He would give to Jesus "a number whom no man could number," who should be purchased by His blood and through that blood should be most securely saved.

Now when Election marches forward it carries the Covenant. These are chosen in the Covenant of Grace. When Predestination marches and when it marks out the way of Salvation it proclaims the Covenant. "He marked out the places of the people according to the tribes of Israel." And Redemption also, pointing to the precious blood of Christ, claims Salvation for the blood-bought ones because the Covenant has decreed it to be theirs.

Now, my dear Hearers, this advance guard is so far ahead that you and I cannot see them. These are true doctrines but very mysterious. They are beyond our sight and if we wish to see Salvation we must not stop until we see the vanguard—because they are so far off that only the eye of faith can reach them. We must have that sacred glass, that Divine telescope of faith or else we shall never have the evidence of things not seen. Let us rest certain, however, that if we have Salvation we have Election. He that believes is elected. Whoever casts himself on Christ as a guilty sinner is certainly God's chosen child. As sure as ever you believe on the Savior and go to Him you were predestinated to do so from all eternity and your faith is the great mark and evidence that you are chosen of God and precious in His esteem.

Do you believe? Then Election is yours. Do you believe? Then Predestination is as surely yours as you are alive. Do you trust in Jesus alone? Then fear not, Redemption was meant for you. So then, we will not be struck with terror at that grand advance guard that has already gained the celestial hill and has prepared the place where the elect shall forever repose upon the bosom of their God.

II. But mark, we are about to review THE ARMY THAT IMMEDIATELY PRECEDES SALVATION. And first, in the forefront of these there marches One whose name we must pronounce with sacred awe. It is God the Holy Spirit. Before anything can be done in our salvation there must come that Third Person of the Sacred Trinity. Without Him—faith, repentance, humility, love—are things quite impossible. Even the blood of our Lord Jesus

Christ cannot save until it has been applied to the heart by God the Holy Spirit.

Before we notice the grand army, then, that immediately precedes Salvation, let us be cautious that we do not forget Him who is the leader of them all. The great King, Immortal, Invisible, the Divine Person called the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit—it is He that quickens the soul—or else it would lie dead forever. It is He that makes it tender, or else it would never feel. It is He that imparts efficacy to the Word preached, or else it could never reach further than the ear. It is He who breaks the heart, it is He who makes it whole—He, from first to last—is the great worker of Salvation *in* us just as Jesus Christ was the author of Salvation *for* us. O Soul, by this may you know whether Salvation has come to your house—are you a partaker of the Holy Spirit?

Come now, answer this question—has He ever breathed on you? Has He ever breathed *into* you? Can you say that you have been the subject of His supernatural influence? For, if not, remember, except a man be born of the Spirit from above he cannot see the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. Only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Your best exertions will be all worthless unless the Holy Spirit shall work in you to will and to do of God's good pleasure. The highest efforts of the flesh can never reach higher than the flesh—just as water of itself will never run higher than its source.

You may be moral, you may be strictly upright—you may be much that is commendable but unless you are partakers of the Holy Spirit—salvation is as impossible to you as it is even to the lost. We must be born again and born again by that Divine influence or else it is all in vain. Remember, then, that the Spirit of God always accompanies Salvation.

And now, close in the rear of the adorable Spirit—follow the Thundering Legion. No sooner does God the Holy Spirit come into the soul than He brings with Him what I have called the Thundering Legion. And those of you that have been saved will not be at a loss to understand what I mean. This Thundering Legion is clad in mail, their helmets wave with horror. Their speech is rough like men that come from a far country. Their faces are terrible to look upon for they are like lions and do terribly frighten the timid. Some of the men in this Thundering Legion bear with them swords—with these swords they are to slay the sinner. For before he can be made whole he must be spiritually killed.

The sword must pierce him and must slay all his selfishness before he can be brought to the Lord Jesus. Then another body of them carry with them axes with which they cut down the thick trees of our Pride and abase the goodly cedars of our Righteousness. There are with them those that fill up the wells with stones and break up all the cisterns of our carnal Sufficiency—until we are driven to despair, having all our hopes plundered. Then come those who, with brazen trumpets or with trumps of

ram's horns—like those who once razed Jericho level with the ground—blow a blast so shrill and dread that the sinner thinks that even the yells of Hell itself could not be more terrible.

Then come those who with lances pierce the spirit through and through. And in the rear are the ten great guns, the artillery of the Law, which perpetually fire upon the wounded spirit till it knows not what it is, nor what it does. My Friend, has this Thundering Legion ever come to your house? Have they ever taken up their quarters in your heart? For rest assured these are some of the “things that accompany salvation.” What I have said is no allegory to those who have been converted but it may be a mystery to those who know not the Lord. Understand, then, that the first work of God the Spirit in the soul is a terrible work.

Before a man can be truly converted he must suffer great agony of spirit. All our self-righteousness must be laid level with the ground and trampled like the miry streets. Our carnal hopes must, every one of them, be cut in pieces and our refuges of lies must be swept away with the hail of God's anger. The Law of God will appear terrible to the sinner when he is first convicted of sin. “What have I done?” he will say. Or rather, “What have I undone? I have undone myself.” See him when God the Spirit has first convicted him of sin. You would think him mad.

He is thought to be mad by his worldly companions. He weeps day and night, tears become his meat and his drink. He can scarcely sleep for the dreams of Hell and when he wakes he thinks he feels it already. “Oh, the wrath to come, the wrath to come, the wrath to come!” That seems to be ever pressing on his heart. He is like John Bunyan's Pilgrim—he has a heavy burden on his back and he knows not how to get rid of it. He wrings his hands and cries, “What shall I do? I am undone. I have rebelled against God and God is angry with me.” Ah, I tell you this Thundering Legion is a terrible thing, indeed.

God be praised, when once they go out of the heart there is some joy. But while they are in the conscience of man, I defy him to eat or drink with any mirth or joy. The poor town of Man-Soul is hung with black all the time these rough soldiers are there. Hideous threats and doleful forebodings are the sinner's only company in such a case. He seeks to find a little hope and comfort in his own doings. Down comes the hammer of the Law and breaks all his doings to pieces. He thinks he will rest on the couch of Indifference and Sloth. Forth comes the Law—ties him to the post—takes its ten-thronged whip and begins to lay on to him with all his might till his heart bleeds again.

Then comes Conscience with its brine and washes him all over. And he is exceedingly tormented for even his bed has become a bed of spikes and thorns. This Thundering Legion always precedes Salvation. More or less of terrors every man must feel before he is converted. Some have less, some have more. But there must be some measure of this terrible Law-work in

the soul or else Salvation has not come to a man's house. Oh, Thundering Legion, you are gone. We hear their trumpets and the dying echoes still appall us. We can remember, Brethren, those terrible days when they were in our house and in our heart. They are gone. What do we see in the rear of them?

Close in the rear there follows a broken Heart. Look at it—do not despise it. God never despises it. “A broken and a contrite heart O God, You will not despise.” I see how this poor broken Heart is broken. It is rent to its very eye and center. It is bathed in tears. It is overwhelmed with suffering. See its humility. It never talks about boasting, now. Mark its repentance—the sins it loved before it hates now. It speaks not about self-salvation. Hear it, as the broken Heart speaks out its broken language. Hear it—“Lord have mercy upon me a sinner!” Do not fear to come and look at this broken Heart—how sweetly it is perfumed!

The sacred smell of a sacrifice which God approves rises from it. Hear it, as again it speaks—“Lord, save, or I perish.” See this poor broken Heart when it is in the world and at its business. It interrupts its business with cries like these—“Oh that—Ah, ah—would that!” And when it can get alone it pours out its heart before God and cries—

***“Unclean, unclean and full of sin
From first to last, O Lord I've been;
Deceitful is my heart.***

Oh wash my soul in Jesus' blood. Forgive me all my guilt and I will be Your servant forever and ever.”

Dear Hearers, has this broken Heart ever come to your house? Rest assured I am speaking God's own truth that admits of no dispute—unless this broken Heart has come within your bosom you cannot be made partakers of Christ. The heart must first be pounded in the mortar of conviction and beaten in pieces with the pestle of the Law—or else it never can receive the grace of the Comforter in all its plenitude. Are you broken-hearted today?

Are you sorrowful at this very hour? Be of good cheer, Salvation is not far behind. When there is once a broken heart there is mercy very near. The broken heart is the prelude of healing. He that kills will make whole. He that wounds will bind up. He that smites will cure. God is looking on you with love and will have mercy upon you.

But who are those that follow in the rear? Another troop, another legion—but these are far different from the rest. The Silken Legion follows—these are not clad in steel. They have no helmets of war upon their head. They have smiling looks and countenances that are full of joy. No weapons of war in their hands—no thunders do they utter but they speak kind words of pity and their hands are full of benedictions. Shall I tell you who this Silken Legion is? There is a troop of them who take the poor wounded heart and wash it first in blood. They sprinkle on it the sacred blood of the Atonement.

And it is amazing how the poor broken Heart, though faint and sick, revives at the first drop of the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ! And when washed in blood, another of this legion steps forward and takes it and washes it in water—for both water and blood flowed from the Savior's heart—

***“Let the water and the blood,
From Your wounded side which flowed
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power”***

And oh, what a washing it is! The heart that was once black as the coals of Hell seems white as the snow of Lebanon. When it has once been bathed in the bath of the Savior's blood and water, oh, how pure it becomes!

He who was black as the tents of Kedar becomes fair as the curtains of Solomon. Then follow those who pour oil and wine into the wounds of this poor broken Heart so that where it smarted before, the wounds begin to sing. The sacred oil and wine of the precious promise is poured into every wound. And then follow those who with downy fingers bind up the Heart with the sacred liniment of Promise till it seems no longer broken but the broken Heart rejoices. The whole Heart sings for gladness. For God has restored its strength and bound up all its wounds, according to His promise—“He heals the broken in heart and binds up their wounds.”

And then, since the work is not quite done, there come those who carry the King's wardrobe. And with the things out of this rich storehouse they array the soul from head to foot. They clothe it with everything that for luster and for glory could adorn it and make it bright as the spirits before the Throne. And then the King's jewelers come in and complete the whole—they array the soul with ornaments and bedeck it with precious stones. As the Father said, “Bring forth the best robe and put it on him and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet,” even so does this Silken Legion wash and heal and cleanse and glorify the once poor broken Heart.

Have these ever come to your house? It is an allegory but it is all plain to him that understands it. Sinner, have you ever had the blood of Christ applied to you?—

***“Could you look and see the flowing
Of His soul's redeeming blood,
With Divine assurance knowing
He has made your peace with God?”***

Do you this hour lay your hand on the dear head of Christ? Do you confess your sin and believe that He was punished for you? Do you? Then verily salvation is yours. And has your heart ever been washed with water? Say, do you hate sin? Is your guilt all cleansed and is the power of guilt cut away so that you do not love the ways of iniquity nor seek to run in the paths of transgressors? Then you are an heir of Heaven. And say,

poor Sinner, have you ever been arrayed in the robe of Jesus' Righteousness? Could you ever fondly hope that you were accepted in the Beloved? Methinks I see you with the tear in your eye and hear you saying, I have sometimes sung with all my heart—

***“Jesus, Your blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
‘Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift my head.
Bold shall I stand in that great day,
For who anything to my charge shall lay?
Fully absolved through Christ I am
From sin’s tremendous curse and shame.”***

And now we have not yet come to a full conviction of Salvation. The Silken Legion is gone. Their banners are still flying in the gale and their trumpets of promise are still making the air glad with melody. What comes next? Now come those that are the actual attendants upon Salvation—or rather, that march in the rank immediately before it. There are four of these, called *Repentance, Humility, Prayer* and *a tender Conscience*. Just before the full assurance of Salvation there marches *Humility*. She is of a downcast look. She is not sad but she has no high looks. She scarcely dares to lift her eye to the place where God's honor dwells.

She is often looking downwards, remembering her past estate—thinking of all the bitterness and the guilt of her previous life. She never boasts of what God has done for her—she looks to the hole of the pit and the miry clay from where she was dug. She knows she has been washed in the blood of the Savior but she remembers how black she was before she was washed and oh, she laments the past although she rejoices in the present.

She feels her own weakness—she dares not stand alone—she leans on the arm of her Beloved, for she knows that she should fall to the ground unless He should constantly maintain her. Side by side with her, is her Sister called *Repentance*—watering the ground with tears to lay the dust before the King. Wherever she goes she weeps and if you ask her why she will tell you she does not weep because of a fear of Hell—that is all gone. The Silken Legion yonder, she tells you, has wiped all her fears away. But she weeps because she smote the Lord that loved her so well. She beats her breast and cries—

***“It was you, my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormentors were;
Each of my crimes became a nail,
And unbelief the spear.”***

The more you tell her of her Salvation—the more she weeps to think she could have rebelled against such a Savior. She is confident that her sins are blotted out. She knows her Master has forgiven her. But she never will forgive herself. Then side by side with *Repentance* is one called *Prayer*. He is a priest and he waves in his hand a censer full of fragrant

incense that the way for the King may be prepared—that wherever He marches there may be a sweet perfume. Prayer rises by midnight to call upon God. Its waking eyes salute the rising sun that it may lift up its heart to Jehovah. And when the sun is setting, Prayer will not let his wheel be hidden beneath the horizon until in his chariot he has carried supplication.

Then in this company is the fourth of those immediately attending upon Salvation—a *tender Conscience*. This tender Conscience is afraid to put one foot before the other lest it should put its foot in the wrong place. Poor tender Conscience. Some despise him. But he is dear to the King's heart. I would to God, my Brethren, you and I knew more about Him. I used to know a conscience so tender—I would wish to feel it again. Then we questioned the lawfulness of every act before we committed it and then—though it were lawful—we would stop to see if it were expedient and if we thought it expedient. Even then we would not do it, except we felt it would be abundantly honorable to the Lord our God.

Every doctrine we used to study carefully lest we should believe a lie. Every ordinance we examined lest we should commit idolatry. Happy were the days when tender Conscience went with us. And now, my Hearers, do you know anything about these four? Has *Humility* ever come to you? Has she ever abased your pride and taught you to lie in the dust before God? Has *Repentance* ever watered the floor of your hearts with tears? Have you ever been led to weep in secret for your sins and to bewail your iniquities? Has *Prayer* ever entered your spirit? Remember, a prayerless soul is a Christless soul. Have you learned to pray—not with the parrot's cry but with the heart's ever fresh expression? Have you ever learned to pray? And lastly are you *tender of Conscience*, for unless your conscience is made tender, Salvation has not met you—for these are the immediate attendants upon it.

III. And now comes SALVATION IN ALL ITS FULLNESS. The “things that accompany Salvation” make a glorious march in the forefront of it—from Election down to these precious opening buds of virtue in the sinner's heart. What a goodly array! Surely the angels do sometimes fly along in admiration and see this long array that heralds Salvation to the heart! And now comes the precious casket set with gems and jewels. It is of God-like workmanship—no hammer was ever lifted on it—it was smitten out and fashioned upon the anvil of Eternal Light and cast in the mold of Everlasting Wisdom.

No human hand has ever defiled it and it is set with jewels so unutterably precious that if Heaven and earth were sold they could never buy another Salvation! And who are those that are close around it? There are three sweet sisters that always have the custody of the treasure—you know them, their names are common in Scripture—Faith, Hope and Love, the three Divine sisters. These have Salvation in their hearts and carry it

about with them. *Faith*, who lays hold on Christ and trusts all in Him. That ventures everything upon His blood and sacrifice and has no other trust. *Hope*, that with beaming eye looks up to Jesus Christ in Glory and expects Him to come soon—looks downward and when she sees grim Death in her way, expects that she shall pass through with victory.

And you, sweet *Love*, the sweetest of the three—she whose words are music and whose eyes are stars. Love also looks to Christ and is enamored of Him. Loves Him in all His offices, adores His Presence, reverences His Words and is prepared to bind her body to the stake and die for Him who bound His body to the Cross to die for her. Sweet Love, God has well chosen to commit to you the custody of the sacred work. Faith, Hope and Love—say, Sinner, have you these three?

Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? Do you hope that through the efficacy of His merits you shall see your Maker's face with joy? Do you love Him? Say, could you repeat after me—

***“Jesus! I love Your charming name,
'Tis music to my ear;
Fain would I sound it out so loud
That earth and Heaven might hear.
Yes, You are precious to my soul,
My Transport and my Trust;
Jewels to You are gaudy toys,
And gold is sordid dust”?***

Have you these three graces? If so, you have Salvation. Having that, you become rich to all intents of bliss. For God in the Covenant is yours. Cast your eye forward—remember Election is yours—Predestination and Sovereign Decree are both yours. Remember the terrors of the Law are past. The broken heart is mourning. The comforts of religion you have already received. The spiritual graces are already in the bud—you are an heir of immortality and for you there is a glorious future. These are the “things that accompany Salvation.”

IV. Now you must have patience with me for just a few more minutes. I MUST BRING UP THE REAR-GUARD. It is impossible that with such a vanguard, grace should be unattended from behind. Now see those that follow Salvation. As there were fair bright cherubs that walked in front of it—you remember their names—Humility, Repentance, Prayer and a tender Conscience—there are four that follow it and march in solemn pomp into the sinner's heart.

The first of these is Gratitude—always singing, “Bless the Lord O my soul and all that is within me bless His holy name.” And then Gratitude lays hold upon its son's hand. The name of that son is Obedience. “O my Master,” says the heart, “You have done so much for me. I will obey You.”—

***“Help me to run in Your commands,
'Tis a delightful road;
Nor let my heart, nor hands, nor feet,***

Offend against my God.”

In company with this fair grace is one called Consecration—a pure white spirit that has no earthliness—from its head to its foot it is all God’s and all gold. Hear it speak—

***“All that I am and all I have
Shall be forever yours.
Whatever my duty bids me give,
My cheerful hands resign.
And if I might make some reserve,
And duty did not call,
I love my God with zeal so great,
That I would give Him all.”***

Linked to this bright one is one with a face serene and solemn called Knowledge. “Then shall we know when we follow on to know the Lord.” Those that are saved understand mysteries—they know the love of Christ—they “know Him, whom to know is life eternal.”

Now, have you these four? They are rather the successors of Salvation than the heralds of it. “Oh yes,” the Believer can say, “I trust I have Gratitude, Obedience, Consecration and Knowledge.” I will not weary you but there are three shining ones that follow after these four and I must not forget them, for they are the flower of them all. There is Zeal with eyes of fire and heart of flame. A tongue that burns, a hand that never wearies and limbs that never tire. Zeal that flies round the world with wings swifter than the lightning’s flash and finds even then she wings too tardy for her wish. Zeal, ever ready to obey, resigning up itself for Christ—jealously affected always in a good thing.

This Zeal always dwells near one that is called Communion. This, surely, is the goodliest of all the train—an angel spiritualized, an angel purified and made yet more angelic is Communion. Communion calls in secret on its God. Its God in secret sees. It is conformed to the image of Jesus. It walks according to His footsteps and lays its head perpetually on His bosom. And as a necessary consequence, on the other side of Communion—which with one hand lays hold of Zeal, is Joy—joy in the Spirit. Joy, that has an eye more flashing than the world’s merriment ever gave to mortal beauty.

Joy, with light foot trips over hills of sorrow singing in the roughest ways of faithfulness and love. Joy, like the nightingale, sings in the dark and can praise God in the tempest and shout His high praises in the storm. This is indeed a fitting cherub to be in the rear of Salvation. Do not forget these other three. They are after-works of the Spirit—Zeal, Communion and Joy.

Now I have almost done. Just in the rear is Perseverance, final, certain and sure. Then there follows complete Sanctification, whereby the soul is purged from every sin and made as white and pure as God Himself. Now we have come to the very rear of the army. But remember as there was an

advance guard so far ahead that we could not see them, so there is a rear-guard so far behind that we cannot behold them *now*. Let us just try to see them with the eye of faith. We have seen the army. We have traced it from the Thundering Legion, guided by the Holy Spirit, till we have finished it by complete Sanctification.

Hark, I hear the silver trumpet sound! There is a glorious array behind. A guard, far, far back are coming following the steps of the conquering heroes that have already swept our sins away. Do you not see in the first part there is one whom men paint as a skeleton? Look at him—he is not the King’s terror. I know you, Death, I know you. Miserably men have belied you. You are no specter, your hand bears no dart. You are not gaunt and frightful. I know you, you bright cherub—you have not in your hand a dart but a golden key that unlocks the gates of Paradise!

You are *fair* to look upon, your wings are like the wings of doves—covered with silver and like yellow gold. Behold this angel Death and his successor Resurrection. I see three bright things coming—one is called Confidence—see it! It looks at Death—no fear is in its eye, no pallor on its brow. See holy Confidence march with steady steps—the cold chill stream of Death does not freeze its blood. See behind it its brother, Victory. Hear him, as he cries, “O Death, where is your sting? O Grave where is your victory?” The last word, “victory,” is drowned amidst the shouts of angels. These bring up the rear. Angels bear the spirits of the redeemed into the bosom of the Savior—

***“Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in,
They are forever blessed.”***

And now follow everlasting songs—“Praise Him, praise Him, King of kings and Lord of lords. He has gotten Him the victory. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, world without end! Hallelujah, yet again!” Let the echoes of eternity perpetually cry, “Hallelujah!” for “THINGS THAT ACCOMPANY SALVATION.”

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STRONG CONSOLATION

NO. 893

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 26 1869,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”
Hebrews 6:17, 18.*

THE Lord's transactions with the Patriarch Abraham are frequently used in Scripture as types of His dealings with all the heirs of promise. The Lord found him in an idolatrous household, even as He finds all His people far off from Him and strangers to Him. But the Lord separated him by an effectual call and brought him out from his country and from his father's house, even as He does unto all His people when He visits them in mercy, and says, “Come out from among them and be you separate and touch not the unclean thing.”

The Lord, then, was pleased to give to His servant a very gracious promise, the likes of which, only yet more clear and bright, He is pleased to give to every heir of salvation. And after awhile, that the Patriarch's faith in the midst of his increasing trials might come to a fullness of strength, the Lord was pleased to make a Covenant with him and to confirm that Covenant by sacrifice of blood and by solemn oath. Even thus does He reveal Himself to us, unfolding the ancient Covenant of Grace which He has made with us in Christ Jesus and He bids us look upon the solemn seal of the Savior's sacrifice and of the oath of old which the Lord made unto His Son.

As He led His servant, a stranger in a strange land, but yet surrounded and enriched with innumerable mercies, even so are we sojourners with Him, as all our fathers were, but yet endowed with boundless favor in the blessings of the right hand of the Most High. No doubt, the great end of God in this, so far as Abraham's life on earth was concerned, was to produce in Abraham a model of unstaggering faith. God takes pleasure in the persons of His servants. He takes a delight in the training and education of His children, in the creating of His own image in their characters. And especially if there is one thing in a saint which delights God more than another, it is the choice Grace of Faith. And therefore Abraham, who is the “friend of God” more than any other, is also the most believing of men and the father of the faithful.

Now, Beloved, the Lord who has dealt with us as he did with Abraham, has the same end which he would answer in us as in the Patriarch. He would have us manifest all the Divine Graces which can adorn our char-

acter and make us imitators of God as dear children. Above all, He would have us strong in faith, giving glory to God. O that this end of God might be answered in you and in me—that we may be no more children, carried about with every wind of doctrine, may be no more puny in faith, tossed to and fro with anxieties and suspicions—but may become strong men who are able both to run in the race, to persevere in the pilgrimage, to contend in the fight and to labor in the service, because the sinews of our strength are well knit and the muscles of our faith are firm in reliance upon the living God, who is the strength of our life and will be our portion forever!

How far, dear Brethren, we have as yet reached to anything like the strong consolation and the vigorous faith of the text is for us to enquire. And if on enquiry we find ourselves deficient, let us plead mightily with God that He would continue His gracious work, that He would reveal Himself more fully and that we may have a firm, unstaggering faith in Him. In order that we may have in ourselves the highest degree of assurance and confidence in God, the Lord is pleased to reveal Himself to His servants as a God of Truth and Love in multiplied promises and, in addition to this, in the most solemn oaths.

If we do not believe God, it is not because He has not plainly spoken. If we doubt Him, it is not because He has left room for doubts, or given occasion for mistrust. His words are plain, often repeated, very positive, presented in the most assuring form, and ratified and settled with the most solemn assurances. Why, then, should I doubt? Why should I not, since God is abundantly willing to show to me the *immutability* of His counsel, be abundantly willing to rest in that immutability, giving glory to God and enjoying peace in my own soul?

My discourse shall be aimed at the helping of God's servants to attain to a strong faith in Him. May the Holy Spirit help my infirmities and bless your souls. First, this morning, we shall, by the help of the text, find out *the favored people* who are the rightful owners of the strong consolations spoken of in the text. Secondly, we shall speak upon *the condescending God* who is pleased to give such overflowing comfort. And, thirdly, we shall speak upon *the strong consolation itself* which flows from these immutable things of God.

I. First, then, dear Friends, may you be able to see yourselves as in a mirror, while we look into this text, to notice who are THE FAVORED PEOPLE OF GOD. In the 17th verse, they are described as the “heirs of promise.” In the 18th verse, they are portrayed as those “who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” Observe, then, that the favored children of God are first described as “the *heirs of promise*,” by which, at once most solemnly, are excluded all those who are relying upon their own merits.

If there are any here present who think that they have led a blameless life and have added thereto a careful attendance to the duties of religion and to all the decencies and amiabilities of society and that, therefore, they have somewhat of a claim on God and something wherein to glory, they are evidently excluded from all the blessings of the Covenant, for that

is a Covenant of *promise*, not a Covenant of legal *rewards*. A promise is not a debt, but a blessing and if the blessing comes by promise, then those who receive it are not those who put in a claim by reason of good things worked by themselves. What do you say, dear Hearer, is your salvation based and bottomed and grounded and founded upon the Sovereign Grace of God to you, an undeserving sinner? Do you confess that you have nothing of your own wherein to boast, and do you hope, alone, in the mercy of God in Christ Jesus? Then let me hope you are one of the heirs of promise.

“Heirs of promise,” again. Then this excludes those who are heirs according to their own will, who scoff at the mighty work of Divine Grace and believe that their own free choice has saved them! The Lord said unto Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” And Paul adds in Romans 9:16, “So then, it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” Dear Hearer, here is a weighty question for you—from where did your religion come? Did it come entirely of yourself and spring from your own inward promptings and nothing else, or are you a Christian because the Grace of God came across your will?

Are you a Christian because the hand of Divine Grace took the helm of your vessel and turned it in the opposite direction to its natural inclining? Are you rather the *subject* than the user of Grace? Are you rather *sought* of God than one who of himself did seek God? Tell me, now, is it your own will or God’s will that has the honor of your salvation? Remember they are not all Israel that are of Israel, “but in Isaac shall your seed be called.” God makes, here, a distinction and takes Isaac and passes by Ishmael.

And yet again, as the Apostle reminds us, “when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calls), it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” “Therefore,” says the Apostle, “He has mercy on whom He will have mercy.” It is a blessed mark of Divine Grace when we are willing to feel that it is just and right that pardon should be distributed according to God’s will rather than *our* will! The promise must be freely given of God and who among us would interfere with His rights to give as He wills? Shall not the Judge of all the earth be right? Shall He not do as He wills with His own?

All heirs of promise will consent to this. One more thought—“Heirs of promise,” then heirs, not according to the power of the flesh, but according to the energy of Divine Grace. Ishmael was the heir according to flesh, but he obtained not the inheritance—“They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God.” Isaac was born not through his father’s or his mother’s strength, for they were well advanced in years, but he was the child of *promise*, the fruit of Divine visitation. Now what is your Grace in your heart? Did it spring from the strength of Nature? If so, it is but Ishmael, it will be rejected—it is but the bondwoman’s child and will

be cast out. But if your piety is the pure gift of God, an Isaac born when human nature was incapable of anything that was good and when your depravity could produce nothing that was acceptable in the sight of God—if it has been granted to you according to the power of the Holy Spirit, then is it such as shall surely bring you to Heaven!

The children of God, then, are heirs of promise, not heirs by merit, not heirs by their own will, not heirs by human power. Just in this manner does John describe Believers as, “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13). Here are sharp distinctions. My Soul, can you bear them? While listening to them, do you feel no rebellion, but rather feel a humble desire to sit down at Jesus’ feet and hopefully say, “I trust I also am a child of the promise”? Ah, then is it well with you.

A plainer description of the favored people follows in the 18th verse. We will look at it. “*Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.*” Then, dear Hearers, all the people of God were once in danger. They have “fled for refuge.” Men do not flee for refuge when they are not in distress. The vessel puts not into the harbor of refuge when winds and waves all favor her. A man does not escape out of a city like Lot out of Sodom unless he is persuaded that the city is to be destroyed and that he is likely to perish in it. Ah, indeed, we who are saved today confess with gratitude to Him who has delivered us, that we were once in danger.

In danger, my Brothers and Sisters, is the word strong enough? In danger of eternal burnings! It was worse than that, for we are brands plucked out of the fire! We already burned with that fire of sin which is the fire of Hell. We were already destroyed, already dead and corrupt! Our danger had overtaken us and overthrown us. The accumulated horrors of the tempest of Divine Wrath were gathering to pour themselves on our devoted heads! But we have fled for refuge. Blessed be God, no longer do we dread that lightning flash of wrath! No longer are we consumed with that flame of reigning sin! Christ has called us to shelter in His wounds and we have fled from the wrath to come.

My Brethren, every true child of God not only was in danger, but he felt it, for, alas, if I say the child of God was in danger, why, so were all alike, children of God and children of the devil, too! Oh, how some of you are in danger this morning! You have but a step between you and death and it may be you will never enter this Tabernacle, or any other House of Prayer again, but within the next seven days you will have to stand before the Judge of all the earth! You are in peril! But the mark of the child of God is that he has felt his danger—for a man must feel a danger before he will flee for refuge. Do you feel it?

Dear Hearer, have you felt it not merely as a transient fright that passed over you for a moment and then you wiped away your tears and went back to your carnal security? Have you felt the danger so that the fear haunted you by day and by night and would not let you rest till you escaped for your life? I have nothing to say to you as a child of God unless you have so felt. I cannot address you as one that has fled for refuge

unless you have also felt that you *needed* a refuge, felt it solemnly with broken heart before God and confessed that you could not fight the battle yourself nor could you endure the storm alone, but must find a shelter other than your own doings or resolutions could afford you.

Still, even this does not quite describe the child of God. He was in danger, and he felt his danger, but the text says, he has, “fled for refuge.” I have no doubt that the words here point to the old Jewish institution of the Cities of Refuge. A man had slain another by mistake and the next of kin would be quite sure to avenge the blood. But the manslayer fled with all his might to the appointed City of Refuge. When once he passed between the portals of that sanctuary he was secure. So, Brethren, the children of God have, by nature, provoked the just vengeance of Heaven. They have been guilty against the Law—and Justice, red-handed and swift—was fast behind them.

This they knew, and being moved with fear they took to their heels with a solemn repentance and an eager faith and they sped away to Jesus Christ, the appointed City of Sanctuary! And they have found protection in Him. I say they *have* found it. Dear Hearer, have you found it? No, it is nothing to say, “I hope I shall.” What if the avenger of blood strikes you with his killing sword even now? *Have* you found it? Remember, you are this day either a saved man or not! There are no middle places between these two! The wrath of God pursues you, or else you are at the altar’s horn, secure through the sprinkled blood. You are this day condemned already, waiting for execution, or else you are absolved and vengeance can never strike you. Which of the two is it?

Oh, I know that many of us can say, “By God’s Grace I have fled for refuge. Jesus Christ, I have looked to You and to You alone. You are my only confidence. If a soul can perish trusting in Christ, I shall perish. If there is anything needed besides You, O Jesus, I shall perish, for I have nothing besides You. But if simple faith in the once crucified Savior can save the sinner, then I am a saved man, for I have so believed and so I will, God helping me, to life’s last hour.” You have, then, reached the Refuge. What a mercy this is! You can now walk at peace as a saved sinner. Sin is pardoned, the wrath of God is turned away from you.

But the text goes on to describe these favored people as running for a crown. There is a commingling of metaphors here, and yet at the same time no confusion. The first metaphor is over, they have, “fled for refuge,” and now they continue to run, but for another reason, “to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” Beloved, every child of God is pressing forward towards the hope of everlasting life and glory undefiled beyond the stars! Is it so with us? God has promised to us a, “crown of life that fades not away,” and our life is a getting ready for that crown—a pressing forward towards that unfading bliss.

We are daily blessed with inward aspirations after it, hungry longings for it, Divine impulses towards it! And moreover, we hope we are purifying ourselves by His Spirit, even as He is pure—that when He shall appear, for whose coming we are looking—we may be found of Him in peace, made

ready to enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb. I shall not detain you longer with the description, but I shall press upon you all to ask yourselves whether you have fled for refuge and are pressing onward to the hope that is set before you. For upon this question everything must hinge. If it is so, Brethren, the strongest consolation in the Word of God is not denied you—the richest promise and the rarest blessing of the Covenant you may grasp without any interference, for *everything* belongs to you!

But if not and you do not answer to this description, so far from wishing to administer any consolation to you, we fear lest we should say a word that might lull you into a deeper and more dangerous peace. For you no sweet notes of consolation! But the shrill trumpet must be sounded in Gibeah and we must lift up the voice of alarm in Zion—for out of Christ, not having fled for refuge—wrath comes upon you even to the uttermost and there shall be no escape! If they that despised Moses' Law perished without mercy, of how much sorer vengeance shall you be counted worthy that shall despise the Son of God? How shall you escape if you neglect so great a salvation?

II. But we must pass on to our second head. Let us humbly look, for a minute, to the ways and dealings of our CONDESCENDING GOD to these favored people, hoping that we belong to their number. Notice each word, "God *willing*." Whenever God does anything in a way of Divine Grace, He does it, as we say, *con amore*, He does it, in the highest sense, willingly. In a certain sense, all the acts of God are willingly done, but there are some which in another sense He does *unwillingly*. "He does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men."

It is not the will of God that sinners should perish. He has declared it. He had rather that they turn unto Him and live. But when He reveals Himself to His saints, He does it with a sacred willingness, a Divine cheerfulness. It is an occupation Divinely suitable to His generous Nature. "God willing." "*Willing more abundantly*." Notice that expression. It has, in the Greek, the sense of more than is necessary and is secretly meant to answer the objection concerning the Lord's taking an oath. God is willing to reveal Himself to His people and He is willing to do that "more abundantly," up to the measure of their need. He would let them know that His counsel is immutable and He would not only give them enough evidence to prove it, He would give them overwhelming evidence—evidence more than would be or could be possibly required by the case itself—so that their unbelief may have no chance to live and their faith may be of the strongest kind.

The word, "to show," is remarkable! It is the very word used in the Greek when our Lord showed His disciples His hands and His side, as if the word would say that God would lay bare the immutability of His Nature, would, as it were, strip His eternal purposes and let His people look upon them, handle them and see their reality, their truth and certainty! "God is willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel."

Beloved, oftentimes a man will not give further assurance of the truth of what he states, when he believes he has already given assurance enough. No, he stands on his dignity and he says, "Do you not believe me? I have already given you a promise, I have given that promise again and again, why seek more? My character in all past life has been such that I am entitled to be believed. I have given you what I conceive to be overwhelming proof of my fidelity and honesty. If you ask more, you shall not have it. I do not feel called upon to repeat my words as if I were suspected of untruth." Observe with wonder that our ever gracious God never stands on His dignity in this style at all, but He looks not so much at the dignity of His own Person as at the *weakness* of His people, and therefore, being willing more abundantly to show unto His poor feeble trembling people the immutability of His counsel—He not only gives one promise, but He adds another and another and another—till to count the promises were almost as difficult as to count the stars or number the sands on the sea shore!

Yes and when He has done all this, He comes in with a master clap to crown it all and confirms every promise by an oath—that by not one immutable thing but by two, the promise and the oath, in both of which it is impossible for Jehovah to lie—His people might never dare to doubt again, but might have strong consolation. The first immutable thing upon which our faith is to stay itself, is the *promise*. How badly we treat our God! If a father should give a promise to any of you, being a child, you believe your father. I know, dear Wife, you would count it a great dishonor if anyone assumed that you doubted your husband's word. I know, dear Sister, that you would think it sad discredit to your brother if you had cause to doubt his word.

Oh, no, we readily believe and accept the truthfulness of those we love and yet our God, our Father—Christ our Brother, our dearest Friend—O why, why do we not believe Him? But it may be whispered in times of darkness, "Yes, but God may have given a promise that He will save those who fly to Christ and I hope I have fled to Christ, but suppose He should change His mind and retract His promise?" No, but He has told you it is an *immutable* promise and when a man says, "I will never alter my word," we do not expect he will. If he is an honest man, he cannot. If his promise were only intended to be broken, why, he is playing the fool with us! But when it is given with an intent to be kept, as God says His is—for He calls it an *immutable* promise—let us not entertain suspicions against it.

The text implies that if God were to break His promise He would lie. He cannot take back His promise without lying and let not the thought even flit across our soul that God should lie! "Has He said and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken and shall He not make it good?" Beloved, when you are conscious that you are great sinners and have no good thing in yourselves, it is easy to yield to the dark suspicion, "Suppose, after all, I believe in Christ and yet my faith should not be enough? Suppose this which has been set before me in the Word of God as the groundwork of a sinner's hope should turn out to be too little?"

At such times it really appears that the Gospel plan is too simple and we are tempted to think it may prove to be insufficient. But the text will not allow such a supposition, for there is the promise of God, “he that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” And He tells us that is an immutable promise, consequently if He did change it, if He did shift the system of His Grace, He would lie. But He cannot lie! Oh, what consolation is this, then! Our refuge is secure, our confidence is firm! Look here, you people of God! This promise of God was not made in a hurry. A man makes a promise on a sudden and he cannot keep it afterwards, but through the everlasting ages the promise was on Jehovah’s heart before He spoke it with His lips!

Men sometimes make promises that they cannot fulfill—they are in circumstances which do not permit them. But can God ever be in a difficulty? Can He ever lose His power to do what He wills? He is Omnipotent! The heavens and the earth are His. “All power belongs unto God.” Men sometimes make promises which it would be unwise to keep and perhaps it is better to break them. But the Lord cannot be unwise, His is infinite wisdom as well as infinite strength. The promise, then, because of its wisdom, will surely stand. Beside, my Brothers and Sisters, the promise He has made is to His own honor. It redounds to His glory to show mercy to the unworthy.

Moreover, His promise is made to His own Son, and His love to Him is intertwined and interwoven with His promise. He could not break His word to one of us without breaking it to His dear Son, since we are *in* Him and trust in Him. O my Brethren, the Divine promise must stand good! Show me where it was ever broken! I will tell you where it has been kept even to the end, in the 10,000 times 10,000 of the blood-washed, who, with white robes, are this day surrounding His Throne with never-ceasing songs! It has never been broken even to us on earth! Here stand some of us, the witnesses of Divine fidelity. Why, then, should we mistrust a promise which has always been immutable and has never been, for a moment, treated by God as a thing to be tampered with? Why should we begin to doubt Him?—

**“O for a strong, a lasting faith,
To credit what the Almighty says,
To embrace the message of His Son,
And call the joys of Heaven our own.”**

But, Brethren, it is added that God, in order to prevent our unbelief effectually, has taken *an oath*. An oath, if it is allowable—and I think our Lord Jesus has forever forbidden all Christian men every oath of every sort—an oath, if ever allowable, as it was under the old dispensation, should never be taken except upon the most solemn business and in the most solemn manner. An oath of a man is a thing at which an angel might well tremble. What greater dishonor or shame could you pour upon a man than to convict him of perjury? We count such men the pariahs of the human race! We put them outside the social scale as unworthy to be communed with! Their breath is pestilence and leprosy is on their brows! Perjury! The man is no man! He has sunk below the level of manhood

when he comes to that. But God has, with an oath, sworn by Himself that all the heirs of promise shall be blessed forever, saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you."

Now, Brethren, who among us dare doubts this? Where is the hardy sinner who dares come forward and says, "I impugn the oath of God"? Oh, but let us blush the deepest scarlet and scarlet is but white compared with the blush which ought to mantle the cheek of every child of God to think that even God's own children should, in effect, accuse their heavenly Father of perjury! Oh, shame upon us! Forgive us, great God, this deep atrocity, and from this hour may we hold it certain that as You have sworn that he that flees for refuge to Christ shall be safe—that as You have promised that he that believes and is baptized shall be saved—we who have so believed are secure beyond all question! Let us no more doubt our salvation than our *existence* and no more think ourselves in jeopardy in the darkest and the most terrible hour than we think God's Throne itself in jeopardy, or God's Truth itself in peril. O Believer, stand to it that the Lord cannot lie! How I have rolled those words over in my thoughts—they have rung in my ears like a bell—"Impossible for God to lie." Of course it is!

Next, "Things in which it is impossible for God to lie," as if there were some things more impossible than others. "*Immutable* things, in which it is impossible for God to lie." And then the finale, "Two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie." I do not know whether you catch the accumulation of the meaning, the tidal wave of reassuring thought. If you do, there is a force about it which is rather excessive than deficient, as though a huge battering ram were brought to crush a fly, or ocean stirred to a tempest to float a feather. We have too much, surely, instead of too little evidence for our faith. Here is more evidence than faith can want.

Beloved, here is ocean-room for you! Were you the vilest sinners, your vessels which draw the most water may float here! There is room for all the navies of sinners that ever swam the sea of sin. Leviathan may come here and though he could make the ocean to be hoary and to boil like a pot, in these immutable things, wherein there is an impossibility for God to lie, there is room for him. Here is unshaken ground for a confidence that never shall for a moment dare to mistrust God!

III. But I must turn away to the third point and note THE STRONG CONSOLATION WHICH FLOWS OUT OF ALL THIS. This is setting the wine bottles at the taps of the vat to catch the flowing juice from these rich grapes of Eshcol, these mighty clusters which we have been flinging into the winepress. There is strong *consolation*, says the text, for the heirs of Grace—which implies that the children of God must expect to have trouble. They have a promise and an oath—but then these are given that they may have *consolation*.

Now, God would not give them consolation if they were not to have tribulation. Wherever the Lord gives a man comfort, it is because he will need it. You will need it, dear Brothers and Sisters. Write that down in

your tablets, then—"In the world you shall have tribulation." The text says, "*strong* consolation." If you are an heir of Heaven, you may look for *severe* trials—

***"Crosses each day and trials hot
The Christian's path has been,
And who has found a happy lot
Without a cross between?"***

All the followers of the Great Cross-bearer are cross-bearers, too! But then there is the strong consolation for the strong tribulation.

What is strong consolation? I shall occupy but two or three minutes in bringing that out. I think strong consolation is that which does not depend upon bodily health. What a cowardly old enemy the devil is! When we are strong and vigorous in body, it is very seldom that he will tempt us to doubt and fear. But if we have been racked with hours of pain and sleepless nights and are getting to feel faint and weary, then he comes in with his horrible insinuations—"God will forsake you. His promise will fail!" He is vile enough to put his black paws on the brightest Truths of God in the Bible, yes, upon even the very existence of God, Himself, and turn the boldest Believer into the most terrible doubter, so that we seem to have gone bodily over to the army of Satan and to be doubting every good thing that is in the Word of God.

Strong consolation, even at such times, enables us, still, to rejoice in the Lord though every nerve should twinge and every bone should seem melted into jelly with pain. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Let Him crush me, but He shall get nothing out of me but the wine of resignation. I will not fly in His face, but still say, "Not as I will, but as You will." O may you have such strong consolation, my dear Brothers and Sisters! Strong consolation is that which is not dependent upon the excitement of public service and Christian fellowship. We feel very happy on Sunday, here, when we almost sing ourselves away to everlasting bliss and when the sweet name of Jesus is like ointment poured forth so that the virgins love it!

But when you are in colder regions, how is it? Perhaps you are called to emigrate, or go into the country to a bare ministry where there is nothing to feed the soul. Ah, then, if you have not good ground for your soul to grow in, what will you do? Those poor flowers which depend altogether upon being watered—how soon they fade if they are forgotten for a little while! May we have root in ourselves and drink of the dew of Heaven and be like the "tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth his fruit in his season, whose leaf, also, shall not wither." This is to have strong consolation. Ministries are blessed, but oh, we must live on surer bread than ministries if we would have the highest form of life! We must use the means so long as God gives us the means, but we must have a spiritual life that could live even if means were denied us. May we have such a consolation.

Brethren, the strong consolation which God gives His people is such as no mere reasoning can shake. Persons are often afraid that new infidelities will upset our holy religion, that diggings in the earth, or searchings

in the skies will cast suspicion on the Word of God. Now, Beloved, I bear witness that I have never seen, so far as I recollect, any attack which touched, in the slightest degree, the central soul of Christianity. All the attacks I have ever heard of in my short life have always been upon what carnal men could discern, namely, the outskirts of religion, such as the correctness of the numbering in the book of Genesis, or the geology of Moses.

But, my dear Friend, how is it that they do not attack the *spiritual* life of the Believer? Why are there none who touch the root of the matter by denying the fact of spiritual life and showing that spiritual phenomena are to be otherwise accounted for? Let them prove that there is no such thing as *prevailing prayer* and that God does not hearken to the voice of a man! Let them show that there is no such thing as *joy in the Lord*, no abounding of the consolations of the Holy Spirit within the spirit! No, they do not try to disprove *these* facts, because the only answer that the Church of God would give to them, if they once attacked her *real* strength, would be this, "The virgin daughter of Zion has shaken her head at you and laughed you to scorn."

If I cannot defend the book of Genesis against the arithmetic of a prelate. If I cannot defend certain dogmas against the sneers of a clever unbeliever, I yet believe that I could do so if I were better taught. But if the doubters will come to battle with me about my blessed Lord and Master and the power of His blood and the secret of the Lord that is with them that fear Him, I will cut them in pieces as Samuel hewed Agag before the Lord—for my own experience makes me strong! Oh, it is sweet contending here, for reason is laughed to scorn! You might as well reason me out of a toothache, or convince me that I do not exist, as reason me out of my consciousness that I love Christ and that I am saved in Him! They cannot touch the essentials of vital godliness and this is a strong consolation which reasoning no more wounds than men come at leviathan with spears and swords, for he laughs at them and accounts their spears as rotten wood.

Strong consolation, again, because it will bear up under conscience and that is a harder pressure than mere reasoning can ever bring. Conscience says, "Yes, but you are a wretch, indeed! See what you did before conversion! And what have you been since? Those good works of yours are all spoiled, rotten like apples with the maggot in them, though they are bright red to look upon." Oh, do you not know what it is to see your prayers and your preaching and your giving all tumble to pieces and all blown away like dust before the March winds? Ah, then, it is blessed to have a strong consolation which enables you to say, "I know all this and I know a great deal more. I am the chief of sinners, but Jesus died for me. And if I were blacker, still, Jesus would wash me. If I were more of a devil than I am, He could make me a saint. I rest in Him and in Him, alone, and not in self nor anything within, but wholly on the work of Jesus and the perfect righteousness of my atoning Lord."

Oh, this is strong consolation which can quiet the clamors of conscience! Yes and we can deal with Satan with his horrible insinuations and blasphemies and still can say, "I will trust in the Lord and not be afraid." It is a strong consolation that can deal with outward trials when a man has poverty staring him in the face and hears his little children crying for bread. It is strong consolation when bankruptcy is likely to come upon him through unavoidable losses. It is strong consolation when the poor man has just lost his wife and his dear children have been put into the same grave—when one after another all earthly props and comforts have given way it needs a strong consolation then! Not in your *pictured* trials, but your *real* trials! Not in your imaginary whimsied afflictions, but in the real afflictions and the blustering storms of life. To rejoice, then, and say, "Though these things are not with me as I would have them, yet has He made with me an Everlasting Covenant ordered in all things and sure."

This is strong consolation! And it will be proved to be so, by-and-by, with some of us, when we shall be in the solemn article of death, for I doubt not that the message will come to many of us, before long, "The pitcher is broken at the fountain and the wheel at the cistern and the spirit must return to God that gave it." Ah, then to lie quiet on the bed and look death in the face and call it, Friend, and look into an eternity so surely ours—with all its natural gloom and all the alarm which this poor flesh and blood naturally feels at the parting pang—and yet calmly to prepare ourselves for undressing, expecting to be satisfied when we wake up in His likeness—this needs strong consolation!

And to do even more than this, as many of God's saints have done—to go down into the river, singing as they go, "Glory! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah, through Him that loved us, we are more than conquerors! O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law. But thanks be unto God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." This is strong consolation, indeed.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, by these two immutable things, wherein it is impossible for God to lie, may you have strong consolation from this time forth, even forever and ever. Amen and amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Hebrews 6.

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THE ANCHOR

NO. 1294

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 21, 1876,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the veil; where the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.”
Hebrews 6:17-20.

FAITH is the Divinely-appointed way of receiving the blessings of Grace. “He that believes shall be saved,” is one of the main declarations of the Gospel. The wonders of creation, the discoveries of Revelation and the movements of Providence are all intended to create and foster the principle of faith in the living God. If God reveals anything, it is that we should believe it. Of all the books of Holy Scripture it may be said, “these are written that you might believe and that believing you might have life.” Even if God conceals anything, it is that we may be able to confide in Him since what we *know* yields but little space for trust compared with the *unknown*.

Providence sends us many different trials, all meant to exercise and increase our faith and, at the same time, in answer to prayer, it brings us varied proofs of the Divine faithfulness which serve as refreshments to our faith. Thus the works and the Words of God cooperate to educate men in the Grace of faith. You might imagine, however, from the doctrine of certain teachers, that the Gospel is, “Whoever *doubts* shall be saved,” and that nothing could be more useful or honorable than for a man’s mind to hang in perpetual suspense, sure of nothing, confident of the truth of no one, not even of God, Himself!

The Bible raises a mausoleum to the memory of its heroes and writes upon it as their epitaph, “these all died in faith.” But the *modern* gospel derides faith and sets up, instead, the new virtue of keeping abreast with the freshest thought of the age! That simple trust in the truthfulness of God’s Word, which our fathers inculcated as the basis of all religion, would seem to be at a discount, now, with “men of mind” who are able to cope with “modern thought.” Shame upon professed ministers of Christ that some of these are worshipping at this shrine and are laboring after the repute of being intellectual and philosophical by scattering doubts on all sides!

The doctrine of the blessedness of *doubt* is as opposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as darkness is to light, or Satan to Christ, Himself! It is invented as a quietus to the consciences of those proud men who refuse to yield their minds to the rule of God! Have faith in God, for faith is, in itself, a virtue of the highest order! No virtue is more truly excellent than

the simple confidence in the Eternal which a man is helped to exhibit by the Grace of the Holy Spirit. No, not only is faith a *virtue* in itself, but it is the mother of all virtues! He that believes becomes strong to labor, patient to suffer, fervent to love, earnest to obey, zealous to serve!

Faith is a root from which may grow all that can adorn the human character. So far from being opposed to good works, it is the ever-flowing fountain from where they proceed. Take faith away from the professed Christian and you have cut the sinew of his strength. Like Samson, you have shorn him of his locks and left him with no power either to defend himself or to conquer his foes. "The just shall live by faith"—FAITH is essential to the vitality of Christianity and anything which weakens that faith weakens the very mainspring of spiritual power!

Brothers and Sisters, not only does our own experience teach us this, and the Word of God declare it, but the whole of human history goes to show the same Truth of God. Faith is force! Why, even when men have been mistaken, if they have believed the mistake, they have displayed more power than men who have known the truth, but have not heartily believed it. The force that a man has in dealing with his fellow men lies very much in the force of conviction which his beliefs have over his own soul. Teach a man the Truth of God so that his whole heart believes in it and you have given him both the fulcrum and the lever with which he may move the world.

To this very moment the whole earth is tremulous like a mass of jelly beneath the tread of Luther, and why? Because he was strong in faith! Luther was a believer in the Word of God and the schoolmen with whom he had to contend were mere disputers. The priests, cardinals and popes with whom Luther came into contact were mere traders in dead traditions! Therefore he smote them hip and thigh, with great slaughter. His whole manhood believed in what he had learned of God—and as an iron rod among potters' vessels, so was he among the pretenders of his age! What has been true in history all along is most certainly true now. It is by believing that we become strong—that is clear enough.

Whatever supposed excellencies there may be in the much vaunted receptive condition of the mind, the equilibrium of a cultured intellect and the unsettled judgment of "honest" disbelief, I am unable to discern them. And I see no reference to them in Scripture. Holy Writ neither offers commendations of unbelief, nor presents motives nor reasons for its cultivation. Experience does not prove it to be strength in life's battle, or wisdom for life's labyrinth. It is near akin to credulity and, unlike true faith, it is prone to be led by the nose by any falsehood.

Unbelief yields no consolation for the present and its outlook for the future is by no means comforting. We discover no intimation of a sublime cloud land, where men of self appreciating brain power will eternally puzzle themselves and others. We hear no prophecy of a celestial hall of science where skeptics may weave fresh sophistries and forge new objections to the Revelation of God. There is a place for the unbelieving, but it is not Heaven!

Coming to our text, whose tone is far removed from all uncertainty, we see clearly that the Lord does not desire us to be in an unsettled condition but would put an end to all uncertainty and questioning. As among men a

fact is established when an honest man has sworn to it, so, "God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath." Condescending to the weakness of human faith, He, Himself, swears to what He declares and thus gives us a Gospel *doubly* certified by the promise and oath of the everlasting God! Surely angels must have wondered when God lifted His hand to Heaven to swear to what He had promised and must have concluded that from then on there would be an end of all strife because of the confirmation which the Lord thus gave to His counsel.

In working out our text, I must direct you to its most conspicuous metaphor. This world is like a sea—restless, unstable, dangerous, never at one stay. Human affairs may be compared to waves driven with the wind and tossed. As for ourselves, we are the ships which go upon the sea and are subject to its changes and motions. We are apt to be drifted by currents, driven by winds and tossed with tempests. We have not yet come to the true terra firma, the rest which remains for the people of God. God would not have us carried about with every wind and, therefore, He has been pleased to fashion for us an anchor of hope most sure and steadfast, so that we may outride the storm.

I shall not attempt to preach from the whole of the great text before us, for it would require seven years, at least, and a Dr. John Owen, or a Joseph Caryl to bring forth a tenth of its meaning! I am simply going to work out the one set of the Truths of God suggested by the image of an anchor and may God grant that all of us, this morning, who know the meaning of that anchor may feel it holding us fast by its grip within the veil! And may others who have never possessed that anchor, before, be enabled to cast it overboard this morning, for the first time, and feel throughout all the rest of their lives the strong consolation which such a holdfast is sure to bestow upon the believing heart!

I. First, let me call your attention to THE DESIGN OF THE ANCHOR of which our text speaks. The design of an anchor, of course, is to hold a vessel firmly to one place when winds and currents would otherwise remove it. God has given us certain Truths which are intended to hold our minds fast to truth, holiness, perseverance—in a word, to hold us to Himself. But why hold the vessel? The first answer which would suggest itself would be *to keep it from being wrecked*. The ship may not need an anchor in calm waters, when upon a broad ocean a little drifting may not be a very serious matter. But there are conditions of weather in which an anchor becomes altogether essential. When a gale is rushing towards the shore, blowing great guns and the vessel cannot hold her course and must surely be driven upon an iron-bound coast, then an anchor is worth its weight in gold!

If the good ship cannot be anchored, there will be nothing left of her in a very short time. Except for, here and there, a spar, the gallant vessel will go to pieces and every mariner drowned. Now is the time to let down the anchor, the best bow anchor, if you will, and let the good ship defy the wind. Our God does not intend His people to be shipwrecked—shipwrecked and lost forever—however, they would be if they were not held fast in the hour of temptation. Brothers and Sisters, if every wind of doctrine whirled you about at its will, you would soon be drifted far away

from the Truth as it is in Jesus—and concerning it you would make shipwreck!

But you cost your Lord too dear for Him to lose you! He bought you at too great a price and sets too great a store by you for Him to see you broken to pieces on the rocks. Therefore He has provided for you a glorious holdfast, that when Satan's temptations, your own corruptions and the trials of the world assail you, *hope* may be the anchor of your soul, both sure and steadfast. How much we need it! For we see others fall into the error of the wicked, overcome by the deceivableness of unrighteousness and left forever as castaways. "Having no hope and without God in the world."

If you have done business on the great waters for any length of time, you must be well aware that were it not for everlasting Truths of God which hold you fast, your soul had long since been hurried into everlasting darkness and the proud waters had long before this have gone over your soul! When the mighty waves have lifted themselves up, your poor boat has seemed to go down to the bottom of the mountains! And had it not been for unchanging love and immutable faithfulness, your heart had utterly fainted. Nevertheless, here you are, today, convoyed by Grace, provisioned by mercy, steered by heavenly wisdom and propelled by celestial power! Thanks to the anchor, or rather to the God who gave it to you, no storm has overwhelmed you! You are under way for the port of Glory!

An anchor is also needed to keep a vessel from discomfort, for even if it is not wrecked, it would be a wretched thing to be driven here and there, to the north and then to the south, as winds may shift. Unhappy is he who is the creature of external influences, flying along like thistledown in the breeze, or a rolling thing before the whirlwind! We require an anchor to hold us so that we may abide in peace and find rest unto our souls. Blessed be God, there are solid and sure Truths, infallibly certified to us, which operate powerfully upon the mind so as to prevent its being harassed and dismayed!

The text speaks of, "strong consolation." Is not that a glorious word—we have not merely consolation which will hold us fast and bear us up against the tempest in times of trouble, but *strong consolation* so that when affliction bursts forth with unusual strength, like a furious tornado, the strong consolation, like a sheet anchor, may be more than a match for the strong temptation and may enable us to triumph over all! Very restful is that man who is very believing—

**"Hallelujah! I believe!
Now the giddy world stands fast,
For my soul has found an anchor
Till the night of storm is past."**

An anchor is needed, too, *to preserve us from losing the headway which we have made.* The vessel has been making good way towards port, but the wind changes and blows in her teeth. She will be borne to the port from which she started, or to an equally undesirable port, unless she can resist the foul wind! Therefore she puts down her anchor. The captain says to himself, "I have got so far and I am not going to be drifted back. Down goes my anchor and here I stop." Saints are sometimes tempted to return to the country from where they came—they are half inclined to re-

nounce the things which they have learned and to conclude that they never were taught of the Lord at all.

Alas, old Adam and Satan endeavor to drive us back! And were it not for something sure to hold to—back we would go! If it could be proven to be, as certain cultivated teachers would have us believe, that there is nothing very sure, although black is black, it is not very black, and though white is white, it is not very white. If it could be proven that from certain standpoints there is no doubt black is *white* and white is *black*. If it could be proven, I say, that there are no Divine certainties, no infallible Truths—then we might willingly surrender what we know or *think* we know, and wander about on the ocean of speculation—the waifs and strays of mere opinion! But while we have the Truth of God taught to our very souls by the Holy Spirit, we cannot drift from it, nor will we, though men count us fools for our steadfastness!

Brothers and Sisters, aspire not to the charity which grows out of uncertainty! There are saving Truths of God and there are “damnable heresies.” Jesus Christ is not yes and no. His Gospel is not a cunning mixture of the gall of Hell and the honey of Heaven flavored to the taste of bad and good. There are fixed principles and revealed facts. Those who know anything experimentally about Divine things have cast their anchor down and, as they hear the chain running out, they joyfully say, “This I know and have believed. In this Truth I stand fast and immovable. Winds may blow and crack their cheeks, but they will never move me from this anchorage! Whatever I have attained by the teaching of the Spirit, I will hold fast as long as I live.”

Moreover, the anchor is needed *that we may possess constancy and usefulness*. The man who is easily moved and believes this, today, and that, tomorrow, is a fickle creature. Who knows where to find him? Of what use is he to the younger sort and the feeble folk, or, indeed, to anyone? Like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed, what service can he render in the work of the Lord and how can he influence others for good? He believes not! How can he make others believe? I believe that the orthodox *disbeliever* is more largely a creator of infidelity than the heterodox Believer—in other words I fear that the man who earnestly believes an error has a less injurious influence upon others than the man who holds the Truth of God in indifference and secret unbelief.

This man is tolerated in godly company, for he professes to be one of ourselves and he is, therefore, able to stab at Piety beneath her shield. The man knows nothing, certainly, but only hopes and trusts. And when defending Truth, he allows that much may be said on the other side, so that he kisses and stabs at the same time. Our God has provided us an anchor to hold us fast lest we be shipwrecked, lest we be unhappy, lest we lose the progress we have made and lest our character should become unstable and, therefore, useless. These purposes are kind and wise! Let us bless the Lord who has so graciously cared for us.

II. Secondly, I invite you to consider THE MAKE OF THE ANCHOR. “That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation.” Anchor-making is very important work. The anchor-smith has a very responsible business, for if he makes his anchor badly, or of weak material, woe to the shipmaster when the

storm comes! Anchors are not made of cast iron, not of every kind of metal that comes to hand, but they are made of *worked* iron, strongly welded and of tough, compact material which will bear all the strain that is likely to come upon it at the worst of times. If anything in this world should be strong, it should be an anchor, for upon it safety and life often depend.

What is our anchor? It has two great blades or flukes to it, each of which acts as a holdfast. It is made of two Divine things. The one is *God's* promise, a sure and stable thing, indeed! We are very ready to take a good man's promise, but perhaps the good man may forget to fulfill it, or be unable to do so—neither of these things can occur with the Lord—He cannot forget and He cannot fail to do as He has said! Jehovah's promise, what a certain thing it must be! If you had nothing but the Lord's bare Word to trust to, surely your faith should never stagger. To this sure word is added another Divine thing, namely, God's *oath*.

Beloved, I scarcely dare speak upon this sacred topic! God's oath, His solemn assertion, His swearing by Himself! Conceive the majesty, the awe, the certainty of this! Here, then, are two Divine assurances, which, like the flukes of the anchor, hold us fast. Who dares doubt the promise of God? Who can have the audacity to distrust His oath? We have for our anchor two things, which, in addition to their being Divine, are expressly said to be Immutable—that is, two things which cannot change! When the Lord utters a promise, He never runs back from it—"the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Has He said and shall He not do it? Has He promised and shall it not stand fast? He never changes and His promise abides from generation to generation!

Then comes the oath, which is the other Immutable thing. How could that be altered? God has pledged the honor of His name and it is not supposable that, under such circumstances, He will retract His engagements and deny His own declarations! Ah, no—

***"The Gospel bears my spirit up.
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation for my hope
In oaths, and promises, and blood."***

Notice, next, of these two things that is said—"Wherein it is impossible for God to lie." It is inconsistent with the very idea and thought of God that He should be a liar! A lying God would be a mistake in *language*, a self-evident contradiction! It cannot be, God must be true—true in His Nature, true in His thoughts, true in His designs, true in His acts and assuredly true in His promises and true in His oaths. "Wherein it is impossible for God to lie." Oh, Beloved, what blessed holdfasts have we here! "If hope cannot rest on such assurances, what could it rest upon? But now, what is this promise, and what is this oath? The promise is the promise given to Abraham that his seed should be blessed and in this seed should all nations of the earth be blessed, also."

To whom was this promise made? Who are the "seed"? In the first place, the Seed is Jesus, who blesses all nations. And next, our Apostle has proved that this promise was not made to the seed according to the flesh, but to the seed according to the spirit. Who, then, are the seed of Abraham according to the spirit? Why, Believers! For He is the father of the faithful and God's promise, therefore, is confirmed to all who exhibit

the faith of believing Abraham! To Christ, Himself, and to all who are in Christ, is the Covenant made sure, that the Lord will bless them forever and make them blessings.

And what is the oath? That may refer to the oath which the Lord swore to Abraham after the Patriarch had offered up his son, for which see the 22nd chapter of Genesis. But I think you will agree with me if I say it more probably refers to the oath recorded in the 110th Psalm which I would have you notice very carefully—"The Lord has sworn, and will not repent, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." I think this is referred to because the 20th verse of our text goes on to say, "Where the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec."

Now, Beloved, I want you to see this anchor. Here is one of its hold-fasts—God has promised to bless the faithful—He has declared that the seed of Abraham, namely Believers, shall be blessed and made a blessing. Then comes the other arm of the anchor which is equally strong to hold the soul, namely, the oath of the priesthood, by which the Lord Jesus is declared to be a Priest forever on our behalf—not an ordinary priest after the manner of Aaron, beginning and ending a temporary priesthood—but without beginning of days or end of years, living on forever! Jesus is a Priest who has finished His sacrificial work, has gone in within the veil and sits down forever at the right hand of God, because His work is complete and His Priesthood abides in its eternal efficacy!

This is a blessed anchor to the soul—to know that my Priest is within the veil! To know that my King of righteousness and King of peace is before the Throne of God for me, representing me and, therefore, I am forever secure in Him. What better anchor could the Comforter, Himself, devise for His people? What stronger consolation can the heirs of promise desire?

III. We have no time to linger, though tempted to do so and, therefore, I ask you to advance in the third place to notice OUR HOLD OF THE ANCHOR. It would be of no use for us to have an anchor, however good, unless we had a hold of it. The anchor may be sure and may have a steadfast grip, but there must be a strong cable to connect the anchor with the ship. Formerly it was very general to use a hemp cable, but large vessels are not content to run the risk of breakage and, therefore, they use a chain cable for the anchor. It is a grand thing to have a solid substantial connection between your soul and your hope—to have a confidence which is surely your own—from which you can never be separated!

Our text speaks plainly about this laying hold of the anchor in the end of the 18th verse—"That we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." We must personally lay hold on the hope. There is the hope, but we are bound to grasp it and hold it fast. As with an anchor, the cable must pass through the ring, and so be bound to it. So must faith lay hold upon the hope of eternal life. The original Greek signifies "to lay hold by main force and so to hold as not to lose our hold when the greatest force would pull it from us." We must take firm hold of the firm Truth of God!

Ah, Brothers and Sisters, as some men have a cloudy hope, they would seem to have a very doubtful way of laying hold upon it. I suppose it is

natural it should be so. For my part, I desire to be taught something certain and then I pray to be certain that I have learned it. Oh to get such a grip of the Truth of God as that old warrior had of his sword, so that when he fought and conquered he could not separate his hand and his sword, for his hand clung to his sword as if it were glued to it! It is a blessed thing to get hold of the doctrine of Christ in such a way that you would have to be dismembered before it could be taken from you, for it has grown into your very self! Mind you have a sure hold of your sure anchor!

“Well,” says one, “but *may we* lay hold upon it”? My answer is, the text says it is “set before us”—to, “lay hold of the hope set before us.” You may grasp it for it is set before you. If any of you were very faint and hungry and came to a person’s house and he said, “sit down,” and you sat down at the table. And when you sat there, the master set before you a good joint of meat and some very pleasant fruits and the like, you would not long question whether you might eat them, but would infer your liberty to do so because the food was set before you!

Assuredly this is the welcome of the Gospel! The hope is set before you! For what purpose is it so set? That you may turn your back upon it? Assuredly not! Lay hold upon it, for wherever Truth of God is met with, it is both our *duty* and our *privilege* to lay hold upon it. All the guarantee that a sinner needs for laying hold on Christ is found in the fact that God has set Christ forth to be a Propitiation for our sins. Christian, you are in a storm—here is an anchor! Do you ask, “May I use that anchor”? It is set before you for that very purpose! I guarantee you there is no captain here but what if he were in a storm and saw an anchor set before him, he would use it at once and ask no questions. The anchor might be none of his, it might happen to be on board as a piece of merchandise—he would not care an atom about that! “The ship has got to be saved. Here is an anchor, over it goes.” Act thus with the gracious hope which God provides for you in the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Lay hold on it now and evermore

Now, notice that our hold on the anchor should be a present thing and a conscious matter, for we read, “which hope we have.” We are conscious that we have it. No one among us has any right to be at peace if he does not know that he has obtained a good hope through Grace. May you all be able to say, “which hope *we have*.” As it is well to have a cable made of the same metal as the anchor, so it is a blessed thing when our faith is of the same Divine Character as the Truth of God upon which it lays hold. It needs a God-given hope on our part to seize the God-given promise of which our hope is made! The right mode of procedure is to grasp God’s promise with a God-created confidence. Then you see that right away down from the vessel to the anchor the holdfast is all of one piece, so that at every point it is equally adapted to bear the strain.

O to have precious faith in a precious Christ! A precious confidence in precious blood! God grant it to you and may you exercise it at this very moment!

IV. Fourthly, and very briefly, let us speak of THE ANCHOR’S HOLD OF US. A ship has hold upon her anchor by her chain cable, but at the same time the most important thing is that the anchor keeps its hold upon the ship and so, because it has entered into the ground at the bottom of the sea, holds the vessel hard and fast. Brothers and Sisters, do you know

anything about your hope holding you? It will hold you if it is a *good* hope. You will not be able to get away from it! Under temptation, depression of spirit, trial and affliction you will not only hold your hope—that is your duty, but your hope will hold you—that is your privilege! When the devil tempts you to say, “I will give it all up,” a power unseen will speak out of the infinite deeps and will reply, “But I shall not give *you* up. I have a hold of you and none shall separate us.”

Brothers and Sisters, our security depends far more upon *God’s holding* us than our holding onto Him! Our hope in God, that He will fulfill His oath and promise, has a mighty power over us—far more than equal to all the efforts of the world, the flesh and the devil to drag us away. How is it that our Divine anchor holds so fast? It is because it is, in its own nature, sure—“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.” It is, in itself, sure as to its nature. The Gospel is no cunningly devised fable—God has spoken it. It is a mass of fact. It is pure, unalloyed Truth with the broad seal of God, Himself, set upon it.

Then, too, this anchor is “steadfast” as to its hold. It never moves from its lodgment. It is sure in its nature and steadfast when in use and, therefore, it is practically safe. If you have believed in Christ unto eternal life and are expecting that God will be as good as His Word, have you not found that your hope sustains you and maintains you in your position? Brothers and Sisters, the result of the use of this anchor will be very comfortable to you. “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.” It will not prevent your being tossed about, for a ship at anchor may rock a good deal and the passengers may be very seasick, but she cannot be driven away from her moorings!

There she is and her passengers suffer discomfort, but they shall not suffer shipwreck. A good hope through Grace will not altogether deliver you from inward conflicts, no, it will even *involve* them! It will not screen you from outward trials—it will be sure to *bring* them! But it will save you from all real peril. I may say to every Believer in Jesus that his condition is very like that of the landsman on board ship when the sea was rather rough and he said, “Captain, we are in great danger, are we not”? As an answer did not come, he said, “Captain, don’t you see great fear?” Then the old seaman gruffly replied, “Yes, I see plenty of fear, but not a bit of danger.”

It is often so with us. When the blinds are out and the storms are raging there is plenty of fear, but there is no danger. We may be much tossed, but we are quite safe, for we have an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast which will not move. One blessed thing is that our hope has such a grip of us that we know it. In a vessel you feel the pull of the anchor and the more the wind rages the more you feel that the anchor holds you. Like the boy with his kite—the kite is up in the clouds, where he cannot see it, but he knows it is there, for he feels it pull. So our good hope has gone up to Heaven and it is pulling and drawing us towards itself. We cannot see our anchor, it would be of no use if we *could* see it—its use begins when it is out of sight—but it pulls and we can feel the heavenly pressure!

V. And now, lastly, and best of all, THE ANCHOR’S UNSEEN GRIP, “which enters into that within the veil.” Our anchor is like every other,

when it is of any use it is out of sight. When a man sees the anchor, it is doing nothing, unless it happens to be some small stream anchor or grapnel in shallow water. When the anchor is of use it is *gone*—there it went overboard with a splash! Far down there, all among the fish, lies the iron holdfast, quite out of sight. Where is your hope, Brothers and Sisters? Do you believe because you can *see*? That is not believing at all! Do you believe because you can *feel*? That is *feeling*, it is not believing! But “blessed is he that has not seen and yet has believed.”

Blessed is he who believes against his feelings, yes, and hopes against hope! That is a strange thing to do, hoping against hope, believing things impossible and seeing things invisible. He who can do that has learned the art of faith! Our hope is not seen, it lies in the waves, or, as the text says, “within the veil.” I am not going to run the figure too closely, but a mariner might say that his anchor is within the watery veil, for a veil of water is between him and it and so it is concealed. Such is the confidence which we have in God, whom having not seen we love—

***“Let the winds blow, and billows roll,
Hope is the anchor of my soul.
But can I by so slight a tie,
An unseen hope, on God rely?
Steadfast and sure, it cannot fail,
It enters deep within the veil,
It fastens on a land unknown,
And moors me to my Father’s Throne.”***

Although our anchor is gone out of sight, yet, thank God it has taken a very firm grip and “entered into that which is within the veil.” What hold can be equal to that which a man has upon his God when he can cry, “You have promised, therefore do as You have said”?

What grasp is firmer than this, “Lord, You have sworn it, You can not run back. You have said that he that believes in You is justified from all sin. Lord, I believe You, therefore be pleased to do as You have said. I know You cannot lie and You have sworn that Christ is a Priest forever. I am resting in Him as my Priest who has made a full atonement for me. I therefore hold You to Your oath—accept me for the sake of Jesus’ sacrifice. Can You reject a soul for whom Your own Son is pleading? He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto You by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for me! My Lord, this is the hold I have upon You! This is the anchor which I have cast into the deep mysterious attributes of Your wondrous Nature! I believe You and You will not make me ashamed of my hope.” Oh, Brothers and Sisters, what a hold you have upon the living God when you rely on His oath and promise! Thus you hold Him as Jacob held the Angel and the blessing you will surely win at His hands!

Note next, that when an anchor has a good grip down below, the more the ship drags, the tighter its hold becomes. At first, when the anchor goes down, perhaps it drops upon a hard rock and there it cannot bite, but, by-and-by, it slips off from the rock and enters into the bottom of the sea. It digs into the soil and, as the cable draws it on, it goes deeper and deeper till the anchor almost buries itself. And the more it is pulled upon, the deeper it descends. The anchor gets such a hold, at last, that it seems to say, “Now, Boreas, blow away, you must tear up the floor of the sea before the vessel shall be let go.”

Times of trouble send our hope deep down into fundamental Truths of God. Some of you people who have never known friction, you rich people who never known need, you healthy folks who were never ill a week—you have not half a grip of the glorious hope that the tried ones have! Much of the unbelief in the Christian Church comes out of the easy lives of professors! When you come to rough it, you need the solid Gospel! A hard-working hungry man cannot live on your whipped creams and your fine drinks—he must have something solid to nourish him—and so the tried man feels that he must have a Gospel which is true—and he must believe it to be true, or else his soul will famish!

Now, if God promises and swears, have we not the most solid of assurances? The firmest conceivable faith is no more than the righteous due of the thrice holy and faithful God. Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, when greater trouble comes, believe the more firmly! And when your vessel is tossed in deeper water, believe the more confidently! When the head is aching and the heart is palpitating. When all earthly joy is fled and when death comes near, believe the more! Grow surer and surer that your Father cannot lie, yes, “Let God be true and every man a liar.” In this way you will obtain the strong consolation which the Lord intends you to enjoy.

The text concludes with this very sweet reflection, that though our hope is out of sight, we have a Friend in the unseen land where our hope has found its hold. In anxious moments a sailor might almost wish that he could go with his anchor and fix it firmly. That he cannot do, but we have a Friend who has gone to see to everything for us! Our anchor is within the veil—it is where we cannot see it—but Jesus is there and our hope is inseparably connected with His Person and work! We know of a certainty that Jesus of Nazareth, after His death and burial, rose from the grave and that 40 days afterwards, in the presence of His disciples, He went up into Heaven and a cloud received Him!

We know this as an historical fact and we also know that He rose into the heavens as the comprehensive Seed of Abraham in whom are found all the faithful. As He has gone there, we shall surely follow, for He is the first fruits of the full harvest. According to the text, our Lord Jesus has gone within the veil *as our High Priest*. Now, the High Priest within the veil is in the place of acceptance on our behalf. A Melchisedec High Priest is one who has boundless power to bless and to save unto the uttermost. Jesus Christ has offered one bloody Sacrifice for sin, namely, Himself, and now He sits down at the right hand of God forever, even the Father. Brothers and Sisters, He reigns where our anchor has entered! We rest in Christ's finished work, His Resurrection power and His eternal Kingship. How can we doubt, after this?

We are next informed that Jesus has gone within veil *as the Forerunner*. What is a forerunner if there are not others to run after him? Jesus has gone to lead the way! He is the pioneer, the leader of the great army, the first fruits from the dead! And if He has gone to Heaven as a forerunner, then we who belong to Him will follow after! Should not that reflection make our hearts glad? We are told next that as the Forerunner our Lord has *for us* entered—that is entered to take possession in *our* name. When Jesus Christ went into Heaven, He did, as it were, look around on all the

thrones and all the palms and all the harps and all the crowns, and said, "I take possession of all these in the name of My redeemed. I am their Representative and claim the heavenly places in their names."

As surely as Jesus is there, the Possessor of all things, so shall we, also, each one, come to his inheritance in due time! Our Lord Jesus, by His intercession, is drawing us to Heaven and we have only to wait a little while and we shall be with Him where He is. He pleads for our Home-bringing and it will come to pass before long. No sailor likes his anchor to come home, for if it does so in a storm, matters look very ugly. Our anchor will never come home, but it is *drawing us Home!* It is drawing us to itself, not downwards beneath devouring waves, but upwards to ecstatic joys! Do you not feel it? You who are growing old, do you not feel its Home-drawings?!

Many cords hold us here, but they are getting fewer with some of you—the dear wife has faded away, or the beloved husband has gone. Many of your children have gone, too, and a host of friends. These are all helps to draw you upward. I think at this very moment you must feel as if your boat were about to change by some magic power from a ship, which floats the waters to an eagle which can fly the air! Have you not often longed to mount while singing—

***"Oh that we now might grasp our Guide!
Oh that the word were given!
Come, Lord of Hosts, the waves divide,
And land us all in Heaven!"***

My cable has grown shorter of late, a great many of its links have vanished. I am nearer my hope that when I first believed. Every day hope nears fruition! Let our joy in it become more exultant. A few more weeks or months and we shall dwell above! And while we shall need no anchor to hold us fast, we shall eternally bless that Divine condescension which produced such a holdfast for our unstable minds while tossed upon this sea of care!

What will those of you do who have no anchor? A storm is coming on! I see the lowering clouds and hear the distant hurricane! What will you do? May the Lord help you at once to flee for refuge to the hope set before you. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Hebrews 6.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN IN BOOK"—230, 193, 632.**

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STRONG CONSOLATION FOR THE LORD'S REFUGEES NO. 1352

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 29, 1877,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”
Hebrews 6:18.*

WHEN we read such a choice verse as this we are apt, at once, to conclude that it “belongs to them that are of full age, even to those who by reason of use have had their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” We set this aside as a choice morsel reserved for those who have worn well and borne the burden and heat of the day—for those who have attained to full assurance of faith and, therefore, are able to lay hold upon rich Covenant provisions. Let us at once correct this mistake, for the passage belongs to a very early form of Christian experience! It relates, indeed, to the lowest degree of Christian Grace!

Let me read it again. “That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation.” To whom does the, “we,” refer? We “who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” The strong consolation mentioned in the text belongs to those who have fled to Christ for refuge—and surely this is at the very *beginning* of the Divine life. It belongs, also, to those who lay hold upon the hope of the Gospel and this, also, is a very elementary part of Christian experience. If you have only newly fled to Christ for refuge and if, by a child-like faith, you have freshly laid hold upon the hope that is set before you, then the riches of Grace are yours and God’s oath and promise are intended to afford you strong consolation.

As far as this text is concerned, you need not examine yourselves to search for strong faith, or deep experience, or great growth in Grace, or advanced holiness, for if you are but Christ’s refugee and a grasper of the Lord’s promises, you may rejoice in the two immutable things and rest in peace! I gather from God’s beginning, thus early, to encourage His people, and from His laying down so much comfort for them at the outset, that He would have them happy all their lives. It is not the Lord’s mind that the King’s children should go mourning all their days. If you hang your harps upon the willows, it is not by Divine Precept that you do so, for His Word to the Prophet is, “Comfort you, comfort you My people, says your God. Speak you comfortably unto Jerusalem.”

He would have you clothed in raiment of rejoicing, yes, He desires that your joy may be full! If your heavenly Father would not have you sorrowful, will you not consent to His loving wish concerning you and drink

deeply into the comfort which He provides? The Lord knew of old that His people would need comforting, for He foresaw our infirmities and our afflictions from our birth. He knew what creatures of the dust we are, how frail and feeble and, therefore, He has ordained abundant consolation, that His poor, weak, tried and tempted people may be strengthened and cheered. Carefully notice that the Lord has laid most stress upon the point which is most vital to the Believer's comfort.

He knew right well that we should often doubt His great Grace and think the Covenant way of salvation to be too good to be true and, therefore, that we might have no excuse for mistrust or suspicion. He has first pledged His word and then has condescendingly uttered a solemn oath, swearing by Himself that from now on we might never raise a question about the foundations upon which the eternal settlements of love are laid. To Believers He has put salvation and all other Covenant blessings beyond dispute in order that all who are interested in them might have the firmest assurance concerning them.

The worst possible trial to a Believer is to have it suggested to him that the Gospel is not true, that pardon through the precious blood is a fiction and that God is not reconciled through the atoning Sacrifice. If we are absolutely certain as to the Truth of God's Gospel and our own salvation, thereby, then all other things are of small consequence to us and, therefore, has the Lord fixed on a sure basis of promise and oath this cornerstone of our comfort. He has set His promise in such a light that it becomes blasphemy to doubt it! Our loving Father knew that we should often be assailed by the spirit of distrust and this has led Him so abundantly to certify the Truth of the things which He has promised. You know, Beloved, guilt is very suspicious. When you have done wrong to a man, you cannot believe him. Nothing renders you so full of doubt towards another as your own consciousness of having acted unjustly towards him.

Now, when a sense of guilt comes over the soul, Nature begins to say, "Can the Lord be a sin-pardoning Lord? Can He love me as He says He does? Such a base, ungrateful rebel as I—can I really have part in so great a salvation as that which God has provided and set forth?" Knowing the suspicious nature of a guilty heart, God has made His oath and promise to be two sheet-anchors to the soul so that our faith may ride out every storm of doubt. The greatness of the mercies, themselves, often staggers us. When we consider God's electing love, when we reckon the amazing cost of redemption and when we see the high honor of adoption, union to Christ and heirship with Him, we naturally exclaim— "Why all this for *me*?" And, alas, we are apt to go a step further and say, "Can it be true? Is it not all a pleasant dream? Has the Lord really made *me* one with Christ and called me His Beloved? Will He prepare for *me*, also, a place among the glorified?"

Lest the greatness of the blessing should stagger our confidence, the Lord has ensured every blessing to us by a Covenant rendered valid by His own act and deed—a Covenant signed, sealed and delivered so as to be beyond all question! Moreover the Lord knew that we should doubt His

faithfulness because we, ourselves, are so false. We remember many a broken promise, broken though made before the Lord. And persons who are untruthful, themselves, are very apt to think others so. Therefore our God, knowing the deceitful nature of our hearts, foresaw that we should be an unbelieving race and has set two swords at the heart of our suspicions and questions—slaying unbelief by His oath and promise.

Besides, our nature runs so cross to the whole system of Divine Grace that we need much assuring before we can believe it. We are always for working, deserving and earning! Phariseeism is the religion of Nature. We boast of our merit and yet we are as meritless as Satan, himself. The idea of working and deserving appears to be ingrained in our nature and as certain as the blood is red, so sure is the heart self-righteousness. We cannot divest ourselves of the idea of salvation as *payment* for work done—that it is a gift, a free gift of Grace—it is hard to make us believe. Even after conversion the old tendency betrays itself. We steal away from Jesus to Moses as often as we get the opportunity and then begin to doubt Free Grace. Therefore the Lord has fettered and bound us down to believing with golden chains of promise and oath. “It must be so,” He says, “the Grace that I have revealed is, indeed, true, for I have sworn by Myself.” Beloved, we ought earnestly to abhor that wicked legality of ours which so often does despite to the Grace of God, casts suspicion upon His mercy and brings our souls into bondage.

Another door for doubt is found in the fear of presuming. It is right that we should be fearful of being comforted in a wrong manner, for nothing is more deadly than false peace. The Lord approves of that holy jealousy which leads us to examine ourselves whether we are in the faith. I am always sorrowful when hallowed fear departs from a man so that he no longer dreads self-deception. But the fear of presuming may be perverted by the Evil One and then it becomes a snare to our feet. Beloved, be sure of this, that it is no presumption to believe God! The presumption lies in *doubting* Him! Faith is sister to humility, and mistrust is neighbor to pride.

But lest any of you tremblers should be afraid to take the promise of God as being absolute and Truth to you, behold, Jehovah swears it! And do you dare doubt it? You dare not question the veracity of God who thus with, “amens,” and, “verilys,” pledges His own eternal power and Godhead that the Covenant of His Grace shall stand fast forever! Thus does God lay the stress of assurance where we are apt to put the force of our doubt. And by making His own promise sure, He affords to us consolation of the strongest order.

At this time, hoping that some of God's people may be comforted thereby, we shall describe the conditions of mind to which the text is addressed and the blessing which it brings. The text speaks of three states—first, we have “fled for refuge.” Secondly, we have, “laid hold upon the hope set before us.” And thirdly, we have, “a strong consolation.”

I. First, WE HAVE “FLED FOR REFUGE.” Although the original Greek does not quite so plainly refer to a refuge as our authorized version would suggest, the figure here used is undoubtedly that of the City of Refuge to

which the man-slayer fled when he was in danger from the avenger of blood. I shall not attempt to draw the parallel at any length, pleasing as such a work would be, for you can easily trace it out for yourselves. I will only follow the figure so far as I need it for my present purpose.

The man-slayer, the moment he had, in the heat of passion, killed a man, became an apt representative of an awakened sinner who discovers himself to be in an evil case. There lies the body of the man he has murdered with a hasty blow. He knows not what to do. Can you conceive the rush of unhappy feeling which overwhelms his mind? May none of us never know the pang of seriously injuring, much less of *killing*, any man by accident. But to have done it in the heat of wrath, in sudden passion—how terrible! What must be the horror of the man's soul! He sees the clay-cold corpse upon the ground and wishes he could die, too! Blood is on his hands and on the soil—and his conscience hears a voice appealing to God for vengeance!

He looks around and trembles at the fall of a leaf. Everything is changed. The plot of land which his father left him, once so pleasant, is now a horrible Aceldama, a field of blood. He cannot endure to look upon the homestead which once he loved. He turns his eyes upward and the very skies seem to frown! He wonders that the earth beneath him does not open and swallow him up. Bloodstains are on everything! Even when he shuts his eyes, he sees the crimson blots. He knows not what to do—to go to his house, to hide himself in yonder thicket—or to plunge into the river which flows hard by. He is in a terrible state of mind, the furies hover around him and a thousand stings of serpents are fixed in him.

I remember well when I was in a similar state of heart as to my sins, for I saw my Lord upon the Cross and I felt that I was guilty of His death—

***“My conscience felt, and owned the guilt,
And plunged me in despair.
I saw my sins His blood had spilt,
And helped to nail Him there.
Alas! I knew not what I did
But now my tears are vain!
Where shall my trembling soul be hid?
For I, the Lord have slain!”***

I discovered that I had so sinned as to have involved myself in eternal destruction! What a horrible discovery it was! Everything had been pleasant enough before, but, lo, I found myself a rebel against the Most High and my very existence was dreadful beyond conception. Where should I flee, or how should I escape? An awful dread was over me and I could not bear it. Hell had begun to burn within my spirit and the undying worm had begun its gnawing! It is the work of the Spirit of God to convict men of sin, of righteousness and of judgment to come—and it is well when the soul begins to fear—for then it begins to live.

The alarmed man-slayer would, next, if he could calm himself at all, consider what he could do and he would soon come to the conclusion that he could neither defy, nor escape, nor endure the doom which threatened him. The avenger of blood would be sure to be after him. Could he resist him? Would it do to take up arms and defend himself? Could he hope to

escape from the vengeance of the tribe by hiding in some secret den or cave of the earth? Or could he endure the wrath of the avenger? He knew that he could not, for the avenger of blood would seek blood for blood and not be satisfied till he had taken his life.

Now, it is altogether in vain that men dream of defying the Lord. They would be utterly consumed as stubble in the flame! The Lord of Hosts is terrible in arms and we cannot stand out against Him. We may have thought ourselves strong, but when it comes to an actual facing the Lord before the bar of judgment in our own conscience we find that we cannot stand before Him for an instant—and our loins are loosed with fear. As to escaping from Him, how impossible we feel it to be! The top of Carmel has no caverns in which we could lie concealed! In the deeps of the sea, the crooked serpent, commissioned by God, would find us! The wings of the morning could not bear us swiftly enough to enable us to escape from the right hand of Jehovah, nor could the thick darkness cover us from His eyes. As to bearing the penalty of His wrath, that we know to be impossible, for should He once begin to deal with us in vengeance, we must be driven from His Presence into the lowest Hell.

Thus, in the days of our conviction no hope is discovered to natural reason and our dread is increased till fear takes hold upon us as pain of a woman in travail, for we see what we have done and we know not what we can do to escape from the consequences! Then there comes to our ears what, perhaps, we had heard before, but had heard so indifferently as never to have really understood it—we hear of a divinely provided way of escape! The man-slayer had, perhaps, left unnoticed the provision of the six Cities of Refuge because he had, then, no personal need of them. But as soon as he became a murderer, those places became all important in his esteem and his mind admired that merciful statute which had ordained a shelter from blood-revenge.

When under a sense of sin men value Christ Jesus! We heard of God's way of salvation but we never studied it, set our hearts upon it, or labored to understand it fully until we saw our guilt before us in all its blood-red hue. How wonderful is the system of Grace! Here it is—that as in Adam we die through Adam's sin, so if we are in Christ, we live through Christ's righteousness. The way of escape for the sinner lies not in himself but in Another. He must come under another headship and then he is saved. Under the first natural headship we became sinners. Under the second gracious Headship we become righteous! How consoling it is to perceive that the second Adam, in whom we become righteous through believing, has the power to save us because the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all—and He has made atonement to the fullest!

Instead of dealing personally with every man in Christ and asking from each of them the penalty due for sin, God, in His mercy, has taken the whole sin of those in Christ in the bulk and asked payment for the whole mass at the hand of their great Covenant Head! The Lord has gone, in fact, to the second Adam, to Christ Jesus, and presented to Him the dread account of all the sin of His redeemed. He has said to Him, "Will You discharge all this?" and Jesus has answered, "Yes," and has carried up to the

Cross all the gigantic load of sin and made an end of it there! He shouted the victory, saying, "It is finished," for the whole debt of His people was forever blotted out! Their sins were buried in His sepulcher, never to rise again! But He, Himself, has risen, having personally discharged of all the liabilities which He took upon Himself on our behalf, and so we, also, are discharged, for He died for our offenses—and He rose, again, for our justification!

Now, when a man begins to perceive that his sin can be reckoned with by God rather than according to what he has personally been and done. When he learns that God regards Believers as being in Christ and, therefore, reckons with Christ for them, then his soul finds peace. Behold this and admire—I, believing, am dead to sin, for Jesus died! I, believing, have borne Jehovah's wrath, for Jesus bore it on my behalf! Behold, He says unto the Believer, "Your warfare is accomplished and your sin is pardoned, for you have received, at the Lord's hands, in the Person of His Son, double for all your sins." The Believer's debt was imputed to the Lord Jesus and, therefore, it is no more on the Believer! He is discharged and may go his way in peace!

Dear Hearers, such a plan as this may not please some of you who have never felt the horror of guilt and have known no need of a Savior, but it charms us! You have always been so good and excellent that you feel no joy at the thought of another standing in your place—but a man who is alarmed, distressed, amazed and conscious of his guilt—when he hears of this strange, this wondrous plan of not imputing unto us our trespasses because God has laid all our iniquity upon Jesus, our Surety and Substitute! That man, I say, rejoices when he hears of it and at once flies to it! The text, however, not only implies that we need the refuge and have heard of it, but that we have fled to it.

To flee away from self to the provided Refuge is a main act of faith. The manslayer left his house, his wife, his children, his farm and the oxen with which he was plowing. He left everything to flee away to the City of Refuge. That is just what a man does when he resolves to be saved by Grace—he leaves everything he calls his own! He renounces all his rights and privileges which he thought he possessed by nature. Yes, he confesses to have lost his own natural right to live and he flies for life to the Grace of God in Christ Jesus! The manslayer had no right to live except that he was in the City of Refuge. He had no right to *anything* except that he was God's guest within those enclosing walls. And so do we relinquish heartily and thoroughly, once and forever, all claims and rights arising out of our supposed merits! We hasten away from self that Christ may be All in All to us. We have "fled for refuge."

Observe that fleeing for refuge implies that a man flees from his sins. He sees it and he repents of it, but he flees away to Christ, the Sin Bearer, at once. His thoughts return gloomily to the sad memories of the past, but from all these he flies to Christ. He thinks of himself as under the Law and he soon finds that he cannot keep it and, therefore, the Law curses him for his failures. He will then have no consolation unless he flees away to Christ who kept the Law on our behalf. In Christ is our refuge from the

Law and nowhere else. When despair hovers over a man like a black cloud charged with lightning, he must run to Jesus!

“How can *you* be justified?” asks the wounded conscience. The answer must be found in Jesus. When we fly to Christ, the Fulfiller of the Law, despair vanishes at once, for we see that we are righteous in the righteousness of Christ and accepted in the Beloved! Every now and then we foolishly go back to our own self-righteousness, but our wisdom is to flee from this as from the plague. We cannot live in that abomination! Creature righteousness is all a lie and a forgery—it ought to be regarded by us as dross and dung, for it is no better. Flee from it with all your might! A Christian is always fleeing from himself! It is the business of his life to escape, alike, from his sin and his righteousness—that he may never regard himself before the Lord as an individual, sole and separate from Christ, but only as one *with* Jesus and, therefore, in Him, dear to the Father's heart—cleansed, justified and accepted. May the Holy Spirit keep us to this.

You will perhaps ask me, “How came the Apostle Paul to get where this text lands him? What line of thought led him to speak about the strong consolations which furnish the Lord's fugitives with such confidence?” He had been speaking of three matters which represent the confidence to which we flee. He spoke just before (Heb. 6:13-16), of the Covenant which the Lord made with Abraham in which He had sworn with an oath that He would bless him and his seed. Now it is understood that the seed of Abraham is, first, the Lord Jesus, and secondly, all Believers—for the Covenant was by promise, as in another place the Apostle proves—and was made with a seed, not after the flesh, but after the spirit, so that Abraham was the father of the faithful, or of all who have faith.

Now a Covenant firmly established by oath with the Father is sure to the heirs and, accordingly, Paul says, “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath.” He, then, who is a Believer, is certified by the oath of God that in blessing He will bless him. This is sure to all Believers and sure to me and to you if we are Believers. As Believers we flee away from ourselves and the Covenant of Works to the sure Covenant of unchanging Grace—and our consolation is strong, because God is true.

The Apostle had, also, been speaking of the inheritance of rest which was typified by Canaan. An oath was sworn by God that the unbelievers in the wilderness should not enter into His rest and this was tantamount to an oath that Believers *would* enter into His rest, seeing that some must enter therein. Now, we, because we are Believers, and upon that ground, alone, enter into rest. Believing in Him who justifies the ungodly, we, by faith, enjoy peace with God. And we need not fear that we shall enter into eternal rest, for the oath of God will bring us in. Furthermore, the Apostle referred to the eternal priesthood of Christ as set forth in the type of Melchisedec and, there again, we have a matter in which promise and oath unite.

In a later chapter Paul opens up what he had already mentioned—“For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by Him

that said unto Him, the Lord swore and will not repent, You are a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." By the oath of God, the Son is consecrated forevermore and, having offered one Sacrifice for sins forever, He sits at the right hand of God, able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him. Well then, I, a poor convicted sinner, without any other hope, flee away from myself to the eternal priesthood of Christ and to the Sacrifice that He has offered once and for all! And I know, because God has sworn it, that His Sacrifice avails for me and for all Believers. In thus fleeing for refuge to our great Lord and Priest, we find a strong consolation in the oath and promise of God.

The one solemn question is—beloved Hearers, have *you* fled for refuge? Are you the Lord's refugees today? Are you fugitives, daily, from self and sin? Are you in Christ as in a city of Refuge? And is He the sole ground of your security? If so, the strongest consolations are your portion!

II. But, secondly, WE HAVE COME TO "LAY HOLD." Here we have a change of figure unless we recall the case of Joab who fled for refuge to the temple and laid hold upon the horns of the altar. We will not insist upon that rare incident, for probably it did not occur to the Apostle's mind. Beloved, we feel that we need a refuge and we find that God has been pleased to set one forth. He says, "Whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life." He bids us cease from all hopes of merit and simply come and believe Him and trust in the great work which His Beloved Son has finished for us.

He bids us accept the great plan of Christ's Headship on our behalf and His sacrificial suffering in our place. Justification by faith in Jesus is set before us. What are we to do according to the text? We have to "lay hold" upon it. We are not commanded to prepare ourselves for it, or to get what the Romish writers call, "the grace of congruity," by which we should be fit for it. It is simply to be laid hold upon by us just as we are. Everybody here knows what it is to lay hold upon a support or a treasure. Sinner, that is just what you have to do with Christ! You have to lay hold upon Him by faith. You are drowning—there is a rope thrown to you. What have you to do? "Lay hold." You are not to look at your hands to see whether they are clean enough. No, lay hold, dirty hands or clean hands!

"But my hands are weak." Lay hold, Brother, as best you can, weak hands or not, for while you are laying hold of Christ, God is laying hold of you! You may rest assured of that. If you have the faintest grip of Christ, Christ has a firm grip of you as never shall be relaxed! Your business at this moment is to lay hold and keep hold. God has given us this blessed hope, that those who are in Christ are, for Christ's sake, forgiven all their iniquities. They are accepted and are secure of everlasting life—and of this we have only to lay hold! What does it mean? What is to be done in order to lay hold? Well, first, we must believe the Gospel to be true. Do you, all of you, believe it to be true that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them? Yes, I know you believe that God has sent His Son to be a propitiation for sin. So far, so good.

The next thing is to apprehend for yourselves this Truth of God. Christ justifies Believers. He is worthy of trust—trust Him—and He has justified you. “I do not feel it,” says one. You do not need to feel it! It is a matter of *believing, not feeling*. Believe in Jesus and, because you are a Believer, be assured that you are saved. “But I thought I should feel,” says another. Yes, you shall feel enough by-and-by, but now there is a question between you and God. Is the Lord a liar or not? “He that believes not has made God a liar,” and, on the other hand, “He that believes on Him has set to his seal that God is true.” Which of the two is it to be?

God, with a solemn oath, declares that Believers are blessed. Being the seed of Abraham they are blessed according to His Covenant. With an oath He declares that Believers shall enter into His rest! With an oath He declares that His Son, the everlasting Melchisedec, is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him! What then? Do you believe Him or not? “Oh,” says one, “I believe God’s Word, but I doubt its application to *me!*” You do not believe it unless you believe it for yourself, for there are no exceptions made in the case! If you believe, you are blessed. If you believe, you shall have rest. If you believe, the great Melchisedec lives for you and pleads for you—and you are saved. If you believe—that is the point—if you honor God by accepting His Word as true, and by relying upon Christ for yourself—then is it well with you!

If you say, “Yes, the rope is a strong one, and I believe it will support a sinking man,” why not lay hold upon it? That is the vital point of faith—to believe God practically by resting one’s own eternal destiny upon the Truth of God which we say we believe. “Lay hold on the hope.” While a man lays hold upon a thing he goes no further, but continues to cling to it. We have fled for refuge, but we flee no further than the hope which we now lay hold upon, namely, eternal life in Christ Jesus. We never wish to get beyond God’s promise in Christ Jesus to Believers, the promise of salvation to faith. We are satisfied with that, and there we rest. “Laying hold” in the forcible language of the Greek, would imply firm retention of that which we have seized.

I remember well when first I laid hold on the hope that God had set before me. I was terribly afraid to grasp it, for I thought it was too good to be true. But I saw that there was no other chance for me and, therefore, I was driven right out of myself to be bold and venture all. I knew that I must flee *somewhere* and it seemed to be that or nothing. I was forced to believe in the wondrous plan of salvation by Another and in Another, even in salvation by Jesus Christ! I made a dash at it, believed it—and joy and peace filled my spirit! That is 27 years ago, now, and I am still laying hold upon it. Brothers and Sisters, I have not gone an inch beyond the old hope! Jesus Christ was All in All to me, then, and He is the same now, only I am more resolved than ever to lean my soul on Him and upon Him alone.

I profess to you this day I dare not place a shadow of reliance on any sermons I have preached, or any alms I have given, or any prayers I have offered, or any communion with Christ I have enjoyed, or on anything that I have done, or said, or thought. I rely wholly on what Jesus did and is do-

ing, as my Covenant Head and Surety! I know He bore my sin in His own body on the tree. I know He buried my sin where it never shall have a resurrection and I know He stands as my Representative at the eternal Throne. And I also know that I shall soon be where He is because I am one with Him, since I have believed in Him.

Now, my Friend, if you believe in Him, too—if it were but five minutes ago that you received faith—you are just as safe in the hands of Jesus as those of us who have been in Him for years. If by an act of trust you do but accept what God has set forth, fleeing to it and laying hold upon it, the “strong consolation” of which the text speaks belongs to you! I pray God, in His mighty mercy, will lead many to believe in Him now. Did you notice that the Apostle speaks of laying hold upon a hope? This does not mean that we are to lay hold, by *imagination*, upon something which we hope to obtain in the dim future, for the next verse goes on to say, “which hope we *have*.” We have our hope now! It is not a shadowy idea that possibly, when we come to die, we may be saved. We know that we, at this moment, are safe in our refuge and we lay hold on our confidence as a *present joy*.

Yet that which we lay hold upon is full of hope—there is more in it than we can now see or enjoy. What is the hope? The hope of final perseverance! The hope of ultimate perfection! The hope of eternal Glory! The hope of being with our Lord where He is that we may behold His Glory forever—a purifying hope—elevating and full of glory! A hope which cheers and delights us as often as we think of it! This we have laid hold of by a simple act of faith, believing God to be true. This laying hold upon the hope which God sets before us is a very simple matter and yet there are some who do not understand it, for they ask us again and again, “What is faith?”

Well, it is laying hold, but if you want to know more about it, lay hold at once, and see what it is by *practice*. Lay hold at once, Sinner! It is all you have to do—and the Spirit of God enables you to do it! As I said before, black-handed Sinner, do not stop to wash your hands, but lay hold! That which you lay hold on will wash you and cleanse you. And poor, feeble, trembling, paralyzed Soul, Jesus bids you stretch out your hands and as you lay hold you shall find peace and consolation!

III. This is our last point. WE ENJOY “STRONG CONSOLATION.” I have not time to speak upon this as I should like and, therefore, will just throw out a few hints. Many of our fellow men have no consolation. When trouble comes, woe is unto them! There are many others who have a weak consolation. They depend upon the “*absolvo te*” of a priest. That must be a very poor thing, I should think, for anybody to get consolation out of—to know that you have been to “mass,” have “confessed,” and have been assured of forgiveness by a poor, mortal *man* who is no better than yourself, except that he has had his head shaved! What ground for consolation poor beings can see in this, I cannot tell—it must be a very poor support when sin and Satan assail the soul.

Many have a very insufficient consolation, for as soon as trial or trouble arise they faint—and when they have the prospect of death before them

their consolation vanishes like the dew in the sun. But we have a strong consolation! We call that additive strong of which a very few drops will flavor all into which it falls! How wonderfully the consolation of Christ has affected our entire lives! There is such potency in it that it sweetens everything about us. It is so strong that it masters all our fears and slays all our skepticisms. Though there are many teachers busily engaged in suggesting unbelief, yet our strong consolation flings a thousand doubts aside as Samson slew a thousand Philistines! It conquers all our trouble, too, for it makes us feel that, being called according to the eternal purpose, all things work together for our good.

Yes, this consolation is so strong that it vanquishes death, itself, and makes us descend into the chill precincts of the sepulcher without a shiver, joyfully triumphant because Christ has promised us life, God has sworn it and the promise and the oath must be true! What I want you to note is that the consolation of the Christian lies wholly in His God, because the ground of it is that God has sworn and that God has promised. Never look, therefore, to *yourselves* for any consolation—it would be a vain search. Flee from yourselves and lay hold upon the hope set before you. Oh Christian, you lose consolation when you look away from your God! Fasten the eyes of faith on Him and never let them glance elsewhere. His promise, His oath, Himself—a true and faithful God—this consideration, alone, can sustain you.

Remember, too, that your consolation must come from what God has spoken and not from His Providence. Mind that you do not look to the Lord's Providential dealings for your springs of joy, for He may chasten you with the rod of men and beat you with many stripes. But His promise smiles when His Providence frowns. See how the Apostle dwells upon the promise and the oath as the two immutable things and not upon temporal blessings! Outward Providences change, but the oath never changes—remember that! Your comfort must not even depend upon sensible realizations of God's favor, nor on sweet communions and delights. No, but upon—"He has said it and He has sworn it"—those are the two strong pillars upon which your comfort must rest. Not upon what you *think* He says to your heart, nor upon what you may believe you have felt to be applied to your own soul, but upon the bare Word, promise and oath of God without feeling or evidence to back it. God has said it and sworn it—there is your strong consolation.

Remember, however, that the power of the strong consolation derived from the oath of God must, in your personal enjoyment, depend very much upon your faith. What is the consolation of a promise if you do not believe it? And what is the comfort of an oath if you doubt it? O Brothers and Sisters, I charge you by the veracity of God, labor after an increased faith! If you never doubt God till you have cause to do so, you will never doubt again! It is impossible for Him to lie in anything and, above all, in the great things that your soul rests upon! Therefore do not treat Him as if He could lie, nor dare to suspect His faithfulness, but hold on to the immutable veracity of God.

Remember that this consolation which is intended to come to you by faith, if you do not get it, will prove that you are insulting God. It may appear to be a small and an easy thing to believe God, but it is a horrible and a detestable thing to *disbelieve* Him! Picture some generous friend in this assembly coming before us and saying "I promise such-and-such a thing." He would be grieved at heart if someone should rise and say, "I am willing enough to believe it, but I cannot." I can hardly think of anything which would be more insulting to an honest man than to have doubt cast upon him by one who pretends to be anxious to believe him. But suppose in great gentleness of spirit the person so mistrusted were to say, "To put an end to all questions, prepare a deed and I will set my hand and seal to it. And I will, at the same time, take a solemn oath, calling God to witness that what I promise is true"?

Now if any person should say, "I still do not believe it," can you conceive the pain of heart, yes, and the indignation which would naturally take possession of our friend's mind? Now God cannot swear by anything greater than Himself, for there is no greater, and so He has sworn by Himself. By His own existence, by His holiness from which He can never part, by the majesty of His Deity He has solemnly sworn that the believing seed shall be blessed—and blessed they must be. There shall be forgiveness and eternal life to everyone that believes in His Son Jesus Christ. This is no fiction! God cannot deceive us on such a point as this, nor, indeed, upon any other! This is no dream, no charming myth as some would seem to fancy! It is reality, *Divine* reality!

Now then, Souls, will you cast yourselves upon this Divine reality? May the devil be kept back from you that you may cease blaspheming God by doubting Him! May the eternal Spirit now convince you how natural, how proper, how necessary it is that you should at once believe the promise and the oath of God and trust yourselves with Jesus Christ, whom He sets forth to be a Prince and a Savior to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins this day! I wish I knew how to plead with you, but the time has gone. There was a time with me when to have heard this message would have made my heart leap within me, for I needed Christ. And when I heard that I must lay hold upon Him and flee to Him and so be saved, I was delighted to do so!

Those of you who are as sinful as I was and as conscious of it, will, I trust at this very moment, look unto Him and be saved—and if you do, by the promise and the oath of God, you are eternally secure! May God the Holy Spirit lead you to Jesus. Amen.

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

“FLEE FROM THE WRATH TO COME”

NO. 2704

**A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, DECEMBER 9, 1900.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 23, 1881.**

*“Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”
Matthew 3:7.*

*“Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”
Hebrews 6:18.*

WE will first consider the question of John the Baptist. “When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” I have no doubt that the Pharisees and Sadducees were very much surprised to hear John addressing them in that way, for men who wish to win disciples ordinarily adopt milder language than that—and choose more attractive themes—for they fear that they will drive their hearers from them if they are too personal and speak too sharply. There is not much danger of that, nowadays, for the current notion now abroad is that Gospel ministers can sew with silk without using a sharp needle and that, instead of piercing men with the sword of the Spirit, they should show them only the hilt of it—let them see the bright diamonds on the scabbard, but never let them feel the sharpness of the two-edged blade! They should always comfort, console and cheer, but never allude to the terror of the Lord.

That appears to be the common interpretation of our commission. But John the Baptist was of quite another mind. There came to a him a Pharisee, a very religious man, one who observed all the details of external worship and was very careful even about trifles. He was a firm Believer in the resurrection, and in angels and spirits, and in all that was written in the Book of the Law, and also in all the traditions of his fathers. He was a man who was overdone with external religiousness, a Ritualist of the first order who felt that if there was a righteous man in the world, he certainly was that one! He must have been greatly taken aback when John talked to him about the wrath of God and plainly told him that that wrath was as much for him as for other people! Those phylacteries and the broad borders of his garment, of which he was so proud, would not screen him from the anger of God against injustice and transgression, but, just like any common sinner, he would need to “flee from the wrath to come.”

I daresay that the Sadducee was equally taken aback by John’s stern language. He, too, was a religious man, but he combined with his religion greater thoughtfulness than the Pharisee did—at least, so he said. He did not believe in traditions and he was too large-minded to care about the little details and externals of religion. He observed the Law of Moses, but he clung rather to the letter of it than to its spirit, and he did not accept all that was revealed, for he denied that there was such a thing as an angel or a spirit. He was a Broad Churchman—a man of liberal ideas, fully abreast of the age! He professed to be a Hebrew of the Hebrews, yet, at the same time, the yoke of religion rested very lightly upon his shoulders. Still, he was not irreligious!

Yet here is John the Baptist talking to him, as well as to the Pharisee, about “the wrath to come”! They would both have liked to have a little argument with him, but he talked to them about *fleeing* from the wrath to come. They would both have been pleased to discuss with him some theological questions and to bring up the differences between their two sects, just to hear how John would handle them, and to let them see which way he would lean. But he did not waste a moment over the matters in dispute between Pharisees and Sadducees—the one point he had to deal with was the one of which he would have spoken to a congregation of publicans and harlots—and he spoke of it in just the same way to these nominally religious people! They must “flee from the wrath to come,” or else, as surely as they were living men, that wrath would come upon them and they would perish under it!

So John just kept to that one topic—he laid the axe to the root of the trees as he warned these hypocritical professors to escape for their lives, otherwise they would perish in the common destruction which will overwhelm *all* ungodly men. This was not the style of preaching that John’s hearers liked, but John did not think of that. He did not come to say what men wished him to say, but to discharge the burden of the Lord, and to speak out plainly what was best for men’s eternal and immortal interests! He spoke, therefore, first, concerning the wrath of God and, next, he spoke concerning the way of escape from that wrath.

Those shall also be our two topics. First, *the tremendous peril*—“the wrath to come.” And, secondly, *the means of escape*—“Flee from the wrath to come.”

I. First, dear Friends, let us think of THE TREMENDOUS PERIL which overtakes all men who do not escape from it.

That tremendous peril is *the wrath of God*. There is a wrath of God which abides on every ungodly man. Whether men like that Truth of God or not, it is written, “God is angry with the wicked every day.” And, also, “he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” And yet again, “he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.”

But *this wrath is in abeyance for a time* and, consequently, men do not think much either of the wrath that now is, or of “the wrath to come.” It will not, however, always be in abeyance. The sluices of the great deep will be pulled up and the awful torrents will come leaping forth and will

utterly overwhelm all who are exposed to their fury. This “wrath to come” will, in part, fall upon men at death, but more fully at the Day of Judgment, and it will continue to flow over them forever and ever! This “wrath to come” is that of which John spoke, and of which we will now think for a while.

I remark, first, that this *“wrath to come” is absolutely just and necessary*. If there is a God, He cannot let sin go unpunished. If He is really God and the Judge of all the earth, He must have an utter abhorrence of all evil. It cannot be possible that He should think the same of the honest and the dishonest, of the chaste and the unchaste, of the sober and the drunk, of the truthful and the lying, of the gracious and the dissolute. Such a god as that would be one whom men might rightly despise! But the true God, if we understand aright what He is, must hold all sin in detestation. All evil must be utterly abhorrent to His pure and holy soul. And it is not only because He can do it, but because He *must* do it, that He will, one of these days, let loose the fury of His wrath against sin!

As it is necessary, in the very nature of things, that there should be certain laws to govern His creation, so is it equally necessary, in the very nature of things, that sin should be punished and that every transgression and disobedience should receive a just recompense of reward. This is the inevitable consequence of sin—there is nothing arbitrary about such a result. It is fixed in the very nature of things that, “for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account in the Day of Judgment.” And for every sinful action, they must appear before the bar of God. Do not think, when we speak about the wrath of God, that we picture God to you as a tyrant. We do but tell you that this is only the nature of things—that just as if you take poison, it will kill you, or if you indulge in drunkenness, or if you take almost any form of disease, it will bring pain and mischief to you—so sin must bring upon you the wrath of God—it cannot be otherwise. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of God’s Law can pass away till all is fulfilled—and one part of that Law requires that He should punish all transgression, iniquity and sin.

And if now, for a time, the full manifestation of that anger is delayed, I beseech you, Brothers and Sisters, do not therefore trifle with it! The longer God’s arm is uplifted, the more terrible will be the blow when at last He strikes. To sin against the patience and long-suffering of Almighty God is to sin with a vengeance! You do, as it were, defiantly put your finger into the very eye of God when you know that He sees you sin and yet you go on sinning because He does not immediately take vengeance upon you for all your evil works! It is in great love that He restrains His wrath, for He is “slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.” But as a torrent that is dammed up for a while, gathers force and strength, and every hour in which it is kept back it gets to be more irresistible, so must it be with “the wrath to come” when, at last it does come upon you! If it has waited for some of you for seventy, or sixty, or fifty, or even for 20 years, it will come as an overwhelming flood when, at last, it bursts the barriers

which, at present, hold it back. Trifle not, therefore, with that long-suffering of God which may be blest to your salvation!

Nor is “the wrath to come” any the less sure because it is delayed. Because sentence is not at once given against an evil work, therefore men say, “We need not trouble ourselves. ‘How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?’ Behold, He winks at our iniquities! He counts them as mere trifles. No harm will come to us because of them.” Sirs, if you are prepared to cast away the Bible, I can understand a little that you should talk like that. But if you really believe that the Scriptures are the Word of God, you know what the consequences of your sin must be. Concerning the wicked, it is written, “If he turns not, He will whet His sword. He has bent His bow and made it ready. He has also prepared for him the instruments of death.” Even if you are so foolish as to cast away your Bibles, yet, unless you think yourselves to be mere dogs and cattle that shall rot back into the ground from where you came, and be done with forever, you must expect that there will be another state of existence in which right shall be vindicated and wrong shall be punished! It seems to lie upon the very conscience of man, in the unwritten code of intuitive knowledge, or of knowledge handed down from father to son, that there must come a time in which God will surely bring every secret thing to light, and visit with judgment the proud and the high-handed oppressor—and vindicate the rights of men and the rights of His own Throne. It must be so! And if the wrath tarries for a while, it is none the less sure.

I feel quite staggered as I try to speak of this “wrath to come” because *when it does come it can be something very terrible because Divinity enters into the essence of it.* The wrath of man is sometimes very terrible, but what must the wrath of God be? O Sirs, I have tried, these many years, humbly, yet earnestly, to preach the love of God, and I have never yet reached the height of that great argument, for His love is boundless! But so are *all* His attributes and, if you consider any *one* of them, you must say, “It is high, I cannot attain unto it.” But the just indignation of God against sin must be commensurate with His absolute purity. That man who trifles with right and wrong, and thinks that these are mere arbitrary terms, has no indignation when he sees wrong done. But God, who is infinitely pure and holy, cannot—it is not possible that He should look upon sin without an awful abhorrence. “Oh,” He says, by the mouth of His servant Jeremiah, “do not this abominable thing that I hate.” He is not indifferent to sin—He hates it—and He pleads with men not to do it because it is so abominable and so hateful in His sight!

What will “the wrath to come,” be? If God but touches a man, as it were, with only His little finger, the strongest must at once fail and fall, the mightiest can scarcely open his eyes, and the seal of death is speedily imprinted on his brow. But what will it be when the hand of God shall begin to plague the ungodly, when He shall pour out all the vials of His wrath upon them and crush them with the bosses of His buckler? What will be their portion when He says, “Ah, I will ease Me of My adversaries, and avenge Me of My enemies?” Think, too, what must be the meaning of

that terrible passage—let me repeat it to you slowly and solemnly—“Now consider this, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.”

Thus have I faithfully tried to set before you “the wrath to come.” Now listen to me for a few minutes, and let me have your impartial judgments while I still further speak upon this important theme. Who, do you think, are the more honest men—those who tell you plainly what the Scriptures say concerning this wrath of God, or those who smooth it over, or deny it altogether? I will not judge them—before the Judge of the quick and the dead let those appear who dare to be apologists for sin, and to diminish the dread thought of God’s anger against it! But I might, without any breach of Christian charity, be permitted to suspect the honesty of those who use flattering words to please and deceive their hearers! But I could not suspect the honesty of those who preach an unpalatable Truth of God which grieves themselves as much as it is distasteful to those who hear it!

Let me also ask you which style of preaching has the greater moral effect upon yourself? Will you be likely to go and sin after you have heard of God’s anger against it, or will you more readily commit iniquity when you have it salved over and you are told that it is but a little thing of which God takes no account? I was in the cabin of a vessel, one day, with a brother minister who was disputing with me upon the non-eternity of future punishment. And the captain of the ship came in and said, “What are you discussing down here? The scenery is beautiful, come up on deck and admire it.” So I said to him, “This is the question in dispute, whether the punishment of sin is eternal, or not.” “Well,” he said, “we cannot have any theological discussion just now,” but, turning to my opponent, he said, “Don’t you go on deck and talk to my sailors any of your rubbish! They are bad enough as they are. But if you tell them what I heard you say just now, they will swear and drink worse than ever.” Then, turning to me, he said, “You may talk to the men as much as you like—you will do them good and not harm by telling them that God will certainly punish their sins.” Now, there is common sense in that argument of my friend—you know that there is! That which is most likely to do good, and to repress sin, is most likely to be right. But that which gives me latitude to offend my conscience, leads me to suspect whether it could ever have come from God at all, and makes me seriously doubt whether it can be true.

And what, Sirs, will be the consequence if it should turn out that we are mistaken when we preach to you concerning the wrath of God? What losers will those of us be who have fled to Christ for refuge? But suppose it should turn out that we are right? Where will you be who have despised the wrath of God? We have two strings to our bow, but, to my mind, *you* have none at all! I would not like to lie down upon my deathbed in the hope that death would be an eternal *sleep*—that would be a miserable hope even if it could ever be fulfilled! I would not like to risk my destiny in the world to come upon the prospect of being annihilated because I did not believe in God! It would be a wretched thing to

hope for, but what if even that poor hope should fail me? Where should I be then?

But I can go with confidence before my God and say to Him, “Be Your wrath what it may—I know that it must be terrible to the last degree—but be it what it may, I will not dare it. And even if it would not hurt me, yet I would not make You angry, O God, by sinning against You. And if there were no punishment for sin but the loss of Your love—if there were nothing but the loss of Heaven, the loss of having failed to please You, my God—I would count that loss to be tremendous and terrible. Let me be reconciled to You, my Maker. Tell me how You can be just and yet forgive the guilty. To You I fly! Oh, save me from the wrath to come!”

Thus have I set before you, as best I can, the tremendous peril.

II. Now, in the second place, I want, for a few minutes, to tell you about THE MEANS OF ESCAPE. John said to the Pharisees and Sadducees, “Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”

By this question, he seemed to imply that there is no way of *deliverance from “the wrath to come” but by flight*. Sinner, you cannot endure the wrath of God! If your ribs were granite and your nerves were brass, you could not endure the wrath of the Almighty! No, not even for a moment! If a man had a toothache, how dreadful it would seem to him to have to bear that pain for twelve months, even if he knew that there would be an end to it then. But what must the anger of God be when He comes to deal with our entire manhood and to punish our sins forever and ever? We cannot bear it—we must flee from it. What does this mean?

It means, first, *immediate action*. You must escape, Man! If you remain where you now are, you will certainly perish. You are in the City of Destruction which is to be overwhelmed with the fiery flood of “the wrath to come.” You must be in earnest to escape from it before judgment is executed upon the place and all who are in it! You must “flee from the wrath to come.”

Fleeing means not only immediate action, but *swift action*. He that flees for his life does not creep and crawl—he runs at his utmost speed and he wishes that he could ride on the wings of the wind. No pace that he can reach is fast enough for him. Oh, if God the Holy Spirit will make you, whom I am now addressing, feel your imminent danger, you will want to fly to Christ with the swiftness of a flash of lightning! You will not be satisfied to linger as you are even for another hour. What if that gallery should fall about your ears? What if God should smite the house while you are still in your sins? What if, in walking home, you should walk into your graves? What if your beds should become your tombs? It may be so with any one of you, so there is no time to linger or delay. Haste is the word for you—God sends it to you and says, “Today if you will hear My voice, harden not your hearts; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

To flee also means *to go straight away at your objective*. A man who flees for his life does not want any circuitous, round-about roads. He takes short cuts, he goes over hedge and ditch that he may get where he wants to be in the shortest possible space of time! So straight away to

Jesus is the only direction for you just now. Some people will recommend you to read books which I am certain you cannot understand, for no living soul can. Or perhaps you may meet with persons who want to explain to you some wondrous mystery. Listen to them, if you like, at the Day of Judgment, when the great business of your salvation is over—but just now you have not any time for mysteries, you have no time for puzzles, you have no time to be confused and confounded—the one thing you have to do is to go straight away to Jesus, straight away to Jesus!

You are a sinner and He is the only Savior for sinners—so trust Him—God help you to trust Him and thus to find immediate salvation! It is a straight road to Christ. The plan of salvation is not a thing that is hard to be understood. “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” And he shall never come into condemnation, for he as passed from death unto life! There is the Gospel in a nutshell—lay hold of it and live by it. You have not time for anything else and you have no need of anything else, so flee, “flee from the wrath to come.”

Notice how John the Baptist explained to those Pharisees and Sadducees the way in which they had to flee. He told them, first, that *they must repent*. There is no going to Heaven by following the road to Hell! There is no finding pardon while continuing in sin. Depend upon it, Mr. Drunkard, you will not be forgiven for your drunkenness if you still go on with your drinking! Let not the man who is unchaste imagine that he can go on with his sin and yet be forgiven. Let not the thief dream that there is any pardon for him unless he quits his evil course and tries to make such restitution as he can to those whom he has wronged.

There must be repentance, then, and *that repentance* must be practical. Note how John put it—“Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance”—*evidences* of true amendment of life. It is no use whining and crying, and going into the enquiry rooms with a lie in your right hand, and then going home to swear and drink, or to break the Sabbath, and to live as you like—and all the while hoping to enter Heaven. No, sin and you must part, or else Christ and you can never keep company. You remember that message that John Bunyan thought he heard when he was playing at tip-cat on a Sunday on the village green? He suddenly stood still with the stick in his hand, for he thought he heard a voice saying to him, “Will you leave your sins and go to Heaven, or have your sins, and go to Hell?” That is the alternative which both the Law and the Gospel put before men. “Flee from the wrath to come.” But there is no fleeing from wrath except by repentance of sin—and by fruits meet for repentance—*evidences* of a real change of heart and life.

Then John went on to say to the Pharisees and Sadducees that they must *give up all the false hopes which they had cherished*. “Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham as our father.” Those Pharisees said, in deed, if not in word, “It really does not matter though we act the hypocrite, for Abraham is our father.” And the Sadducees said, in effect, “Though we are unbelievers, it is of small consequence, for Abraham is our father.” “No,” answered John, “you must abandon all such false hopes as that.” And if any of you, dear Friends, have said, “We shall be

all right because we are regular church people.” Or if you have said, “We are all right, for we are Baptists, we are Methodists, we are Presbyterians—our father and mother, and our grandfather and grandmother were good Christian people.” Ah, yes, and so may your great grandfather and great grandmother have been, but your pedigree will avail you nothing unless you personally quit your sin and lay hold on Christ as your Savior!

Nor is there anything else upon which you can depend for salvation. Your Baptism, your church or your chapel attendance, your eating of the Lord’s Supper, your saying of collects, your family prayers, your giving of your guineas—everything of your own put together will all be less than nothing and vanity if you trust to it! You must flee away from all such false hopes as that and get a better hope, even that of which my second text speaks—“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”

John the Baptist did not tell his hearers all this, for he did not come to preach the Gospel to them. He came to preach the Law, but he did sufficiently indicate where they must go, for he said to them, “There stands One among you, whom you know not. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” It is to Him, even to Jesus, that you must flee. If you would be saved, you must be among those who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before you. That is the real refuge for sinners—the laying hold of Christ, the getting a faith-grip on Jesus as the one atoning Sacrifice, the looking to Him with tearful but believing eyes, and saying, “Jesus, Son of God, I trust in You. I put myself into Your hands, and leave myself there, that You may deliver me from the wrath to come.”

I pray you, Brothers and Sisters, wherever you are, you who think you are so good, be anxious to get rid of all that fancied goodness of yours! I beseech you, if you have any self-righteousness about you, to ask God to strip it off you at once! I should like you to feel as that man did who had a forged bank note and some counterfeit coin in his possession. When the policeman came to his house, he was anxious not to have any of it near him—so, shake off your self-righteousness! You will be as surely damned by your righteousness, if you trust in it, as you will by your unrighteousness! Christ, alone, the Gift of the free Grace of God—this is the gate of Heaven—but all self-satisfaction, all boasting, all exaltation of yourself above your fellow men is mischievous and ruinous, and will surely be deadly to your spirit forever.

How does Christ deliver us from “the wrath to come?” Why, *by putting Himself into our place, and putting us into His place*. Oh, this blessed plan of salvation by *substitution*—that Christ should take a poor, guilty sinner, and set him up there in the place of acceptance and joy at the right hand of God and that, in order to be able to do so, Christ should say, “Here comes the great flood of almighty wrath—I will stand just where it is coming and let it flow over Me” And you know that it did flow over Him till He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, and more, till He cried

aloud, “My God, My God why have You forsaken Me?” And still more, till He cried, “It is finished!” And He bowed His head and gave up the ghost—
**“He bore, that you might never bear,
 His Father’s righteous ire”—**

and so, suffering in your place, and putting you into the place of acceptance which He, Himself, so well deserves to occupy, He saved you from “the wrath to come.”

I used to think that if I once told this wondrous story of “Free Grace and dying love,” everybody would believe it. But I have long since learned that so hard is the heart of man that he will sooner be damned than be saved by Christ! Well, you must make your choice, Sirs. You must make your choice for yourselves—only do me this one favor when you have made your choice—do not blame me for having tried to persuade you to act more wisely than I fear your choice will be. I sometimes tremble as I think of the account I have to give in concerning the many thousands who crowd this place to listen to my voice. What if my Master should say to me, at the last, “You flattered them. You tried to run with the times. You did not dare to preach to them the old-fashioned Gospel and to tell them of Hell and of judgment, and of atonement by blood?”

No, my Master, by Your Grace, You will never be able to say that to me! With all my faults, infirmities and imperfections, I have sought to declare Your Truth, as far as I knew it, to the sons of men. Therefore, my Hearers, I shake my skirts free of your blood! If any of you shall reject Christ, I will have nothing to do with your damnation! Be spiritual suicides if you will, but I will not be your soul-murderer, nor act like Saul wished his armor-bearer to do when he bade him thrust him through with the sword. I implore you to “flee from the wrath to come!” Escape by quitting your sins and laying hold on Jesus! Do it this very moment, for you may never have another opportunity to do it! May the Lord, in His infinite mercy, grant you Grace to trust in Jesus! Amen and Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
 MATTHEW 3; 11:20-30; REVELATION 7:9-17.**

Matthew 3:1, 2. *In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* His was a preparatory ministry. His work was to prepare men’s minds for Christ and never is the heart of man so ready to receive Christ as when it is in a state of repentance. When it is weary of sin, then is it that Christ comes in and is welcomed by the soul conscious of its guilt, tired of it, and longing to be rid of it.

3, 4. *For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord, make His path straight. And the same John was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt about his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.* Everything about him was impressive and everything was suitable to the message he had to deliver. He was so dressed as to be noticed, at once, as a man of ascetic habits. He was not the chaplain of a prince, otherwise he would have been clothed in soft raiment. He was not one

who had a gentle message to deliver, or he would not have gone into the wilderness and summoned the people to come away from their avocations to listen to him. He was the rough pioneer to prepare the way for the King.

5, 6. *Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.* That was his baptism—a baptism of repentance and of confession—preparatory to the coming of the Master. See what power there was in John because God was with him! I do not know that he had any remarkable eloquence. Certainly, some things about him were rather repulsive than attractive. But when God is with a man, the people must listen to him! Jerusalem must pour her thousands out of her gates and the rural districts must yield their hundreds—for if God speaks, no matter *by whom*—He will have human ears listen to His voice.

7, 8. *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet of repentance.* Answerable to your repentance, congruous therewith, arising out of it and truly *proving* its reality!

9, 10. *And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham as our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees.* No mere pruning and trimming work did John come to do! He was the handler of a sharp axe that was to fell every worthless tree.

10. *Therefore every tree which brings not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.* It is not enough to hew it down—into the fire it must go! And John minces not his words about the matter—he speaks the message of his Master straight out and plain.

11, 12. *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to carry: He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire: whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.* See the humility of the true servant of Christ! He is not even willing to exercise the office of a slave and to carry his Master’s shoes, or to unloose the laces of them. And who among us is worthy to occupy even the lowest office for Christ? There is an honor about it that far transcends any worthiness of ours. To serve Him at all, is honor, indeed! But, Brothers and Sisters, fix your eyes upon Christ and recollect what a Baptism it is into which He baptizes us—not with water, but into the Holy Spirit and into fire! Can we bear it? Can we endure the fire? It will only burn up that which ought to be burned—and happy is he to whom God has imparted that eternal life which can never be consumed!

13, 14. *Then Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of You, and You come to me?* This is one of the most striking proofs that the ordinance of Baptism is not to be neglected by any of Christ’s followers, for even He who, in Himself, could have had no need for it—who is, Him-

self, the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit and with fire, yet comes to the baptizer in water, and asks to be immersed!

15. *And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now, for thus it become us to fulfill all righteousness.* Nothing that appertains to righteousness must be neglected—the little as well as the great must be observed!

15-17. *Then he allowed Him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up immediately out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a Voice from Heaven saying, This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* This doctrine of repentance was preached by the Master as well as by the servant. Turn to the 11th Chapter of Matthew’s Gospel and let us read a few verses, beginning at the 20th.

Matthew 11:20. *Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not.* They listened. Sometimes, they applauded. But they repented not and there is nothing really accomplished until men have repented. In vain have we preached until men are brought to repent! So the Master said—

21, 22. *Woe unto you, Chorazin! Woe unto you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of Judgment, than for you.* Listen to that, you Gospel-hardened sinners, you who have heard and heard, and heard, but have not repented! See how great is your sin, for you have rejected what others would have received if it had been presented to them? See how your guilt accumulates—and its also punishment!

23, 24. *And you, Capernaum, which are exalted unto Heaven, shall be brought down to Hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment, than for you.* Sodom—that is the blackest place of all! Ah, me, will that verse ever fall, like a millstone, upon any one of my hearers, to grind him to powder, because you heard the Gospel and rejected it—always intending to receive it—but never receiving it at all? From such a doom, may God in mercy deliver you!

25-30. *At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things are delivered unto Me of My Father, and no man knows the Son, but the Father; neither knows any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomever the Son will reveal Him. Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.* Just by way of contrast to what I am going to say in my sermon, let us read a few verses in Revelation 7. [Sermons were always preached after the expositions—EOD.]

Revelation 7:9. *After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the Throne, and before the Lamb.* Our numbering can go a very long way—what, therefore, must be the countless hosts of the redeemed who are to be “a great multitude, which no man could number”? And what an infinite variety there will be among them, seeing that they shall not only be “of all nations,” but out of those nations they shall be “of all kindreds, and people, and tongues”—that is, all sorts and conditions of men, of every race, and of every age from the first century down to the last. Christ’s immeasurable redemption price must bring to Him a great reward! Isaiah long ago foretold that “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” And it is no little result that will satisfy Him for such travail of soul as He endured! This great multitude “stood before the Throne, and before the Lamb.”

9. *Clothed with white robes.* To set forth their purity, their victory and their entrance into the marriage state, for such was the color usually worn on such occasions. “Clothed with white robes,” to show that they had entered into their rest, so that their garments were no longer soiled through their toil. They have reached their everlasting Sabbath, their weekday service is over forever!

9-11. *And palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the Throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the Throne on their faces, and worshipped God.* The angels form the outer ring. The elders, who represent the Church of the redeemed, are nearer to the Throne of God than even the holy angels are! Nearest to God in Heaven are those who have been *redeemed* from among men. How high a dignity—how noble an estate—awaits us, by-and-by! But, all alike, both saved men and unfallen angels, “fell before the Throne on their faces, and worshipped God.”

12-17. *Saying Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, Who are these who are arrayed in white robes? And from where have they come? And I said unto him, Sir, you know. And he said to me, these are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He who sits on the Throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst, anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb who is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

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

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

THE FORERUNNER

NO. 3102

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 23, 1908.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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ON THURSDAY EVENING, JULY 16, 1874.

*“Where the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus.”
Hebrews 6:20.*

THE Jewish high priest went within the veil once a year and represented the people there, but he was never their forerunner, for no one followed him into the Most Holy Place. His entrance within the veil did not admit another human being—and when he came forth, the veil again concealed the secret glories of the Most Holy Place even from him for another year and from all others at all times—so that neither Aaron, nor any other high priest of his line could ever be called a forerunner within the veil. This is one of the many instances in which our Lord Jesus Christ, as the great Anti-type, far excels all the types. They do, as it were, represent the hem of His garment, but the glorious majesty and fullness of His high priestly office, they are not able to set forth.

Moreover, this title of Forerunner is peculiar to the passage before us. The fact that Christ is the Forerunner of His people may be found in other words in the Scriptures and again and again in this Epistle. But it is only here that we have the exact expression that Jesus Christ within the veil has gone to be the Forerunner of His people.

Now, what is peculiar and unique usually excites curiosity and attention. And if it is something peculiar and unique with regard to our Lord Jesus Christ, who is Himself peculiar and unique, we should look at it as closely as we can and bend our whole minds and hearts to the consideration of it.

I. I am going to speak, first, upon THE NAME WHICH IS USED CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST AS THE FORERUNNER. Our Lord is sometimes spoken of as the Master, the Messiah, the Son of Man and so on, but here He is simply called Jesus. “Where the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus.”

I do not pretend to know why this title was selected, but at least it may be suggested that *Jesus is the name which His enemies despise*—Jesus of Nazareth, “the Nazarene,” as His fiercest foes cry to this day. About the name, Christ, there is always a measure of respect, for even those who do not believe Him to be *the* Christ, yet look for a Christ, a Divinely-anointed One, a Messiah sent from God. But, “Jesus,” is the personal name of Him who was born at Bethlehem, the Son of Mary, to whom the angel said before His birth, “You shall call His name JESUS.” It is “the Nazarene” who is “the Forerunner, even Jesus,” and it is that

name of Jesus that has caused His enemies to gnash their teeth and speak and act against Him, even as Paul confessed to king Agrippa, “I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.” It is by that name which His enemies abhor that He is known within the veil! They speak of Him there as the Savior, the Joshua, the Jehovah-Jesus of His people—and by that name we know Him as our Forerunner.

Moreover, Jesus is not only the name which is hated by His foes, but it is *the name which is dearest to His friends*. How charming is its very sound! You know how our hymn writers have delighted to dwell upon it. Dr. Doddridge wrote—

***“Jesus, I love Your charming name,
‘Tis music to my ear.
Gladly would I sound it out so loud
That earth and Heaven could hear!”***

And Charles Wesley sang—

***“Jesus, the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease
‘Tis music in the sinner’s ears,
‘Tis life, and health, and peace!
Jesus, the name high over all,
In Hell, or earth, or sky,
Angels and men before it fall
And devils fear, and fly.”***

Out of all our Savior’s names—and they are all precious to us and, at certain times each one has its own peculiar charm—there is not one which rings with such sweet music as this blessed name, “Jesus.” I suppose the reason of this is that it answers to our own name, the name of sinner. That name needs, to cover it, the names of Him who saves His people from their sins. The sound of this confession, “I have sinned,” is like that of a funeral knell. But the music of the sentence, “Jesus saves me,” is like that of a marriage peal! And, as long as I am a sinner, the name of Jesus will always be full of melody to my soul. To the Old Testament saints, it was comforting to read of Him who was to be born—“His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace”—and we still delight to repeat those majestic sounds. But in our quiet and calm moments, and especially in times of despondency and depression of spirit, the music of the harp sounds most sweetly when this is the note which the minstrel evokes from it, “Jesus, *Jesus*, Jesus.” And it is very pleasant to me to think that this is the name that we shall remember best even in Heaven. He has gone there, as Jesus, to be our Forerunner, so Dr. Watts was right when he sang—

***“Jesus, the Lord, their harps employs—
Jesus, my Love, they sing!
Jesus, the life of both our joys,
Sounds sweet from every string.”***

II. Now I want to show you IN WHAT SENSE JESUS IS OUR FORERUNNER.

The word used here means a person running before—a herald, a guide, one who precedes. Such terms would correctly interpret the Greek word used here, so it means, first, *one who goes before to proclaim, or to declare*. A battle has been fought and the victory won. A swift young man, out of the ranks of the victors, runs with all speed to the city, rushes through the gate into the marketplace, and proclaims to the assembled people the welcome news, “Our country is victorious! Our commander is crowned with laurels.” That young man is the forerunner of the victorious host. The whole army will be back, by-and-by, the conquering legions will come marching through the streets and all eyes will gaze with admiration upon the returning heroes—but this is the first man to arrive from the field of conflict to report the victory! In that sense, Jesus Christ was the Forerunner to report in Heaven His own great victory. He did much more than that, as you well know, for He fought the fight alone and of the people there were none with Him. He was the first to report in Heaven His own victory. On the Cross He had met Satan and all the powers of darkness—and there had He fought and overcome them and shouted the victor’s cry—“It is finished!” Who shall report the victory in Heaven? Shall some swift-winged angel, one of the many that had hovered round the Cross and wondered what it all could mean, fly like a flame of fire, pass through the gates of pearl and say, “He has done it”? No, Jesus must Himself be the first to proclaim His own victory and the eternal safety of all for whom He died! They tell out this good news through the streets of Heaven to this day, but He it was who first certified it! When He ascended up on high leading captivity captive. When He entered within the veil and stood before His Father, the First-Begotten from the dead. When He declared by His majestic Presence that all was finished. When He proclaimed the justification of all His elect—in that proclamation He was our Forerunner—the first to proclaim that glorious Truth of God, “It is finished!”

A second meaning of the word, forerunner, will be found in this sense of possessing, for Christ has gone to Heaven not merely to proclaim that His people are saved, but *to possess Heaven on their behalf*. Representatively, He has taken possession of the heavenly places in the name of those for whom He died. Christ had paid the purchase price of our eternal inheritance. We as yet have not entered upon possession of it, but He has and He has taken possession of it in our names. All the elect are summed up in Him who is their Covenant Head—and He being there, they are all there in Him. As the burgesses of a town sit in the House of Commons represented by their member, so we sit in the heavenly places represented by our Leader who sits there in our name. He has taken *seizin*, as they used to say of old—taken possession of all the Glory of Heaven in the name of His people! Why is Heaven mine tonight? Because it is His—and all that is His is mine! Why is eternal life yours, Beloved? Why, because “your life is hid with Christ in God” and He has in Heaven for you, eternal life, and all its accompaniments of joy and blessedness! And He is sitting there enjoying them because they are

His and yours. You are one with Him, so He is your Forerunner in that sense.

Christ is also *our Forerunner in the sense of preceding us*. The Forerunner goes first and others must come afterwards. He is not a forerunner if there are not some to run behind him. When John the Baptist came, he was the forerunner of Christ. If Christ had not come after him, John the Baptist would have come for nothing. As Jesus is the Forerunner to Heaven, rest assured that those for whom He is the Forerunner will in due time follow Him there. The least pledge of the glories of the saints in Heaven is the Glory of Christ there. The surest proof that they shall be there is that HE is there, for where He is, there must also His people be. I delight to think of Jesus Christ as our Forerunner because I feel sure that the mighty Grace which worked so effectually in Him, and made Him run before, will also work in all His people and make them run behind till they enter into the same rest that He now enjoys!

And once again, Christ is our Forerunner within the veil in the sense that *He has gone there to prepare a place for us*. I do not know what was needed to make Heaven ready for us, but whatever was needed once is not needed now, for Heaven has been ready for us ever since Christ went to prepare it. We have sometimes arrived at a house when we were not expected—our friends have been glad to see us, but we could hear the bustle of preparations and we almost wished that we had not gone, so to put them into such a flutter in getting ready for us. But no unexpected guest shall ever await at Heaven's gate! They are watching and waiting for us. They know just when we shall get there and Christ has gone to make everything ready for His long-expected and greatly-loved ones. "I go to prepare a place for you," said Christ to His disciples—and that place He has prepared. We have not to go into an undiscovered country, for however glorious the new world might be, the first man to enter it would tread its soil with trembling feet, for he would not know what he might find there. It was a brave thing to be a Columbus to discover a new world, but it is a happier thing to go to a country that has been discovered many hundreds of years, where civilization has provided for the supply of all our needs. Christ was the Columbus of Heaven and He has made it ready for us who are to follow Him there when our turn shall come to emigrate to the better land!

III. Now I want to answer this question, INTO WHAT IS CHRIST OUR FORERUNNER? He is our forerunner within the veil. Where is that?

Well, first, *it is where all our hope is fixed*. Our hope is fixed on things invisible, mysterious, spiritual, sublime, immutable, Divine—which are where Christ is. Paul tells us that the anchor of our soul is "within the veil, where the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus."

Within the veil is, also, *the place of the greatest possible nearness to God*. Under the old dispensation, it was an awfully solemn thing for a man to be allowed to enter within the veil. Anyone who ventured in there uncalled would have been instantly destroyed. To stand within the veil was a joyous, blissful privilege, yet it involved enormous responsibility.

But you and I, Beloved, stand there in the closest possible nearness to God because Christ has gone there as our Forerunner. He is not merely our Forerunner so that we may enter there in 20 or 30 years' time, or whenever we die, but that we may now boldly enter into the heavenlies where He has gone! Where He is, we are bound to go. Well then, as Christ is there, at His Father's side—

“The Man of Love, the Crucified”—

let us not fear to enter where we have the right to go! It is very sad that when some of us pray, we do not dare to enter within the veil. Even the outer court seems to be too holy a place for us! If we do venture into the court of the priest, we are all in a tremble. But, Brothers and Sisters, we are permitted to enter into that which is within the veil, for Jesus is there and He bids us come to Him—therefore let us come boldly. There is a measure of holy familiarity which the devout man may enjoy in the Presence of God. It is a blessed privilege to know God as your Father and to be as bold with Him as a child is with a father—with the boldness of a love which does not dare because it deserves, but dares because God loves and which, while it humbles itself into the very dust, yet grasps the feet of God even there, clings to Him and delights in its nearness to Him! Is it not a cause of untold joy to us that Jesus Christ is within the veil now as our Forerunner, that we may daily go where He always is? This is the right position for a child of God in prayer! He must not stand at the foot of Sinai. He must not stand in any unclean place, but he must go where the blood has been sprinkled on the Mercy Seat—brought near by the precious blood of Jesus!

Let us also remember that this place of nearness to God, into which Christ has gone, will mean *nearness to God in a higher sense, by-and-by*. You cannot conceive of anybody being nearer to God than Christ is “within the veil.” In that nearness He is our Forerunner if we are truly in Him by faith. Is not that a wonderful thought? We might have thought that in that wondrous nearness to God which the Mediator enjoys, He would be alone, for He is so very near, but it is not so. He has Himself said, “To Him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me on My Throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father on His Throne.” It is not only true that we are to behold Christ's Glory, but even while on earth He said, “Father, I will that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory”—as if they would never fully see that Glory till they were with Him where He is. To whatever heights of Glory He has gone—to whatever raptures of joy He has ascended, He has gone there as the Forerunner of His people!

I may seem to be uttering truisms, but I cannot help it. These are the sort of Truths of God upon which one cannot give allegories, illustrations, or fine sentences. The Truths themselves are so glorious that it would be like painting the lily and gilding it with pure gold to try to adorn it. We must not attempt it, but just leave the Truths as they are for the Spirit of God to apply them to your souls—and so I mean to do after I have mentioned a few practical inferences from the Truth which I have been trying to set before you.

The first is, beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, this—*let us each one endeavor by faith to realize our nearness with Christ*. He has entered within the veil, but He has entered as our Forerunner. Remember that although you are imperfect, feeble, sorrowing, yet you are one with Jesus Christ! You believe that as a Doctrine, but I want you to realize it now as a fact. If you had a rich friend who had given you an equal share with himself of all that he possessed, even if you had not entered upon the possession of it, you would think, “I have not to depend upon charity for my daily bread, for my rich friend has made me as rich as he is, himself.” Now, whatever joy that might give you, it ought to give you far more to think that you are one with Christ and that Christ is one with you! When you suffer, Christ is suffering in one of the members of His mystical body. And when He rejoices, it is His desire that His joy may be in you, that your joy may be full. He has married you and He means you to take His riches as well as Himself and to reckon that all He is and all He has is yours. If the Holy Spirit would cause you to realize this, it would make your soul leap within you and bless the Lord and magnify His holy name! “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine.” No, more, I am a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. Our interests are one, for we are one and Christ up there, in the heavenlies, is but myself there, for I am in Him and I shall soon be actually and literally where He is, as I now am in the Person of Him who is there as my Representative and Forerunner.

That is the first practical thought. And the second is this—*is He your Forerunner, Beloved? Then, run after Him*. There can be no forerunner, as I have said before, unless somebody follows. Jesus is our Forerunner, so let us be His after-runners. “Ah,” says one, “but He is so different from us.” The beauty of it is that He is *not* different from us, for He was a Man like ourselves. “Forasmuch then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.” Though in Him was no sin, yet in all other respects He was just such as we are—and it cost Him as much to run as it will cost us to run—yes, more, for His race was more arduous than ours is. “You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin,” therefore “consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds.” Your road may be full of crosses, but they are not such crosses as the one He carried. You have suffered bereavements. Yes, and “Jesus wept.” You have to endure poverty. And He had not where to lay His head. You are often despised. And He is *still* “despised and rejected of men.” You are slandered. But as they called the Master of the house, Beelzebub, what wonder is it that they speak ill of those who are the members of His household? Jesus Christ ran the very race that you have to run and He ran it perfectly! And that same power which worked in Him to run until He entered within the veil, and so passed the goal, will help you to run till you reach the same spot. If He is your Forerunner and He has run the race, it is essential that you should run it, too, and should also win the prize. Courage, Brothers and Sisters—nothing is too hard for our poor manhood to accomplish through the power of the ever-blessed Spirit! As Christ has conquered, so can we. Sin’s assaults can be

repelled, for Christ repelled them. The Holy Spirit can lift up “poor human nature”—as we call it—into something nobler and better, transforming it into the likeness of the Human Nature of the Christ of God, till in that Human Nature, purity and holiness, shall dwell even to perfection!

Follow, Brothers and Sisters, the mighty Runner who has gone before you within the veil! And the best way to follow Him is to put your feet into His footprints. It may seem as if you might get to the goal either this way or that, but the best Christian is he who does not wish for any other path than that which his Master trod. I would like—oh, that I might realize it—to “follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” Not to say, “This is not essential, and that might be dispensed with,” but, like the Master, Himself, to say, “Thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness.” Good writing, I think, depends very much upon the little letters. If you want to read a man’s letter easily at the first glance, he must write legibly, and mind his Ps and Qs, and all the other letters of the alphabet, especially those that are nearly alike, such as C and E, or I and L. O Christian, there may be very little difference, to the eye of man, between this letter and that of the Believer’s alphabet, but you will do best if you follow your Master exactly in all points! No hurt comes of doing that, but great hurt comes of even the least laxity. Follow closely your great Forerunner! Follow at His heels, as a dog follows his master. Just as Christ ran, so may the Holy Spirit help you to run with endurance the race set before you, “looking unto Jesus.”

The next thing I have to say is this—*let us love our Lord intensely*. He has gone to Heaven, but He has not gone there for Himself alone. He has got so into the habit of sharing with His people all that He has that He has not left off that habit now that He has got into Glory! He says, “I am here for My people. I was on the Cross for them and I am on the Throne for them.” It is marvelous that even the reward that is given to Him, He shares with His own beloved ones, for there is nothing that He has that He keeps to Himself! It was a blessed marriage day for us, His people, when He took us to be His—for with all His heavenly gifts He did us endow and now He has nothing but what He holds in common with His people. We are “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” Then must we not love Him much who has loved us so much that He has given us Himself and all He has? Come, my cold heart, if there is anything that can warm you, surely it is the thought of such true, fond, constant, faithful love as this! Indulge a moment’s thought now. Indulge it quietly. Let your soul picture Him. Come to His feet and kiss them. And if you have an alabaster box of precious ointment, break it open and anoint Him, and fill the house with the perfume of your offering of love and gratitude.

Last of all, *since Christ has gone to Heaven to be our Forerunner, let us trust Him*. We could have trusted Him, I hope, while He was running His race, so surely we can trust Him now that He has won it. The saints of God who lived before Christ came to dwell upon the earth, trusted Him

before He started to run. His Apostles and other disciples, in their poor feeble way, trusted Him while He was running—so shall not we trust Him now that the race is finished and He has gone into Glory on our behalf? If a man says, “I will do a thing,” if he is a truthful man and he can do what he says, we depend upon him. But when he has done it, it would be a shame not to depend upon him. If Christ came here tonight, never having died, and He said to us, “You poor lost ones, I mean to save you,” ought we not to believe Him? If He said, “Dear children of Mine, I mean to come and run a race and win it for you,” would we not say, “Lord Jesus, we trust You”? Well, He is not here in bodily Presence—He is up yonder. Do you not see Him with the crown upon His head? There He sits in Glory—innumerable angels are bowing before Him and cherubim and seraphim are praising Him day without night—and the redeemed from among men are singing, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain for us.” Can you not trust Him, Sinner? “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” Can you not trust Him? He is within the veil, pleading for us, and pleading for all who come unto God by Him—and setting His people the example of coming there to plead, too.

As He is there, can we not all trust Him? The dying thief trusted Him when His hands were nailed to the Cross. Can we not trust Him now that His hand grasps the scepter of Sovereignty? The dying thief trusted Him when men ridiculed Him and thrust out their tongues, and railed at Him—can we not trust Him now that Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of His Glory? Surely we must! Jesus, Master, if we never have relied upon You before, grant us the Grace to do so now! And as for those of us who have depended on You these many years, You dear, tried, precious, faithful Lover of our souls, surely we have done with doubting! We are in Your bosom—no, more—we are inside Your very heart and, therefore, we must be safe! Who can harm us there? You did say, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.”

With this assurance let us go our way, resolving to follow our Forerunner till we get where He is, “within the veil,” and then forever to follow Him “wherever He goes.” Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
HEBREWS 9:24-28; 10.**

Hebrews 9:24. *For Christ is not entered into the Holy Place made with hands, which are the figure of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the Presence of God for us. He has gone within the veil—not the veil of “blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work,” but within the veil that hides “Heaven itself” from our eyes. And there He is—“in the Presence of God for us.”*

25, 26. *Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters into the Holy Place every year with blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the*

end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself. The high priest brought the blood of the animals that were slain for a sin-offering, and hence he came often. He could not bring his own blood, or he would only have come once, but our Savior has come only once, “to put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself.” [See Sermons #759, Volume 13—JESUS PUTTING AWAY SIN; #911, Volume 16—THE PUTTING AWAY OF SIN and #2283, Volume 38—CHRIST’S ONE SACRIFICE FOR SIN—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

27, 28. *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, that after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.* He had to suffer because of sin once, but He will never again have to do that! His Sacrifice will never need to be repeated and never can be repeated.

Hebrews 10:1, 2. *For the Law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? If the sacrifice had really put away sin, surely it would never have needed to be offered again. If one sacrifice had put away the guilt of Israel, there would have been no need to bring another.*

2. *Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.* Once cleansed from sin, we are cleansed from sin—the great deed is done once and for all.

3-5. *But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Therefore when He came into the world. You know who that is, there is but one great, “HE,” to us—our blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the true High Priest!*

5. *He said, Sacrifice and offering You would not, but a body have You prepared Me.* By the work of the Holy Spirit within the Virgin Mary, the blessed body of Christ was “prepared” so that He might be God and Man in one Person and so might bring an offering acceptable unto God.

6-9. *In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me), to do Your will, O God. Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin You would not, neither had pleasure therein; which are offered by the Law; then said He, Lo, I come to do Your will, O God. He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.* [See Sermon #2698, Volume 46—THE FIRST AND THE SECOND—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] That He may bring in the real Sacrifice of which the others were but types and prefigurations.

10. *By that will.* The will which Christ fulfilled in life and in death—“By that will.”

10. *We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once.* [See Sermon #1527, Volume 26—PERFECT SANCTIFICATION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Only one Sacrifice was required. The key-word here is that little word, “once.” Let it not only

sound in your ears, but be written in your hearts! Jesus Christ died once. He brought His Sacrifice once. He put away our sins once.

11, 12. *And every priest stands daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this Man, after He had offered one Sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.* Christ stands no longer to minister as a sacrificing priest. He is sitting down at the right hand of God. That is the posture of one whose work is done and who is taking his rest—"He sat down at the right hand of God." [See Sermon #91, Volume 2—CHRIST EXALTED—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

13-18. *From henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Spirit also is a witness to us: for after that He had said before, This is the Covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put My Laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.* Sin itself being no longer imputed to any Believer in Christ, there is neither the occasion nor the need for the offering of another sacrifice for sin. Christ's one Sacrifice has forever put away the sins of all who believe in Him!

19-22. *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.* The Jew could not personally go up to the Mercy Seat. He had to go there through his representative, the high priest, and we have Christ as our "High Priest over the house of God," so we come to God through Him. The Israelite could not pass through the veil which hid from public gaze the glory of the Shekinah, and Jesus Christ's Humanity was a veil which somewhat concealed the glory of His Deity. But the flesh of Christ having been crucified, the veil has been torn and now we may come right up to the Throne of God without trembling. No, we may come even with holy boldness and familiarity and speak to God without alarm. Having such a privilege as this, let us not neglect it. It was denied to Prophets and kings in the olden time, but now that it is vouchsafed to us, let us avail ourselves of it and constantly, "let us draw near" unto God "with a true heart in full assurance of faith."

23. *Let us hold fast the profession* [See Sermon #1897, Volume 32—HOLDING FAST OUR PROFESSION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] *of our faith without wavering, (for He is faithful that promised).* As He is faithful, let us also be faithful and hold, as with a death grip, the faith which has been revealed to us and worked within us by the Holy Spirit. Yes, and the profession of that faith, too, never being ashamed to acknowledge that we are followers of the Nazarene. And let us while we are thus faithful, ourselves, endeavor to strengthen others.

24. *And let us consider one another to provoke into love and to good works.* The Greek is “to stir each other up to a fit of love. There is no fear that we shall ever go too far in our love to God! Though it would cast us into a state of blessed excitement, yet would it be healthy for us to so live and to so work.

25. *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.* For Christian fellowship is helpful to us and we are helpful to others by it. A Christian is not meant to be a solitary being. Sheep are gregarious and so are the sheep of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us not be solitary pilgrims along the road to Heaven, but join that glorious host of God’s elect who march beneath the guidance of our great Master.

25. *But exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching.* Does not every day bring us nearer to the coming of the Lord? Are there not many signs that these are the last days? Well then, so much the more let us stir each other up to love and to good works!

26, 27. *For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the Truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.* Here the Truth of God taught is that if a Christian apostatizes—if he renounces his faith and goes back to the world, it is impossible to reclaim him. A backslider may be restored, but anyone who should willfully, after receiving the Truth, reject it, has rejected the only Savior. He has rejected the only regeneration and, consequently, he is without the pale of the possibilities of restoration. The question is, “Will any true child of God so apostatize?” That question is answered in this very chapter, but the Truth here taught is that if he does, he goes into a state of absolute hopelessness.

28, 29. *He that despised Moses’ Law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment.* Can there be any sorer punishment than to die without mercy? Yes, there is, for there is *eternal* punishment—“of how much sorer punishment”—

29-31. *Suppose you, shall he be thought worthy who has trodden underfoot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the Covenant, wherewith He was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the Spirit of Grace? For we know Him who has said, Vengeance belongs unto Me, I will recompense, says the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!* [See Sermon #682, Volume 12—FUTURE PUNISHMENT A FEARFUL THING—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] With what terrible sentences does Paul hedge up the way of the Believer! Leave that way and there is nothing for you but destruction. Reject your Savior, give up your hope in Him and there cannot be another name by which you can be saved, or another sacrifice by which you can be cleansed from sin.

32, 33. *But call to remembrance the former days, in which after you were illuminated, you endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and afflictions. Made a spectacle to be mocked at in the theater of the world.*

33-35. *And partly, while you became companions of them that were so used. For you had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in Heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore, your confidence,* [See Sermon #1263, Volume 21—HOLD FAST YOUR SHIELD—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] *which has great recompense of reward. You must push on! You have already defied the foe—to turn back is certain destruction, for you have no armor for your back.*

36. *For you have need of patience. Or, endurance—*

36. *That, after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise. To hold on, to continue to do God's will—this is the task. To start and to make a spurt now and then, is easy enough—but to keep on is trying to every spiritual muscle. And only God can enable you to do so.*

37, 38. *For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draws back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him. If there is a drawing back from faith, God can have no pleasure in us. But shall we draw back? That is the question! And here is the answer.*

39. *But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition. We who have believed in Jesus. We who have sincerely committed ourselves to His care. We who have been born-again of the Holy Spirit, we in whom there is the real work of Grace which God has pledged to carry on—"we are not of them who draw back unto perdition."*

39. *But of them that believe to the saving of the soul. What a blessed Truth of God is this! O Christian, as you see the danger that lies before you if you did prove to be an apostate, bless that Sovereign Grace which will not allow you so to do, even as Paul wrote to the Philippians, "Being confident of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."*

—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.**

FIRST, KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND AFTER THAT, KING OF PEACE NO. 1768

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 8, 1884,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“First being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that
also King of Salem, which is, King of peace.”
Hebrews 7:2.*

WE will not enlarge upon the story of Melchisedec, nor discuss the question as to who he was. It is near enough for us to believe that he was one who worshipped God after the primitive fashion, a believer in God such as Job was in the land of Uz, one of the world's gray fathers who had kept faithful to the Most High God. He combined in his own person the kingship and the priesthood—a conjunction by no means unusual in the first ages. Of this man we know very little and it is partly because we know so little of him that he is all the better type of our Lord, of whom we may enquire, “Who shall declare His generation?”

The very mystery which hangs about Melchisedec serves to set forth the mystery of the Person of our Divine Lord. “Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, he abides a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the Patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.” Melchisedec seems to have been, first by name, and then by place of office, doubly designated a king. First, his name is *Melchisedec*, which signifies by interpretation, “King of righteousness.” His personal name is “King of righteousness.” As a matter of fact, he was also the monarch of some town called Salem. It is not at all likely to have been Jerusalem, although that may have been the case. The interpretation of his official name is “King of peace.”

A teaching was intended by the Holy Spirit in the names—so the Apostle instructs us in the passage before us. I believe in the *verbal* Inspiration of Scripture and, therefore, I can see how there can be instruction for us even in the proper names of persons and of places. Those who reject verbal Inspiration must, in effect, condemn the great Apostle of the Gentiles, whose teaching is so frequently based upon a Word of God. He makes more of words and names than any of us would have thought of doing and he was guided therein by the Spirit of the Lord and, therefore, he was right. For my part, I am far more afraid of making too little of the Word than of seeing too much in it. This man is, first, named “*Melchizedek*”—“King of righteousness” by interpretation—and herein he is like our Divine Lord, whose name and Character can only come to us by interpretation.

What He is and who He is and all His Character, no angel's tongue could tell. No human language can ever describe to the full what Jesus is. He is King, but that is a poor word for such royalty as His. He reigns, but that word, "reigns," is but a slender description of that supreme empire which He continually exercises. He is said to be King of Righteousness, but that is, by interpretation—by the toning down of His Character to *our* comprehension. Scripture might have called Him King of Holiness, for He is "glorious in holiness." His Character, better known to spirits before the Throne of God than to us, is not to be comprehended in that one word, "righteousness." It is but an interpretation and most things lose by translation, and so the perfect Character of the Son of God, as it stands before the Eternal Mind, cannot be fully expressed in human language.

In fact, when our faculties are enlarged and our spirits raised to the highest platform, they can never reach the eternity of our Lord's Sonship and the Glory of His Kingdom—the equity of His Character and the loveliness of His mind, both as God and Man, must still be far beyond us! But this much is translated to us into our own tongue—that He is a King, and that He is a righteous King—yes, the very King of Righteousness—the Sovereign of the realm of equity, the Supreme Lord of everything that is good and holy. That, you see, is wrapped up in His name and Nature. Jesus is Righteousness and every righteous thing gathers beneath the right scepter of His Kingdom.

But the second word, *Salem*, which, brought down to our tongues signifies, "peace," is in reference to a *place* rather than a person. You see, our Lord Jesus is essentially Righteousness—that is interwoven with His name and Person—but He gives, bestows, deposits and pours forth peace in a *place* which He has chosen. And upon a *people* whom He has ordained and whom He has brought near unto Himself—so that His Kingdom of peace links Him with His redeemed, to whom He has given the peace of God.

"First, King of righteousness." How early that "*first*" was, I cannot tell you. "In the beginning was the Word," but when that beginning was, who knows?—for is He not, indeed, without beginning? First and firstborn, from everlasting You are God, O mighty Son of Jehovah! First, King of Righteousness, and then afterwards, when men fell, when rebellion, strife and war had sprung up—then He came to heal the mischief and become, "King of Peace." He comes Himself as the Divine Ambassador, our Peacemaker and Peace. He comes here into this place even into the midst of His Salem, into the midst of His people, and gives us, now, as He has long given, the vision of peace—opening up before the eyes of faith the completeness, the sureness and the delight of perfect peace in Himself.

The one matter which I am going to set forth at this time is just this—"First King of righteousness, and after that also King of peace." Note well the order of these two and the dependence of the one upon the other, for there could be no true peace that was not grounded upon righteousness. And out of righteousness peace is sure to spring up. Righteousness is essential to peace. If it were not first, peace could not be second. If there could be a lying peace apart from righteousness, it would be dank, dark, deadly—a horrible peace ending in a worse misery than war, itself, could inflict! It is necessary, where an unrighteous peace exists, that it should

be broken up, that a better peace should be established upon a true foundation which will last forever.

I shall ask you—and may the Spirit of God help us to do it—first, *to admire the King*, and, secondly, *to enjoy Him*—to enter with holy delight into the full meaning of His name and Character as King of Righteousness and King of Peace.

I. First, I ask you to ADMIRE THIS KING. This Melchisedec, whom we exhibit as a type, *is such a king as God is*. He is according to the Divine model. He is priest of the Most High God and he is like the Most High God, for the Lord Jehovah, Himself, is, first, King of Righteousness, and after that also King of Peace. The great Creator entered the Garden of Eden in that sorrowful hour when our parents had rebelled and were hiding among the trees to escape His call, and He bade them answer for their fault. When they stood trembling before Him in the nakedness of their conscious guilt, they knew Him as their King and their Judge.

At that moment He was not first, the King of Peace to them, but first the King of Righteousness! He pronounced sentence upon the serpent, upon the woman and upon the man, gently making much of the punishment to fall, also, upon the ground; but yet vindicating justice before He spoke a word of peace. After that discourse, yes, in the midst of His sentences, He spoke of peace when He mentioned the woman's Seed that should bruise the serpent's head. Then, also, there happened the slaying of a victim, for the Lord God made unto them coats of skins, of beasts which had, no doubt, been slain in *sacrifice*—and with these they were covered.

In beginning to deal with an apostate race, the Lord observed the fitting order of our text—He began first, righteousness, and afterwards went on to peace. At the gate of the Garden commenced the dispensation of mercy and peace, but first of all there was the pronouncing of the sentence that man should eat bread in the sweat of his face and that unto dust he should return. Substantial righteousness was dealt out to the guilty and then peace was provided for the troubled. At the Fall, God first set up a Judgment Seat and right speedily a Mercy Seat! Righteousness must always lead the van.

Well, the times went on and men began to sin with a high hand. There were giants in those days and the people of God were mixed up with the men of the world. This is the worst sign of the world's depravity—when there ceases to be a division between the people of God and the sons of men. There was an unholy alliance between *sin* and *righteousness*. And then the King came forth, again, and displayed His Countenance and began to judge, correct, and call to repentance. Men perceived that the Countenance of God towards them was the face of one who is first, King of Righteousness. Noah's teaching taught men to return unto the Lord, or He would surely deal with them in righteousness and make a full end. Space most ample was given for repentance, but men were mad upon their follies. He is first, King of Righteousness, and afterwards King of Peace—and so He dealt with that guilty world.

He pulled up the sluices of the great deep which lies under. He let loose all the cataracts of Heaven from above and He swept men from off the face of the earth. Then afterwards He hung the rainbow in the sky and He

smelled a sweet savor of rest—and there was peace, once more, between God and a race that had to begin, again, with father Noah instead of father Adam. Righteousness ruled first and washed out, with a flood, the traces of ungodliness. And then Peace set up her gentle reign upon a new world. All along, in the history of God's dealings with men, He kept to this unvarying rule. God has never forsaken righteousness, not even for the sake of love! He selected a people for Himself. He called His Son out of Egypt. He brought His chosen people through the Red Sea into the wilderness and there He communed with them.

But they went astray after graven images. They defiled themselves with the vices of the surrounding heathen. They became degraded and polluted. And then He came again among them as the King of Righteousness, setting Sinai on a blaze, making even Moses to fear and quake, compelling the earth to open and swallow up rebels, causing the fire to break out among them, or fiery serpents to inflame their veins with death! Though to them He was a King of Peace and walked among them in tenderness, and by the fiery cloudy pillar led their band, and in the midst of the tabernacle by His Shekinah unveiled His Glory, yet it was then true, as it is now true—"The Lord your God is a jealous God."

He would not bear iniquity. He could not look upon sin without indignation. His anger smoked against it, for He is and always must be "first, King of righteousness, and after that also King of peace." That wonderful wilderness journey is bright with mercy, but it is equally dark with justice. Remember the graves of lusting and the burnings. Israel's God was always sternly righteous though glorious in Grace. It is a high but terrible privilege to dwell near to God, for His holiness burns like a consuming fire and will not endure evil! Yes, and when He had brought His people into the promised land, and had given them their heritage by lot, we must remember how they sinned against Him—and it was not long before He brought upon them the Midianites, or the Philistines, or foes of one race or another, so that they were grievously oppressed, quieted and brought low.

When they cried to Him, *then* He delivered them, but He took vengeance upon their inventions. He would not bear their sin—He took it exceedingly ill from them that a people so highly favored should so constantly rebel. He said, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." He was, to His own elect nation, first, King of Righteousness, and then King of Peace! And so it went on until, at last, Israel provoked the Lord beyond measure and the chosen people went astray to their own confusion. And then, with the besom of destruction, He swept them off from the face of their land. He scattered them as a man scatters dung upon the field. Are they not divided to this day among all the people? Are they not, still, a by-word and a proverb, for men everywhere say, "These are the people that forgot their God and He banished them from their land and will keep them in banishment till they return unto their God in spirit and in truth"?

Every Jew whom we see pacing our streets, far off from the city of his fathers, is a proof that the Lord of Heaven is, first, King of Righteousness. All over the world, and everywhere, this is God's way of dealing with men! Do not imagine that God will ever lay aside His righteousness for the sake of saving a sinner—that He will ever deal with men unrighteously in order

that they may escape the penalty due to their transgression. He has never done so and He never will! Glorious in holiness is He forever and ever. That blazing Throne of God must consume iniquity! Transgression cannot stand before it! There can be no exception to this rule. The Judge of all the earth must do right. Whatever things may change, the Law of God cannot alter and the Character of God cannot deteriorate. High as the great mountains, deep as the abyss, eternal as His being is the righteousness of the Most High.

Peace can never come to men from the Lord God Almighty except by righteousness. The two can never be separated without the most fearful consequences. Peace without righteousness is like the smooth surface of the stream before it takes its awful Niagara plunge. If there is to be peace between God and man, God must still be a righteous God—and by some means or other the transgression of man must be *justly* put away, for God cannot wink at it, or permit it to go unpunished. Salvation must first of all provide for righteousness, or peace will never lodge within its chambers. The Lord of Heaven is first King of Righteousness and then King of Peace, so that Melchisedec was such a king as God is.

And now, next, the type is especially meant to teach us that He was *such a king as Christ is*, for when the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, He came with this everlasting and unchangeable rule girt about Him—that, though He should be a King, yet He would be first, King of Righteousness and after that also King of Peace. Why did He not set up a kingdom here below among the Jews? Many spirits would have welcomed Him. If He had only set Himself up to be a king, promising them sure conquest and abundant plunder, the zealots of the Jewish nation would have fought like tigers at His side. But, no, He came, first, to be a King of Righteousness, and that was a topic for which they cared nothing. He went into His own Father's House like a king into his palace, but it was with a scourge of small cords, crying, "Take these things hence!"

The Temple was no abode for Him while greed, self and mammon defiled its courts. In that Temple He looked round about Him with indignation, for He saw no trace of righteousness there, but every indication that up to the very veil of the Temple all was given over to human unrighteousness! They wanted an unrighteous kingdom, but He would not have it. His fan was in His hand and He would thoroughly purge His floor. His Laws were not to be like those of Caesar! His soldiers were not to fight with carnal weapons. He came not to set up a kingdom of power and force, but a kingdom of love and truth and righteousness and, therefore, His own people knew Him not and rendered Him no homage! His holiness stood in the way of such a kingdom as the Jews desired and, therefore, they turned upon Him and cried, "Let Him be crucified."

Though they would not acknowledge His Sovereignty, He was their King! And at His death He bore above His head the superscription, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." He would not set up a carnal kingdom of their sort. Church and State, truth and force united in some form or other, must have been suggested to Him, but no—He must be first, King of Righteousness, and then King of Peace. He preached no peace apart from purity. He never made little of vice or error. He was the deadly foe of all evil. He said, "I came not to bring peace, but a sword." Until there is

righteousness, there must be conflict—and peace can only enter when righteousness has won the field. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, I wish I had power to describe to you how our Divine Master, in all His lowliness, began to be the King of Righteousness by His superlative, unrivalled Character!

Here among us there was never such Righteousness as His—such royal Righteousness throughout all His career in all the details of life. I see an imperial Righteousness in the Character of my Divine Lord—Righteousness that is master and superior of all others! Even those that hate Jesus cannot find fault with Him! Books written to disprove His Divine mission are, nevertheless, full of almost fulsome adulation of Him—I call it by no better word because I think that the praises which Infidels have given to our Lord are no more acceptable to Him than were the praises of devils when they said, “This is the Son of God!” Then He bade them hold their peace and I think He has the same wish at this moment touching His Unitarian and Infidel admirers! All sorts of men have been compelled to do homage to this kingly One who has passed across the pages of history, the very Sovereign of all that is right and good. But ah, I think He was most king of Righteousness when He said unto Himself, “My Father’s Law has been broken: I will restore its honor. Men have defied it and trampled on it: I will pay to it the highest homage.”

With this strong desire upon Him, He went up to the Cross and gave His hands and feet to the nails, and His side to the spear! And with a crown of thorns upon His dying brow, He became, in very deed, the King of Righteousness! As the Son of God, He rendered unto the Divine Majesty all the honor due to the Law by reason of the many insults which sin had heaped thereon. The transgressions of His people were laid upon their Great Shepherd—they were made to meet upon Him in one dreadful storm—and that hurricane spent itself upon Him! Our Great Substitute endured the consequences of human guilt on our behalf and thus He is able to pacify the troubled conscience. He is, first, King of Righteousness. He knew that He could not be King of Peace to us till, first of all, He had woven a perfect Righteousness in the loom of His life and dyed it in His own heart’s blood in His death! But when He had achieved this, then He became King of Righteousness, demonstrated to be so before the eyes of all—and then to you and to me He became, from then on—the King of Peace.

How glorious is His name! Oh, for a voice of thunder with which to praise Him! Today our Lord and Master has gone His way up to the eternal hills where He reigns. But His Kingdom, for which we daily pray, is coming and, mark you, it will come by righteousness! I say no word against those who endeavor to bring peace to the nations by the extension of commerce, facilities for travel and so forth. But it is not thus that the sword of war will be broken! Would God the sword of the Lord were quiet in its scabbard forever, but I never anticipate the reign of universal peace on earth till first, the King of Righteousness is acknowledged in every place. I do not think that we shall ever see the fruits without the tree, or the stream without the source, or peace without the enthronement of the principle of righteousness from which it springs.

There shall come a day when the lion shall eat straw like the ox and the wolf shall lie down with the lamb—when they shall hang the useless helmet in the hall and study war no more! But that reign of the joyous King—that era of plenty, love, and joy—can only commence as a reign of righteousness! It cannot be anything else! And until sin is dethroned, till iniquity is banished, we shall not see the Divine fruit of peace upon the face of the earth. Wherever Jesus is King, He must be first, King of Righteousness, and after that King of Peace. So, then, Melchisedec is such a king as God is, and such a king as Jesus is.

Note, next, that *he is such a king as right-hearted minds desire*. I say “right-hearted minds.” I mean not only those who are saved, but those in whom there is some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel. There is an honest and good ground not yet sown and we know what that soil waits for. I remember what my thoughts used to be when I was seeking the Lord. I longed to be saved. I desired to escape from my sin, but with it there always went this thought—“God must be just.” I had always a certain trembling sense of guilt, but at the same time a deep reverence for righteousness. In my heart of hearts I said, “Let not the Lord, even for my sake, do an unrighteous thing. I am nothing, but God and His Righteousness are All in All. It were a greater calamity for God to be unjust than for me to be lost! It were a dark day for all the aspirations of noble minds if it were possible for God to swerve from the strict rule of His integrity. Though He slay me, yet let His name be honored, and let His righteousness remain untarnished.”

I remember distinctly being the subject of that feeling. Sinner as I was, I had a care for the perfect Law of the Lord, and would by no means have agreed to its being dishonored in order to my own personal salvation. I needed this question answered—“How can God be just and yet the Justifier of him that believes?” I did not know, at that time, the sweet secret of Substitution, but when I did know it, no music ever sounded so sweetly in the human ear as that sounded in my heart! When I saw that, by the interposition of the Son of God and His bearing my guilt, God could be sternly, strictly, severely just to the letter—in every jot and tittle—and yet could put all my sin away and take me to His bosom and let me be His child, then I said, “This must be of God! This Divine secret bears upon its own face its own warranty of truthfulness, for no man could have invented a system at once so just to God, so safe to man.”

To be able to look for mercy as just and receive pardon on the ground of righteousness is certainly a high ground to reach! And yet every Believer stands there before God! I say that every right-minded man feels a deep concern for the Righteousness of God when he is soberly in his senses and thinking the matter over. He longs to be saved—that is more than natural—but he does not wish to be saved in a way that would derogate from the supreme splendor of the Righteousness of God! Let the Lord God be glorious in justice and then, if I can be saved, well and good! Blessed be God, we *can* be thus saved! Our entrance to Heaven can be as justly secured as our banishment to Hell was righteously deserved! How Justice and Peace have kissed each other is now made known!

That secret is told us in the Word of God. Is it not written on the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? And I am sure, again, that no right-hearted man

wants Christ to come and be to him the King of Peace and then to let him live in sin. Brothers and Sisters, I want no peace in my heart concerning any fault. If I know myself before God, my heart's inmost prayer is that I may never be able to rest till I am rid of every relic of evil. I do not want to make myself happy and yet to live in a single known sin. If I could have the offer of Heaven and be a drunk, I wish not for a drunk's heaven! What could it be but a scene of riot, strife, and obscenity? If I could have Heaven and be a liar, I want not a liar's heaven. What could the heaven of falsehood be but Hell in truth?

No, I would not wish for a heaven in which I might freely indulge some minor sin, or be jovial in the commission of some unconsidered transgression. No, there can be no Heaven for me till evil in every form is expelled from my nature! My God, my longing is not for happiness, first, but for purity, first, and happiness afterwards and, therefore, it is my delight to read that my King is first, the King of Righteousness, and then the King of Peace! My heart rejoices in a sin-killing King and then a peace-bestowing King, sweeping out the buyers and the sellers from the Temple, and then manifesting Himself there in all His majesty to His waiting people! Melchisedec, therefore, sets forth such a king as all right-minded people desire.

Again, this wonderful Melchisedec *is such a king as Jesus must be to every one of you who have not yet known Him, if you are ever to receive Him as your Savior.* Let me not sew pillows to all arm-holes by preaching salvation to those who do not repent of their evil ways. I do *not* come here to chant in dulcet tones sweet lullabies to men who sleep in unrighteousness. If you would have peace with God, you must repent of sin! If you love evil you cannot love God. There must be a divorce between you and sin, or there can be no marriage between you and Christ. When Jesus comes to a soul, He comes as King of Righteousness first, and after that as King of Peace. We must have a positive righteousness of life, a cleanness of heart and hand—or we shall not be found at the right hand of the Judge!

Let no man deceive himself. "Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap." He that comes to Christ and takes Christ to be his Savior, must take Christ also to be his Ruler and, Christ ruling him, there must be in that man's heart an active, energetic pursuit of everything that is good and holy, for, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." He that lives in sin is dead while he lives and knows nothing of the life of God in his soul. Righteousness must hold the scepter, or Peace will not attend the court. I know that I speak to many who long to be saved, but will you give up your sin? Christ has come to save His people *from* their sins. It you do not wish to be saved from sinning, you will never be saved from damning!

Do you hug your Delilah? Then shall you lose your eyes like Samson. Do you hold to the viper and press the asp to your bosom? Then shall the poison boil within your veins. Christ cannot save you while sin is loved and followed after, and has a reigning power in you, for it is an essential of His salvation that He should deliver you from the mastery of evil. I would to God that many here would cry, "That is the very thing I want. I long for it. Can I be helped to renounce sin?" O poor Heart, if you hunger after righteousness you shall be filled! You shall be helped to conquer

evil—you are being helped by the fiery desire which has been breathed into you! “Oh,” says one, “can I break off the iron yoke and come out of the Egyptian bondage of my lust?” You can! For Christ has come to set you free. Trust in Him, the great Emancipator! But if you say, “I will live in sin and yet go to Heaven,” you shall never do so! There shall, by no means, enter into the Celestial City anything that defiles. He that takes men to Heaven is first, King of Righteousness, and after that He is King of Peace.

I have closed this first head when I have noticed that *that is the kind of king that God would have every one of us to be*. We ought all to be first, kings of righteousness, and then kings of peace. The Lord has appointed each man his kingdom—let us see to it that we reign for good and not for evil. On all sides we hear voices inviting us to peace apart from righteousness. “Oh,” they say to us, “a confederacy, a confederacy.” What do you mean? You are to preach a lie and we are to preach the Truth of God, and yet we are to call each other brothers? We are *not* brothers and we will not, by our silence, aid the fraud. “Oh, but,” they say, “be charitable.” Charitable with what? Charitable with God’s Truth, flinging it down into the mire of error? Charitable by deceiving our fellow men? That we cannot be!

Brothers and Sisters, we must so hold and love the Truth of God as to hate every false way, for the way of error is ruinous to the souls of men and it will go hard with us if, even by our silence, we lead men to run therein. If any man shall say to you, “Come and let us sin together,” reply to him, “I cannot enter into association with you, for I must first be pure and then peaceable, since I serve a Lord who is first, King of Righteousness, and after that King of Peace.” “Hold your tongue,” says the world. “Do not fight against error. Why need you speak so loudly against a wrong thing?” We must speak and speak, sharply, too, for souls are in danger! We must uplift the banner of the Truth of God or we shall be the worst of all cowards! God has made us kings, and we must be first, kings of righteousness, and after that kings of peace.

God’s people are tempted, sometimes, to be a little too peaceable. Remember that our Lord Jesus has not come to make us live at peace with *sin*. He has come to set a man against his brother—to divide a household where iniquity holds sway. There can be no peace between the child of God and wrong doing or wrong thinking of any kind. We must have “war to the knife” with that which would rob God of His Glory and men of their salvation! Our peace is on the footing of righteousness and on no other ground. We are for all that is good and right, but we dare not cry, “Peace, peace, where there is no peace.”

II. Now my time has fled, but I must occupy a little upon the best part of my subject. I have asked you to admire the King. I now beg you to ENJOY HIM. Our Lord Jesus Christ is, first, King of *Righteousness*. You know what it means. Shall I tell you what it *includes*? You who are in Him and one with Him in His Kingdom, are righteous in *His* Righteousness. His is a righteous kingdom and those who obey it will be found to have done rightly. If we follow Christ’s rule we need never be afraid that it will mislead us. We are righteous, certainly, when we are doing His bidding. If any laugh and say, “Why do you do this?” quote the King’s authority! Do

not be afraid if you do the King's bidding! He is a King of Righteousness and you are righteous in obeying His righteous ordinances. He who religiously obeys Mohammed may yet be doing grievous moral wrong—but it is never so with the disciple of Jesus—obedience to Jesus is holiness!

Notice, next, that if we trust this King of Righteousness we are righteous in His merit. I want you to believe this. If you had always kept God's Law and had *never* sinned, you would have been conscious of righteousness. Now, by faith, as many of you who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are as righteous as He is righteous in the sight of God—as righteous as if you had never sinned! Oh, I want you to feel this. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God." But there must *first* be this justifying *righteousness* before there can be peace! What Christ did, He did for His people. I say not that what Christ *did* is imputed to His people, though I believe that it is so—but it *belongs* to His people—for they are part and parcel of Him and so are partakers with Him.

They are in Him as in their Federal Head, and whatever Christ *is*, or *has*, or *does*, belongs in itself, in the very nature of things, to all that are in Him and in that Covenant of which He is the Head. Stand up straight, then, before your God, and though, in yourself, the publican's humble demeanor suits you well, yet in your Lord you may take another stand and say, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died; yes, rather, that is risen again." The Lord Jesus is "made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness." "This is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness," for, "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners," as you and I know to our cost, "so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." "By His knowledge"—by the knowledge of Him—"shall My righteous Servant justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities."

Now, then, do you believe in Christ? Then you have no sin. Your sin was laid upon Christ of old and He bore the punishment of it, and you can not be punished for it. Divine Righteousness cannot exact a double penalty for the same offense. Do you believe in Jesus? Then He has made an end of all the sin which was once written against you! He has buried your transgressions forever in His own sepulcher! If you are in Christ, His perfect Righteousness is wrapped about your loins, and you stand, this day, "accepted in the Beloved." Oh, it is a glorious standing, Jesus the King of Righteousness—and we, in our King, made righteous! We are comely through the comeliness of Christ which is put upon us!

Now this I want you to think of. Whenever you are enjoying the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ, please remember that He never gives you any part of salvation without giving it to you righteously! And if He gives it to you righteously, you are possessed of it righteously. My sins are pardoned. Yes, and righteously pardoned! Oh, is not this a wonder? Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other! If I pray, I have naturally no right to be heard as a sinner, but, using the name of Christ, I expect to be heard as righteously as if I were the new-created Adam fresh from the hand of Deity! When I come before God and ask His protection, I look for it as righteously as Christ looked for it when He was here below, for He has put upon *me*, a poor unworthy Believer, all His regal rights!

And all His righteousness is mine, so that I may use His name at the foot of my prayers and stamp my petitions with His Christly authority. I may take the blessings of the Covenant as freely as He may take them who bought them with His blood—for He bought them for all His people and He has made transfer of all the covenant estate to all who are in Him. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, it is a dreadful thing to be under a sense of sin, but it is an equally blessed thing to be under a sense of righteousness! We are righteous even as He is righteous! Let us never forget this.

And then, next, He is after that, King of *Peace*. I want you to try, tonight—no, I do not want you to *try*, I want the Holy Spirit to do it for you—I want you to *enjoy* the King of Salem, the King of peace! Do you know that at this moment, if you are a Believer, you have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord? There is no quarrel between you and God tonight. You are one with Him! Your delight is in Him! I know not now in my own soul of anything that I could say against the Lord's dealings with me throughout the whole of my life! Nor, let Him deal with me as He wills, do I feel any repugnance to putting myself entirely into His hands. For happiness or sorrow, for wealth or poverty, for life or death I am content to hand myself absolutely over to the Lord. And now, there being peace on the poor creature's side, it is such a joy to think that there is peace from God's side, only still more perfect and enduring. He looks at you through His dear Son, and He sees no sin in you—no iniquity in you! He loves you with a perfect love at this moment and He knows of no just cause or impediment why He should not love you.

“Why,” says one, “I have not been a Believer more than a week.” I do not care if you have not been a Believer more than 10 minutes! He that believes has everlasting life and everlasting love! As soon as the prodigal son was home, what did his father do? Upbraid him? No, he kissed him! Had his father no fault to find? No, not any. He said, “Bring forth the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet. Let us eat and be merry.” Why did he not say, “Come, my dear Son, I must have a little sharp talk with you, for your own good. You know you have behaved very badly to me. I must chide you and upbraid you”? No, no! Not a word of the sort! Not a syllable or even a *look* after that fashion! He gives liberally and upbraids not. He puts his dear child at perfect ease with himself and says, “Be at home. Be happy. Eat, drink and be merry with me; for you are my child, and though you were lost, you are found. You were dead, but you are alive again. Let us rejoice together in this blessed salvation which glorifies my son.”

I want you to sit in those pews—you that really believe in Jesus—and receive this bread and wine in perfect contentment, saying within yourselves, “It is well. It is all well. It is well from beginning to end—from top to bottom. Being justified by faith, I have peace with God. The peace of God that passes all understanding keeps my heart and soul by Jesus Christ.” Come. If you have never enjoyed it before, enjoy it tonight, and do not be afraid! If you go to the devil's feasts, put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite, for you may soon eat and drink and be drunk. Solomon is the author of this prudent advice. But when you come to the feasts of love, drink—yes, drink abundantly, O Beloved! There never was a Christian man that was too happy in God! There never was a Believer that

was too peaceful, too serene, too confident, too hopeful! You cannot drink too much of this heavenly nectar. Oh, that you would but have Grace to take in all that you *may have!*

I know what you will do. You will come, tonight, into my Lord's treasury, and He will say, "Take what you will." There will be mints of gold and silver before you and you will look all round and take up some brass farthing or other and say, "Bless the Lord for this!" Such gratitude is right enough. Bless the Lord for *anything*. At the same time, why not take something better? "Oh, I have been a mourner," you say, "all my days." Whose fault is that? "Oh, but I have never had any great light or any great joy." Whose fault is that? Is it not your own? The Lord seems to me to say to-night, even to the elder Brothers here, "Rejoice and be glad." I do not think that many grumblers come to the Tabernacle, but there are certain grumpy elder Brothers that are apt to say, "Neither at any time transgressed I Your commandments, and yet You never gave me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. I never have any joy. I am a regular seat-holder and a member. I go to the communion. I do all I can, but I never get any of these holy raptures and spiritual delights. These reformed thieves and converted rascals, when they are converted, seem to monopolize all the music and the dancing. I never have a dance to myself at all."

But the father was in such a blessed humor that night that he did not even upbraid the elder brother! He said, "Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. If you have had no kid with which to make a supper for your friends, why did you not take it? All that I have is yours." Come in, dear elder Brother, as well as you younger ones, and let us eat and drink and be merry this night in the name of Him who, having been the King of Righteousness upon the bloody tree, is now, tonight, the King of Peace upon His glorious Throne! It is He, who upon this table, shows you how He worked out perfect Righteousness, breaking His body and pouring out His blood for you! And He now bids you come and see how all this is worked for your peace, for His flesh and blood are now your bread and wine to make you glad! Rejoice in the Lord! And again I say, Rejoice! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Hebrews 7.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—397, 393.**

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THE MAN CHRIST JESUS

NO. 1835

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 12, 1885,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Now consider how great this man was.”
Hebrews 7:4.***

CONSIDER how great Melchizedek was. There is something majestic about every movement of that dimly-revealed figure. His one and only appearance is thus fitly described in the Book of Genesis—“And Melchizedek, king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of Heaven and earth: and blessed be the Most High God, which has delivered your enemies into your hand. And he gave him tithes of all.” We see but little of him, yet we see nothing little *in* him. He is here and gone, as far as the historic page is concerned, yet is he, “a priest forever” and, “it is witnessed that he lives.” Everything about him is on a scale majestic and sublime.

“Consider how great this man was” in the combination of his offices. He was duly appointed both priest and king: king of righteousness and peace and, at the same time, priest of the Most High God. It may be said of him that he sat as a priest upon his throne. He exercised the double office to the great blessedness of those who were with him, for his one act towards Abraham would seem to be typical of his whole life—he blessed him in the name of the Most High God. “Consider how great this man was,” that he not only ruled his people with righteousness and brought them peace, but he was their representative towards God and God’s representative to them—and in each character distributed Divine blessings.

“Consider how great this man was” in the power of his benedictions. Abraham had already been greatly blessed, so much so that he is described as, “He that received the promises.” Yet a receiver of promises so great, a man with whom God had entered into solemn Covenant, was yet blessed by Melchizedek, “and without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.” This great man yet further blessed the blessed Abraham and the father of the faithful was glad to receive benediction at his hands. No small man this—no priest of second rank—but one who overtops the sons of men by more than head and shoulders and acts a superior’s part among the greatest of them!

“Consider how great this man was” in his supremacy over all around him. He met Abraham when he was returning as a conqueror from the overthrow of the robber kings—and the victorious Patriarch bowed before him and gave him tithes of the best of the spoil. Without a moment’s hesitation the man of God recognized the priest of God and paid to him the

tribute of a subject to the officer of a great king. In Abraham's bowing, all the line of Aaronic priesthood did homage unto Melchizedek, for as the Apostle says, "Levi also, who receives tithes, paid tithes in Abraham, for he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him." So that all kings in Abraham and all priests in Abraham did homage unto this man, who, as king and priest, was acknowledged to be supreme. "Consider how great this man was." When Paul had once proven that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham, he felt that he had clearly proven him to be greater than all others, at least to the Hebrews, for the seed of Abraham can recognize none greater than Abraham! And since Abraham, by paying tithes, acknowledges his subordination to Melchizedek, it is clear that the priest of the Most High God was the greatest of men.

"Consider how great this man was" as to the singularity of his person, "without father, without mother, without descent"—that is to say, we know nothing as to his birth, his origin, or his history. Even this explanation hardly answers to the words, especially when it is added, "Having neither beginning of days, nor end of life." So mysterious is Melchizedek that many deeply-taught expositors think that he was veritably an appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are inclined to believe that he was not a king of some city in Canaan, as the most of us suppose, but that he was a manifestation of the Son of God, such as were the angels that appeared to Abraham on the plains of Mamre and that Divine being who appeared to Joshua by Jericho—and to the three holy ones in the furnace. At any rate, you may well "consider how great this man was" when you observe how veiled in clouds is everything about his coming and going—veiled because intended to impress us with the depth of the sacred meanings which were shadowed forth in him. How much more shall this be said of Him of whom we ask—

***"Your generation who can tell,
Or count the number of Your years?"***

"Consider how great this man was" in the specialty of his office. He had no predecessor in his priesthood and he had no successor. He was not one who took a holy office and then laid it down, but as far as the historic pages of Scripture is concerned, we have no note of his quitting this mortal scene. He disappears, but we read nothing of his death any more than of his birth. His office was perpetual and passed not from sire to son, for he was the type of One "who is made not after the Law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."

"Consider how great this man was" in his being altogether unique. There is another, "after the order of Melchizedek"—the glorious Antitype in whom Melchizedek, himself, is absorbed, but apart from Him, Melchizedek is unique. Who can equal this strange, mysterious priest, prophet, king, sent of the Most High God to bless the father of the faithful? He is altogether alone! He receives no commission from the hands of men, nor from God *by* men, and he does not transmit to a successor what he had not received from a predecessor! Melchizedek stands alone—one mighty crag, rising out of the plain—a lone Alp, whose brow is swathed in clouds sublime. "Consider how great this man was," but think not to measure that greatness!

I shall leave you to that consideration, for my business, this morning, is not with Melchizedek, but with a greater than he. I shall take my text in its connection, but lift it up to a higher application. Beloved Friends, if Melchizedek was so great, how much greater is that Man whom Melchizedek represents! If the type is so wonderful, what must the Antitype be! I invite you to consider “how great” is He of whom it is written, “The Lord swore and will not repent, You are a Priest, forever, after the order of Melchizedek.” I will not say, “Consider how great this Man was,” for there is no verb—the “was” is inserted in italics by the translators. We are to consider “how great this Man.” Say, “was,” if you will, but read, also, “is,” and, “shall be.” Consider how great this Man was and is, and is to be, even the Man, Christ Jesus!

And first, this morning, let me *exhort you to consider* how great this Man is. Then let me *assist you to consider* how great this Man is. And then *let us practically improve our consideration* of how great this Man is, trying to turn it to holy account as the Holy Spirit may enable us.

I. First, then, LET ME EXHORT YOU TO CONSIDER HOW GREAT THIS MAN, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, IS.

This subject *claims* your consideration. I do not think it should be a matter of option with you whether you will now consider the greatness of your Lord or not—it is His due and right that you should consider His greatness. For He of whom we speak—“this Man,” is one well known among us. If you are true to your profession, He is one most dear to you, to whom you owe all things, yes, owe your very lives! He is One between whom and you there is a betrothal—you are espoused unto Him, your hearts are His, even as His heart is yours. If you do not consider Him, who will? He has loved you and given Himself for you. Strangers may listen to our teaching at this time and in vain we may cry—

***“Is it nothing to you, all you that pass by?
Is it nothing to you that Jesus should die?”***

But *you* are no stranger, you are not even a guest in His house—you are a *child*, living at home with Him. He is your Brother and much more, for He is bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh. All your interests are wrapped up in Him. You are one with Him—by an endless union, one. I claim, therefore, and I am sure you assent at once to the claim, that you should often consider your Lord and the greatness of His Nature, Person, Office and work. His greatness should be your perpetual theme! I would urge that all other thoughts should now be banished, for this is your Lord’s own day and, therefore, to Him it should be dedicated with glad consent. If you are “in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day,” you will, like John in Patmos, give all your thoughts to the Son of Man who walks among the golden candlesticks. I urge it on you that you do now consider with your whole heart and mind, “how great this Man is.” Do you not consent to the claim?

Certainly the subject *needs* consideration, for, dear Friends, we shall never gain an idea of how great He is unless we do consider and consider much. Here is a great deep and it cannot be fathomed by the thoughtless. You think you know Christ and, blessed be His name, you do know Him in a sense, but do you know the thousandth part of Him? When the Apostle Paul had known Christ for many years, he wrote to the Philippians and

he then expressed himself as desiring to know Christ, for though he knew Him to his own personal salvation, yet he felt that he did not know Him to the fullest. He acknowledged that he knew the love of Christ, but he added, "it passes knowledge." Well may each of us who has been, for years, a student at the Master's feet, exclaim, "I find myself yet a learner." I suppose the saints who have been in Heaven now for thousands of years and have been evermore adoring Him, are still students of Him. This is the philosophy which the most cultured mind shall never fully compass—"God manifest in the flesh." "Consider how great this Man is!"

This is a matter worthy of continual research and calling for profound thought. You must weigh this subject and turn it over and meditate upon it all day. You must let it lie both day and night upon your hearts as a bundle of camphire, perfuming the bosom in which it lies. You must look, and look, and look, and look again—still looking unto Jesus. The angels standing on the golden Mercy Seat always have their eyes bent downward, desiring to look within—and that must be your posture. Oh, you servants of the Lord, by looking to Jesus you *began* to live! By looking to Him you shall *continue* to live and your life shall find strength and growth! This sacred subject shall always need more and more consideration from you. Oh the depths of the love, wisdom and Glory of God in the Person of Jesus Christ!

I go a little further and say that not only does my subject claim your consideration and need your consideration, but it solemnly *commands* it. The text is not a mere piece of advice—it is by Inspiration that the Apostle bids you, today, out of this sacred page, "Consider how great this Man was." He charges you to think of Melchizedek, but much more would he have you remember Melchizedek's Antitype! Oh, do not, my Brothers and Sisters, do not need to be pressed to this Divine study—love it! Never cease from it! Count every minute wasted in which you are not learning more about Jesus! Reckon all other knowledge to be as mere druff and dogs' meat as compared with the knowledge of Christ Crucified. In these days of science, falsely so called, determine with the Apostle to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him Crucified! It is imperative upon you that you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your mind—and that God in Christ Jesus should call into exercise every faculty of your inner man, while, with blended intellect and emotion, you consider how great He was.

Follow out this meditation, I pray you, because there is an exceedingly great reward for any man who will "consider how great this Man was." I find, for myself, that the only possibility of my living is living in Christ and unto Christ. Look about and try to live by the wisdom of man. Unstable as water and fickle as the wind is the product of human wisdom! The history of philosophy, from the beginning until now, is the history of fools, and never was folly so self-evident as in the philosophy which is now dominant! I believe that within a century it will be found impossible to make men believe that educated men were ever so degraded as to accept the philosophy of the present hour—it will seem to be so altogether absurd and contrary to all reason and common sense that it will be rejected with scorn as a popular delusion of a dark age! Even today *this* generation is

kicking about, like footballs, the philosophies of preceding ages—and we may rest assured that future generations will do the same with the dotting of today!

I find, therefore, that I must come back to the Revelation of God. Here is a rock beneath my feet—“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Certain great facts concerning God and His Christ have been made known to us by the Holy Spirit and these are Infallibly sure. God’s Revelation is true, whatever man’s dreams may be! On the basis of Revelation there is a foothold. A personal knowledge of Christ revealed by the Spirit is also a sure matter. I get to Jesus, I speak to Him and meditate upon Him—and He rises before me greater than ever, till, in His Presence, all the learning of men condenses into folly! He is, “God only wise.” Ah, then, I live when He is All in All! My heart is glad and my glory rejoices when I forget all else save Christ Jesus my Lord! Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, I say that you shall find a great reward in full often coming near to your Lord and considering, again and again, how great He is.

Consider His greatness and I, again, remind you that the blessing comes only by consideration. I may speak to you, this morning, about the greatness of my Master, but I shall not succeed in fully declaring it. I am never more vexed with myself than when I have done my very best to extol His dear name! What is it but holding a candle to the sun? What are my lispings compared with the loud acclamations which such an One as He is, might well expect from those who love Him? You must carefully consider, or you will miss the blessing! It will not be enough for you to hear, or read—you must do your own thinking, and consider your Lord for yourselves. You may even read the Bible, itself, without profit, if you do not *consider* as well as read! The wine is not made by gathering the clusters, but by treading the grapes in the wine-vat—under pressure the red juice leaps forth. Not the Truth of God as you read it, but the Truth as you *meditate* upon it, will be a blessing to you.

“Read, mark, learn and inwardly digest.” “Consider how great this Man was.” Shut yourselves up with Jesus, if you would know Him. “Come, my people, enter you into your chambers, and shut your doors about you: hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past.” In Christ there is shelter and the more you consider Him, the greater your peace will be. Come and lay your finger into the prints of the nails, and thrust your hand into His side. Commune with the personal Christ, who always lives—and *always*, “consider how great this Man was.”

Thus have I exhorted you to this duty. Now let me try to help you in it. But what help will mine be unless the Divine Spirit is with me, that the word spoken may be with power?

II. LET ME NEXT ASSIST YOU TO CONSIDER HOW GREAT THIS MAN WAS.

And first, lest the very use of the expression, “this Man,” should leave anybody for a moment in doubt as to our faith in His Godhead, I bid you consider how great this Man was *in His relationship to God*. For though He was Man, He was not merely Man. He was assuredly and truly Man in all respects, “Man of the substance of His mother,” bone of our bone and

flesh of our flesh—and yet He was, indeed, and of a truth, very God. Do not think of Him as a Divine Man, or as a human God—He was neither the one nor the other. He was perfectly Man, yet He was infinitely God! Think, then, into what a position of honor and dignity His Manhood was lifted up by union with the Godhead in one Person. Born, growing, gathering strength, coming to Manhood, suffering, dying—in all this He was Man. Yet He was never, at any time, less Divine.

Our Lord's Humanity is not to be thought of apart from His Deity, for He is one and indivisible. I have sometimes heard objections made against certain expressions in Dr. Watts' hymns in which our Lord is spoken of as the God that bled and died, and so forth. I fear that the objection is frequently aimed less at the poet than at the Truth of the Deity of our Lord—the objector figures as a critic because he dares not avow himself a heretic! Take note that in the Scriptures you shall find frequent confusions of speech upon the Person of our Lord, intentionally made, in order to show that although the Natures were distinct, yet they were indissolubly united in the one Person of Jesus. Of His one Person might popularly be predicated that which, in strict accuracy, could only be true of His Humanity, or only of His Deity! To the one Person of our Lord will be found to be ascribed what He did both as God and as Man—and it is not necessary for us to be wise or accurate above what is written by the Spirit of God.

It is possible to be so true to the letter as to be false to the spirit. Quibblers have no monopoly of wisdom. My Lord Jesus is to me no less a Man because He is God. Oh, how my heart loves Him! He is, to me, fairest of the sons of men, chief among 10,000 and altogether lovely! But He is, to me, because of His Manhood, none the less, but all the more, "God over all, blessed forever." Into the dust my spirit bows before His majesty and my soul adores Him! I ask you, therefore, to consider the greatness of His Manhood because it never was apart from His Godhead and cannot be thought of except in connection therewith. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth." Inconceivable is the greatness of the Man who is thus One with God!

You, my Brothers and Sisters, are not in doubt upon this vital matter. Let me, therefore, ask you to consider "how great this Man was" as to His relationship to men. Christ Jesus is the Second Man, the Lord from Heaven. Adam, our first father, was the head of the race and all men were in him as their representative—in him they stood in the garden. In him, alas, they fell when he broke the Divine Command and the Lord took up the quarrel of His Covenant and cast him out of Paradise. "Oh, what a fall was there, my Brethren: then you and I and all of us fell down." We inherit, because of Adam's failure, a nature whose tendencies are towards evil. Adam was a very great person in relation to the race—he was the summary of all the generations, the fountain of the stream of humanity. To him we might apply the language of the Prophet, "you have been in Eden, the garden of God...You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity was found in you."

As Adam came forth from God, he was as a covering cherub under whose wings the race nestled down. But now comes in the Lord Jesus

Christ as the greater Man, the representative Man in whom none are made to fall, but multitudes arise! In this Man, the Lord is again well pleased with men. Time was when God looked on rebellious man and it grieved Him that He had made him. But now that He turns His eyes to this perfect Man, He feels no such remorse! On the contrary, we read that, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." For the sake of the Man, Christ Jesus, He deals with the innumerable race of sinners in a way of long-suffering and pity—and does not destroy them! Long ago had the flood-gates been pulled up, again, and man been swept away by a deluge—not of water, but of fire—if it had not been that the long-suffering Lord looks on the Well-Beloved Christ and, therefore, spares mankind!

Yes, more. For His sake He sends the Gospel of peace to men and in the name of Jesus glad tidings are sent to every creature. It has sometimes happened that the illustrious deed of one man has served to elevate a class, or even a nation into honor. A grand, heroic deed has welded you not only to that one person but to all his kith and kin. Consider, then, how great this Man was, that the Divine mind which cannot look upon sin without indignation, nevertheless was so charmed to look upon the Person and Character of this glorious Man, that an amnesty was proclaimed to the race and a message was sent to the sons of men bidding them repent and turn to Him and live. "Consider," then, "how great this Man was."

Come a little closer and reach forward to that which will delight your hearts far more—consider *the relationship of Christ to His own people*. Now we get on sure ground and feel a rock beneath our feet! Long before the heavens and the earth were made, God, with prescient eye, beheld the Person of His Son as God in human Nature. And He saw all His elect lying in Him. The Church is His body, "the fullness of Him that fills all in all." God the Father saw, in the Divine decree, the mystical Christ and He was well pleased with all His redeemed for Christ Jesus' sake. How wondrous was that transaction when, in the council chamber of eternity, the Covenant was made, and the Lord Jesus Christ became the Surety of that Covenant! He entered into Covenant with the eternal God on the behalf of His chosen that He would make atonement for their sin and would perfect the righteousness which should cover every one of them—and make them to be accepted in the Beloved.

No actual sacrifice was offered for thousands of years, but see "how great this Man was," since, on the strength of His bare promise, the Lord continued to save men for thousands of years, admitting them to His infinite Glory before the Mediator had appeared, or the Redeemer had put a hand to the work! Consider that you and I, and all of us who are in Christ, are this day beloved for His sake, accepted for His sake, justified for His sake! Still does God embrace us in the arms of almighty love for His sake! For His sake Heaven is being prepared for us. For His sake the treasures of the infinite are given to us because we are the covenanted ones for whom He pledged His fidelity and for whom, in the fullness of time, He poured out His heart's blood that He might redeem us unto God! "Consider how great this Man was." He is so great that all the saints are blessed in Him! He is so great that we, as many as have believed, dwell

forevermore in the clefts of this great Rock and find in Him our castle and high tower. "For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you, also, appear with Him in glory." "Consider how great this Man."

Let me help you a little further, dear Friends, to "consider how great this Man was," by reminding you of *the surroundings of His first advent*. Thousands of years before His birth, holy men had been speaking of Him. Prophets and Seers all pointed to Him as The Coming One. "How great this Man was," since the wisest and best of mankind all looked forward to His day with gladness! Think of that wonderful system of types, emblems and symbols which God ordained by His servant, Moses—for the whole of this system was meant to set forth the Messiah who would yet appear in the fullness of time. To Him witnessed each bleeding sacrifice, each censer of sweet incense, each golden vessel, each curtain and wall of tabernacle or temple—all spoke concerning Him! Yes, and more than that—all the histories of all the empires were all but concentric rings of which He was the center—for the Lord Jesus is the center of history, the sum total of all God's doings and manifestations among the sons of men! That was an august Person towards whom all the past had been laboring and for whom all the present was agonizing!

"How great this Man was," that when He came, the saints were watching for Him—Simeon and Anna could not depart till He appeared! Angels stood on tiptoe, ready to descend and sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Humble shepherds, as they watched their flocks, did but wait for the signal to hasten to adore Him! And wise men from the East forgot the fatigues of a long journey that they might lay their gold and incense at His feet. "How great this Man was," when, being born and laid in a manger, the whole earth was moved by His appearing!

Consider, too, "how great this Man was," not only as to the outward circumstances of His coming, but *as to the secret mystery of His birth*. For this man was not "born in sin," as we are. Neither was He "shaped in iniquity." This is a thing to be thought of and considered in our privacy, but it cannot be omitted here. Thus said the angel to the blessed Virgin, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God." "Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary," He was truly a Man, but not fallen man! The method by which the pure human Nature of the Man Christ Jesus was produced is a great mystery, but it serves to make us see "how great this Man was." I will say no more than this, that we have, here, the fulfillment of the promise, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Think of that Word of old—"When He brings in the first-begotten into the world, He says, And let all the angels of God worship Him." Let us, therefore worship. Reverently forbearing all idle intrusion into the deep things of God, let us go to Bethlehem and "consider how great this Man was."

Now, let us look at His *life*. After He emerged from the obscurity of His childhood, what a life was that of our Lord! His greatest adversaries,

unless they have been mad, have never dared to speak against His Character. If the Christian religion were supposed to be an invention, the existence of the narrative of the life of Jesus would be more wonderful than the facts, themselves! The conception of a perfect character requires a perfect mind, and a perfect mind would never have prepared a fiction and imposed it upon men as a veritable history! If the life of Jesus is a fable, then a perfect Being has deceived us—and this it is not possible for us to imagine! The life of Jesus Christ is great throughout. It is so tender and so gentle that it is never little and mean—it is so unselfish that it never ceases to be majestic. It is so condescending that it is pre-eminently sublime. Above all, it is full of truth, transparent, artless, natural. No one ever thought of Jesus as acting a part, yet He is reality itself. He is so simple, so unaffected, so truly, “the Holy Child Jesus,” that in this He is great above all.

Never was a Man so wholly seen as the Christ and yet never was Man so little understood. You have read memoirs of departed worthies and you have felt, “The biographer did well to say no more upon *this* point.” But you never felt that *anything* need be reserved as to the Character of Jesus. If His chroniclers had kept on writing till the world, itself, had been made a library of the lives of Christ, they would never have recorded an unworthy act or a regrettable word! It is not only that His pursuits were majestic, for He came to save men; that His motives were Divine, for He revealed the Father; but it is Himself that is so great—I mean His soul, His spirit, the Man, Himself! Look at Alexander—he is a great conqueror—but what a pitiful creature he appears when the drunkard’s bowl has maddened him! What a poor thing is Napoleon as seen in privacy! In his captivity he was as petulant as a spoiled child!

Consider the Lord Jesus and it does not matter where you view Him—in the wilderness He is grandly victorious over temptation. In the crowd He is greatly wise in answering those who would entrap Him. Behold Him in His agony in the Garden—was there ever such an Agonizer? Behold Him as the Crucified—did ever cross hold such a Sufferer? When Jesus is least, He is greatest and when He is in the direst darkness, His brightness is best revealed! In death He destroys death! In the grave He bursts the sepulcher. “Consider how great this Men was”—the field of His life is ample—do not be slow to investigate it.

Beloved, I cannot speak as I would of Him. The blaze of this Sun blinds me! Yet consider how great this Man was *in His death*—for then He appeared as the great Sin-Offering, putting away the sin of His people. The Lord had made to meet in Him the iniquity of us all. What a weight was on Him, yet He sustained it! The wrath of God, on account of sin, fell upon Him who had never sinned and He bore it all! A penalty which must have made a Hell for us forever was exacted of our Lord upon the Cross and He discharged it! He drank the whole of our bitter cup! He bore in Himself all that was necessary to vindicate the Divine justice until He could truly say, “It is finished.” “Lame Sabachthani” is the most terrible word that ever came from human lips and, therefore, “It is finished,” is the greatest utterance that tongue ever gave forth! The work was colossal! What if I say it

was *infinite* and, therefore, our Lord Jesus, when He cried, "It is finished," had reached the summit of greatness? "Consider how great this Man was."

Now, Beloved, consider for a minute "how great this Man was" when *He rose again*, for He could not be held with the bonds of death and His body could not see corruption. It was a great thing, in itself, for Christ to rise, but what I want you to remember is that we all rose in Him! "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"—and especially His covenanted people were raised up together with Him! There was for His redeemed, a death in His death and a rising again in His rising again—for we have been made partakers of His Resurrection and we live in newness of life by His rising from the dead. This is His cry as He rises from the tomb, "Because I live you shall live also." "Consider how great this Man was" whose life imparts life to all who are in Him.

But *He has gone up on high* and has led captivity captive. Think of the gifts which were showered down from Heaven in consequence of this Man's ascent into the highest! The Holy Spirit descended, never to return till the close of this dispensation, and now all the gifts that rest in the Church of God and all the works of regeneration, illumination, sanctification and the like, which are worked by the blessed Paraclete, are the effects of the entrance of this Man into the secret place of the tabernacles of the Most High! Every soul regenerated, every heart comforted, every mind quickened, every eye illuminated, every creature spiritually blessed reflects glory upon this Man. How great is He!

Beloved, I would we had time this morning to introduce you to this Man as He now sits *at the right hand of God*, even the Father. There is no need for me to depict Him—if there were, it were impossible to me! What said the man who loved Him best and knew Him best? "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead." "Consider how great this Man is" now, when every angel pays Him homage and at the name of Jesus every knee does bow, of things in Heaven, as, by-and-by, every knee shall bow of things on earth and things that are under the earth, for Jesus Christ is Lord to the Glory of God the Father. "Consider how great this Man is" and then remember that He shall shortly come to be our Judge! Possibly, while I am yet speaking to you, He may appear—no man knows the day nor the hour—but "how great this Man is" will be clearly seen, when, in flaming fire, He shall take vengeance upon those that will not obey Him!

How "great" will He be, when, in the manifestation of His Glory, all Believers shall be glorified! I think I hear, even now, sounding out of my theme, shouts of "hallelujah, hallelujah," from assembled worlds! Yes, the music peals forth loud and long—"King of kings, and Lord of lords! HALLELUJAH! For He shall reign forever and ever! HALLELUJAH!" Break forth with your loud hosannas, oh you waiting spirits of believing men, for the time is at hand when He shall be admired in all them that believe! Consider how great this Man is. I have but reached the fringe of my subject. We see but the hem of our Lord's garments—His actual Glory is unspeakable, unsearchable. Oh, the depths! Oh, the depths!

III. This, in a few words, is THE PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT of the whole subject, with which we must wind up. Consider how great this Man was and, as you consider, believe in His infinite power to bless men. He is

full of blessing as the sun is full of light, that He may shine upon His needy creatures! Christ is full of blessing that He may bless poor, needy, empty sinners. Do you say, poor Sinner, “I am so great a sinner that He cannot save me”? Consider what this Man did when He was here on earth. He went about and laid His hands on the diseased and they were cured! He looked at devils and they fled! He spoke to fevers and they disappeared! And He is in Heaven and, if I may so say, greater than when He was here below, for here on earth He was veiled in humiliation—but now He is enthroned in infinite majesty, “able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.”

Believe in the infinite blessedness treasured up in Christ for every believing soul and come and take your share of it this morning! All that you need and all that you wish for—come and receive freely, for He does graciously dispense it and it is a part of His glory that He delights to enrich the children of men! Let faith in Jesus be one lesson—may God write it on each heart.

And then let us ascribe to our Lord Jesus Christ all the honor that our thoughts can compass. Let us give to Him, this day, our very selves over again. Consider how great this Man was and go away feeling how greatly you are indebted to Him, what great things you ought to do for Him and how little your greatest thing is when you have done it as compared with the greatness of what He deserves—

***“Let Him be crowned with majesty
That bowed His head to death
And be His honor sounded high
By all things that have breath.”***

Do not you feel that question pressing upon your heart?—

***“Oh what shall I do
My Savior to praise!”***

Do something! And having done it, do more and yet more! Give up your whole being to the showing forth of how great this Man is!

Once more, considering how great this Man is, do not be afraid, nor troubled, nor tumbled up and down in your thoughts about anything that is happening, or is yet to happen. “Consider how great this Man was.” Our wise men are going to do away with the old faith—modern culture means to stamp out old-fashioned orthodoxy! Christianity itself is getting to be effete and something better is to supersede it. Listen! “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His Anointed. He that sits in the Heaven shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.”

One said to me the other day, “The current of thought does not seem to run in the direction of evangelical religion.” Well, I said I should not believe in evangelical religion an atom more if the current of thought did run that way. We do not believe according to the counting of heads! The currents of men’s thoughts are so uncertain that you can better tell the flight of birds, or the changing of English weather! The Gospel is, perhaps, the surer to be true because there are so few who believe it! It is according to

our expectation that God's revealed Truth should be abhorred and hated by the wise men of every generation. I shall not believe the Gospel any the less if I am left alone, nor shall I believe it any the more if the whole world shall cry it up! Let God be true and every man a liar. He whose faith stands upon the consensus of popular opinion has placed his feet upon sand, but he who has read his Bible and has been taught of the Spirit of God what the Truth of God is, will hold to it, come what may!

When you consider how great this Man is, it seems to me that to be a fool for His sake is the highest wisdom, and that to cling to what He says is the best philosophy—and to believe Him and none beside—is not only a duty but a necessity of every Christian spirit! Be of good cheer, dear Friends! Let no man's heart fail him because of modern doubt! Let no man be troubled because of the fierceness of the fight! I can hear already the sounding of the trumpets of the Lord's coming. He is not far away! Even if thousands of years intervene before His feet shall touch the Mount of Olivet, the victory will never be doubtful. All is done that is required for winning the battle—His blood has been shed, His life has been accepted as a ransom. The eternal decree has settled it, nothing can change it! "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Psalm 2; 110; Hebrews 7:1-10, 17, 21, 22.*

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—72, 392, 60.

A pamphlet is being widely advertised as prefaced by "Mr. Spurgeon." I have written no such preface. My views on all subjects are as they were. It is disgraceful that an attempt should be made to propagate doctrines which I loathe, by leading the public to suppose that I have espoused them.

April 15, 1885.

C. H. Spurgeon.

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THE PRIEST ORDAINED BY THE OATH OF GOD NO. 1597

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 1, 1881,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And inasmuch as not without an oath He was made Priest, (for those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by Him that said unto Him, The Lord swore and will not repent, You are a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec), by so much more was Jesus made a surety of a better Testament.”
Hebrews 7:20-22.***

THOSE Of you who read Scripture carefully will have noticed that the word, “better,” is one of the key words of the Epistle to the Hebrews. You are constantly meeting with it. In the opening chapter we read that our Lord Jesus Christ is “made so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” Look a little further and you are taught that He is better than Moses, inasmuch as Moses was faithful as a servant in the Lord’s house, but Christ, as a Son over His own house. Further on we find our blessed Lord described as better than Aaron, while His blood is mentioned as speaking better things than that of Abel. And He is declared, in our text, to be the Surety of a better Testament, of which it is said that it is established upon better promises.

It would be a very delightful subject to work out the betterness of Christ, of His blood, of His Covenant and to show that however good other things may be, they must all yield in excellence to Him. It is implied in the use of the word, “better,” that the ordinances of the ceremonial Law were good, in their place, but Jesus is better than the best of all visible things—the eternal Christ is better than the best of all the temporal arrangements which God has made for the good of man. How much better what heart shall conceive? “If the ministration of condemnation is glory, much more does the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For if that which is done away with was glorious, much more that which remains is glorious.”

It behooves us, my dear Brothers and Sisters, to have a firmer faith than Old Testament saints because we see more clearly our ground of trust. Those who lived in the comparative darkness of the previous dispensation were saved by faith and among them there were not a few eminent Believers—surely *we*, also, ought to excel in our confidence in God! Let the 11th chapter of Hebrews stand as a triumphal arch with the names of ancient Believers recorded—these all died in faith and they were no mean men—but inasmuch as we enjoy a brighter light and are living under a better economy, we are called upon to be their *superiors* in faith! Our faith should be clearer, calmer, stronger, more effectual in working—we should do greater things than these, in the name of Jesus.

Being endowed more richly with the Spirit of God, the modern Church should attempt grander works than Israel ever thought about and so there

should be a shining more and more unto the perfect day. If better are the promises, better and yet better should we be under accumulating obligations. My objective at this time will not be so much to enter into details of doctrine concerning our Savior's priesthood as to utter practical Truths of God and press them on the heart. I shall not attempt to exhaust so wonderful a subject as the parallel between Melchisedec and Christ, but I shall try to strengthen the faith of Believers and also to leave unbelievers without excuse if they will still not believe in Jesus Christ, whom God has sent, confirming His mission by an oath.

We need practical results, this morning, and no practical result will content us but this—that you believe on Jesus Christ whom God has sent! To this end were the Scriptures written, as says the Evangelist John, "These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that, believing, you might have life through His name." The objective of the written Word of God is also the objective of the *spoken* Word of God—we would have you hear, believe and live! Vain are your reading and hearing unless they lead you to a sincere reception of the witness of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ!

Oh that you may not, on this occasion, hear in vain! To our text, then—and may the Spirit of God graciously be with us in speaking upon it.

I. Men should believe in Jesus Christ with their whole heart and rely upon Him with unstaggering confidence, first, because of OUR LORD'S SPECIAL ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD. The Lord Jesus Christ was ordained to the priesthood, according to the 110th Psalm, in a manner distinct from all others. His ordination was unique, for neither Aaron, nor his sons, nor *any* of the priests of the tribe of Levi were ever ordained by an *oath*. Ceremonies most important, imposing, instructive and impressive were performed—but there was no oath. God gave promises to the house of Levi, but He expressly stopped short of anything like an oath to them—not because His promise can be broken—but because that promise was conditional and must not be confirmed by an oath, as though it constituted a perpetual engagement.

But our Savior is made a Priest by an *oath* and it is written, as if to make it exceedingly sure, "The Lord swore and will not repent." Not because God ever can or does repent, or run back from His oath in any case, but for the confirmation of our faith in the Immutability of His Word—for it is expressly added, "He will not repent." By an oath which stands fast forevermore, Christ is made a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. But why, my Brethren, an oath for Jesus and none for other priests? First, because of the greater dignity of Christ above all other priests that ever were, for He is the Son of the Highest, and they were not. They were men that had infirmity, but He is sinless. They lived and died and so were changed, but, "Your Throne, O God, is forever and ever." They were ordained to be types and emblems, serving for the time of Israel's infancy, but He came as the, "I AM," the substance of the whole!

They were mere men and nothing more, but Jesus counted it not robbery to be equal with God, though for our sakes He assumed our nature. It seemed becoming that God should settle Him in the priesthood by an oath, seeing He is above all and infinitely superior to all others that have ever exercised the priesthood! I tremble while I speak of the *oath of God*,

for God's lifting His hand to Heaven and swearing by Himself because He can swear by no greater, is something so solemn that one scarcely dares to think of it! The Lord will not hold Him guiltless that takes His name in vain! The devout soul is full of awe at the bare thought of God in His most fatherly and ordinary acts, but how shall we think of the Lord girt with solemnity, resolute in purpose, stern in truth, as lifting His hand and taking an oath? Surely this is the innermost sanctuary of mystery, the Holy of Holies!

This oath was for the honor of His dear Son as He assumed the sacred Priesthood on behalf of the sons of men. The glory of His Character, the dignity of His work, the certainty of its accomplishment and the supreme excellence of His motive in entering upon it all lift up the Priesthood of Christ out of the category of all human priesthods and, therefore, the eternal Father marks it by a special mark of distinction—He makes an oath that His only-begotten Son is a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. Another reason is found in the eternal Character of His work. The priesthood of Aaron and his successors was intended to be temporary. God did not confirm the priests of old in their offices because He held in reserve the right to set them aside when He pleased—and He from the first intended that their functions should be abolished when the fullness of time should come for another and better Priest to take their place.

They were candles for the darkness, but the sun was to rise and then they would not be needed. They were pictorial representations, but when the Substance was come, they would not be required. He allowed their priesthood to be one of imperfect men because He intended, by-and-by, to supersede it by a perfect and enduring Priesthood. Hence no oath of God attended the ordination of the sons of Aaron. But our Lord Jesus Christ's Priesthood and all the economy which He has ushered in was intended by God to be perpetual and, therefore, does He confirm it with an oath. No end of days will ever happen to our High Priest, nor shall the economy of Divine Grace be supplanted by another and clearer revelation. It shall be developed from strength to strength and we shall see greater things than these in the days of the personal reign and the millennial Glory, but no new economy of Grace shall overthrow the present.

Think not, O you ungodly, if you reject Christ, that there will yet come a Savior better than He! For you there remains no other Sacrifice for sin. I have heard men talk of "a larger hope"—I believe it to be a larger *lie* than ordinary if it supposes more mercy than is revealed in Christ Jesus! There is no larger hope than that which Christ has revealed! If it had been so, He would have told us. Stars can be excelled by other stars, but what shall outshine the sun? One human Gospel can be eclipsed by another, but how can there be a more loving, tender, gracious Gospel than that which is embodied in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"—is that message of Grace to be exceeded? Is greater love yet to be revealed?

No! The Gospel is God's ultimatum! He will go no further—we have the last proclamation of mercy to men, the last Savior, the last foundation for hopes to be built upon, the last fountain in which sin can be washed away, the last door of hope by which men shall escape from the guilt and

punishment of sin! I beseech you, avail yourselves of it, for God has confirmed it with an oath that it may stand forever! It is your one and only hope for eternity—lay hold upon it while you may. The oath of God sets forth the dignity of our Lord's Person and the eternity of His office—see that you despise not One who is thus great and abiding. By an oath, also, was our Lord set apart because of the reality of His Priesthood and the Substance that dwelt in His Sacrifice.

As we have already said, the Levitical priesthood dealt only with the shadows of good things to come and not with the very substance of the things. So to speak, the sacrificial bull was not actually a sacrifice, but the *representation* of the Sacrifice that was to come. The morning and evening lambs did not take away sin, but only mirrored the great bloodshedding of the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world! In very deed and truth, the men of the house of Aaron who attended at the visible altar were not actual priests before the real Altar of the Lord, but only shadows of the true. The real Altar is the Person of Christ! The real Sacrifice is the death of Christ and the real Priest is Christ Himself!

The images of heavenly things were glorious, but the glory of the things, themselves, dwells in Christ and we behold that Glory full of Grace and truth. Fly, you shadows, since it is clear that is what you were meant to be, for God did not establish you as abiding things. You did but predict and foreshadow—you were not the *blessings* which you pictured. In Christ is the actual putting away of sin, the effectual Atonement, the real and efficacious Substitution for guilty men, the Redemption which actually redeems, the Sacrifice which reconciles! In Him dwells the Truth of the matter—He is not prediction but *fact*—not promise but *fulfillment*!

Oh, never listen, for a moment, to those who would spiritualize Christ, Himself, and make out even His Person and work to be shadows! Certain teachers have risen who seem to look upon our Redeemer's life as a sort of allegory, an instructive parable, or a myth out of which eclectic minds like theirs may spell out mystic truth. It cannot be so! Christ Jesus is a *fact*—God was Man in human flesh—that mysterious Person, the Son of God, the Son of Mary, lived and loved and died and rose again! His Sacrifice, once offered, has forever put away sin and it has bestowed upon Him the power, by His intercession, to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.

If I had been sent, this day, to be the preacher of the shadows of the Law I would have done my best to obey my Master, but as I am commissioned to preach *absolute* certainties, I am full of delight and resolved to speak boldly. We preach not fictions, dreams, or parables, but literal facts! What a joy I feel—a joy as true and unfeigned as the glad tidings I deliver! For real guilt, here is actual Atonement and sure forgiveness! For access to God, here is an open way and a tender hand to guide you in it! Trifle not with that which is no trifle, lest when you come into real straits and the waters of death are actually around you, you shall find the lack of the only Friend who can effectually help you in your hour of need!

Death and judgment are no fiction! Seek, therefore, in very deed, for the substantial Grace which can bear you through. God confirms the Priesthood of Christ by an oath because it is a real Priesthood! I pray you cast your soul upon it by true and real faith. But perhaps to us, the main rea-

son of Christ's being installed in the priesthood by an oath of God is this—for the strengthening of our faith. Brethren, an oath for confirmation among men is the end of all strife. When an honest man has sworn to it, the testimony stands in evidence and may not be questioned. When *God* not only gives His promise and His word, but swears to His declaration—who shall dare to doubt? Shall blasphemy go the length of accusing Him of perjury? Shall profanity give Him the lie in the teeth of His oath?

There was no need for God to swear if there had not been in us a fearful lack of faith, but, “by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie,” He has given us strong consolation by swearing by Himself that it shall be so. I do beseech you, since God's design is the confirmation of your faith, pray that your faith may be confirmed by it! No measure of faith in Christ can ever be too great. If we trust Him blindly, implicitly, immeasurably with every interest for time and for eternity, we cannot have ventured too far. He that is ordained with an oath may be rested on without fear—He cannot fail—it is not possible, while God's own Truth is staked upon His mission and guarantees His success!

Beloved, ought not this great Truth of God bring many tremblers to believe in Jesus Christ? The Christ we preach is not an enthusiastic amateur who has come among men with high purpose but without commission—with good intentions but without authority. No, God, Himself, has appointed Him to His office and settled Him in it in the most solemn manner, swearing, “You are a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.” Will you not trust Him with your soul since God entrusts Him with His honor? Will you not accept the Priest whom God Himself has ordained? Will you not accept the Sacrifice which He has presented, whose efficacy abides forever before God?

I beseech you, men and brethren, as many of you as have not believed in Jesus Christ, look well to it that you do not reject a Gospel more certain than certainty itself! I know not how else to express the sureness of that to which God has set no less a seal than His own oath! Right joyfully do we see the whole Nature of the infinite God guaranteeing the office of our glorious High Priest, for, by swearing by Himself, the great Jehovah has made His very Being a hostage for the performance of the Covenant of which Jesus is the Surety and put forward His own Character for Truth as the pledge of Christ's eternal Priesthood! May no soul among us dare to refuse a Priest so surely ordained to His office and settled in it by Jehovah Himself!

II. Secondly, we ought to believe on the Lord Jesus because OF THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF HIS PRIESTHOOD. This is seen in the tenor of the Divine oath, which runs thus—“You are a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.” Very briefly, let me mention some of the respects in which our Lord Jesus is a Priest after the order of Melchisedec. These ought all to be reasons for our faith and I pray the Holy Spirit to use them for that purpose. First, our Lord is of the order of Melchisedec as surpassing and superseding all other priests. As surpassing—for Melchisedec comes before human view as priest of the Most High God, blessing Abraham, “and without doubt the less is blessed of the greater.”

Abraham, and Levi in his loins, pay Melchisedec homage! Now, whatever may be said about the priesthood of other men, there can be no

doubt about the superior Priesthood of Melchisedec. Abraham acknowledged it at once, so that before there were any Aaronic priests, there was a greater Priest. Before the foundation of the world, when there was no word concerning a priest of the house of Levi, our Lord Jesus Christ was looked upon by God as Priest and Sacrifice for men. It is not said, “Your *shall* be a priest,” but, “You *are* a Priest forever.” The verb is left out, but the word, “are,” in the present tense, is correctly enough supplied by the translators. “You are a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.” He was a Priest before Aaron and his sons were born or thought of!

Moreover, consider that the decree registered by the Psalmist in the 110th Psalm was published by Revelation hundreds of years after the Law had been given, so that it was not an old decree invalidated by the Law of Moses, but a newly published decree abrogating, in due time, that which had gone before. Even while the Law was in its palmy days and the priest wore the Urim and the Thummim, there was a note struck in the Psalms of David which intimated the ending of it all because there was another Priest, not of the house of Aaron, who surpassed all of them, being made a Priest by *oath*, even while they were priests without an oath. Whatever priesthood there may have been of God’s ordaining under the Old Testament, it was evidently all subordinate to the superior Melchisedec-Priesthood of Jesus Christ our Savior and was predestinated to give place to it.

It was a Priesthood which united with itself the dignity of kingship. This Melchisedec, Priest of the Most High God, was king even as Jesus Christ is King of kings, as well as High Priest over the house of God. Jesus is, first, Melek Zadok, King of Righteousness, setting up a kingdom of righteousness and fulfilling all righteousness Himself. And then he is King of Salem, or of peace, bringing peace to those that believe in Him and follow after righteousness. Now, it is a main ground of trust in Jesus that He is King as well as Priest, with power in His arm as well as merit in His blood—with power to rule and govern and protect us—as well as with an efficacious Sacrifice to purge our sins.

We ought to trust implicitly in One whose royal Omnipotence supports His sacred merit. Double faith should be bestowed on Him who exercises the double office of the King and the Priesthood. Our faith should also rest on the fact that our Lord was, like Melchisedec, “without father, without mother.” We find no father or mother mentioned in the case of Melchisedec because he did not come to the Priesthood by natural descent as did the sons of Aaron and in this he is the great type of Jesus, who is not one of a line, but the only Priest of His order! As a Priest, He is “without beginning of days or end of years,” neither taking the Priesthood from a predecessor, nor passing it on to a successor, nor laying it down because of old age.

There was no beginning to our Lord’s Priesthood, for the witness is, “You are a Priest forever,” and there will be no end to it, for even in the glory He—

**“Looks like a Lamb that has been slain,
And wears His Priesthood still.”**

Our Lord has not left off being a Priest today, poor Sinner! Come to Him with your sins and seek reconciliation! He is able to hear your confession and grant you absolution—He will present your praise and offer your

prayer, for He always lives and because of this He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. Melchisedec had no predecessor, no assessor and no successor—and so is it with our Lord. Of His order there was none before Him—He is the only Priest of His line. None stood side by side with Him, for He needed none. And none can be compared with Him—by His one Sacrifice He has perfected all who accept His Priesthood—what more is needed?

None can follow our Lord in His office. How can there be any successor to Him since He has an endless life and in the power of that endless life always lives to make intercession for us? Listen, you that need a priest to reconcile you to God! Here is One ordained to that office from of old who performs His office even now and ceases not from it for a moment! He, at this moment, asks no help from you, nor from a priest of Rome or Canterbury, or any other place, but is able, Himself, alone, with His own precious blood and prevalent intercession, to save you to the uttermost! This great Priest of ours is Master of all, for as Melchisedec received homage from Abraham in the form of tithes, so does our blessed Lord receive the reverence of all who believe.

The day comes when every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord to the Glory of God the Father! Therefore come and trust Him—trust the Lord of All! O you guilty ones who desire salvation, I beseech you repose upon Him, for He must reign and you must either kiss Him with the homage of your heart, or else He will break you as with a rod of iron in the day of His power! Perhaps one of the main points about Melchisedec is that he is represented as bestowing blessings. When he came to meet Abraham, the chief thing he did was to bless the Patriarch. The Apostle does not refer to the bringing forth of bread and wine by Melchisedec because he regarded it as a temporal blessing *included* in the greater *spiritual* one.

Our Lord Jesus blesses all that trust Him—blesses them with the riches of Heaven and earth—with the eternal Word of God which sustains their souls and with supplies for this mortal life so that they live and praise Him. It is inevitable that blessing should flow forth wherever He comes. He never touches without healing. He never speaks without consoling. He never comes to dwell with a man without enriching. He never belongs to a man without sanctifying and perfecting him. Oh, what a blessed Priest He is! Who would refuse Him, since He is all blessing? “Virtue has gone out of Me,” He said and virtue is going out of Him every day to the sons of men! “In Him shall the families of the earth be blessed.”

Once again, Christ is never to be changed or superseded. He is a Priest forever. As we read nothing of Melchisedec’s having given up the priesthood, so depend upon it, Christ never will lay down His office while there remains a single man to be saved. “Once a priest always a priest” is true of the Lord Jesus Christ though true of nobody else! Once was He ordained and none can take Him from His Priesthood. When once the Father set Him upon the hill of Zion as King, the kings of the earth cannot dash Him from His Throne! O you who pine for certainty and seek everlasting life, come and rest your everlasting hopes on His everlasting Priesthood!

That is my point all the way through. You have not to trust a mere man. You have not to rely upon one who will die, or leave his office to another who may not know you or care for you. You are to trust One who cannot change or die! If I were called upon to be the advocate of human priests this morning. If I were ordained to tell you to trust to the shavelings of Rome, my tongue would cleave to the roof of my mouth for lack of arguments—for what can there be in *them* that we should trust them? O Sirs, the most brutish delusion in the world is to rely upon *any* priest of our own sinful race! I would as soon trust my salvation with the Norwood Gypsy as with a Cardinal Archbishop! Her imposture is not so daring as his!

What can priests do for us? “They can give absolution” you say? The Lord absolve them from the blasphemy of such a pretense! There is ONE pardoning Priest! There is none other under Heaven! He has made all His people, in another sense, to be priests unto Himself, but as atoning priests, or as men that offer a propitiatory sacrifice, He has ordained none—and all who pretend to such power must answer for it before the bar of God! Think of Roman and Anglican priests as priests of Baal and have no fellowship with such deceivers! Pray God to open their eyes that they may, themselves, be delivered from the delusion!

As for you and for me, let us keep to the one Melchisedec Priest and yield subjection to none other. In Jesus we are complete—to look elsewhere would be to dishonor His perfection!

III. I beg you, next, to notice that our text speaks OF THE SUPERIORITY OF THE TESTAMENT UNDER WHICH OUR LORD OFFICIATES in which, also, we shall find abundant argument for believing in Jesus. It says, “By so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better Testament.” Learned men have fought each other very earnestly over the word translated, “testament.” Some say that it means, “testament.” Others answer that in the Septuagint Greek it is used as the interpretation of the Hebrew word which signifies, “covenant.” I feel quite sure that the combatants are both right. I am always glad when I can conscientiously take both sides in a battle and I do so in this instance, because it matters nothing which of the two conquers, though it would be a loss for either side to be defeated.

The word means both testament and covenant. God’s Covenant of Grace has had the conditional side of it so completely fulfilled that it has virtually become a “testament,” or a deed of free gift in which the one party is a donor and the other has become simply a receiver. Though the economy of Grace is a covenant under one aspect, under another it is not a covenant, not requiring something from each of two parties—but it has become a testament or will as to its practical result. The old Covenant was on this wise—if the Israelite people kept to God as their God and if the priests obeyed His Law and offered sacrifices according to Divine rule, God would accept and bless them. Thus there was an, “if,” in the Covenant. It was conditional and, therefore, liable to failure.

The people said, “All that You have spoken we will do.” Eagerly, with all hands up, they cried, “We will do it. We will do it all!” Within 40 days they had broken the Law and the Covenant went to pieces. A man’s covenant is sure to be broken if it promises holiness on the part of the sinful and perseverance on the part of the fickle-minded! Man cannot bear the burden of

the necessary requirements of a covenant with God. Our great High Priest represents another and surer Covenant. There is no, "if," in the Covenant of Grace! It runs thus—"I will," and, "You shall." That is the tenor of it. "For this is the Covenant that I *will* make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I *will* put My Laws into their mind and write them in their hearts: and I *will* be to them a God and they *shall* be to Me a people: and they *shall not* teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all *shall* know Me, from the least to the greatest. For I *will* be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities *will* I remember no more."

Its essence lies in the supreme words, "I will." Therefore, because the conditions of the Covenant of Grace have been fulfilled, it is in no danger of abrogation and Christ Jesus has become the Surety of a better Testament. The first Covenant was typical and shadowy—it was but a school lesson for children. Just as we give to our boys models of churches or models of ships, so was the ceremonial Law a model of good things to come, but it did not contain the things themselves. Christ is no Surety of a mere model or pattern of things in the heavens, but of a Covenant which deals with the heavenly things themselves, with real blessings, with true gifts from God! The first Covenant was temporary—it was meant to be so. It was meant, in part, to teach the coming Covenant and, in part, to show the weakness of man and the necessity of Divine Grace, but it was never meant to stand.

This Covenant of which Christ is the Surety stands forever and ever. The everlasting hills may bow and the heavens, themselves, be rolled up like a worn-out vesture, but God's Covenant shall stand forever and forever while Christ, its Surety lives. The old Covenant was a Covenant in which there were imperfections, as Paul says, "For if that first Covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, He says, Behold, the days come, says the Lord, when I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in My Covenant, and I regarded them not, says the Lord."

In the economy of Grace of which our Lord is the Surety, no fault can be found! And in it there is no fuel for decay to feed upon. There is nothing about it that is weak and unprofitable, for it is, "ordered in all things and sure." "He takes away the first," not that He may set up another which shall be removed in its turn, but, "that He may *establish* the second." In this second we have Covenant purposes unalterable from eternity; love infinite and changeless; promises sure and inviolable and pledges given that can never be withdrawn, for the Lord has sworn and will not repent.

How earnestly do I pray that you may have a part in this Covenant! It includes all Believers within its lines. O that you would believe and so lay hold upon the Covenant once and for all. If you have already believed, I pray you to rejoice in this Covenant and bless the Lord Jesus who has made it sure for you by His blood.

IV. Now, of such a Covenant or Testament has Jesus Christ become the Priest and Surety. And with that we shall close dwelling upon THE RELATIONSHIP IN WHICH HE STANDS TO THAT COVENANT. This is our fourth point. I am sure we did not expect, as we were reading this passage, that we should come upon the word, "surety." The Apostle was speaking of our Lord as a Priest and he puts it thus, "By so much"—that is, by reason of His being inducted into His office by an oath—"was Christ made a Surety of a better Testament." However there is the word, "surety," and doubtless there is excellent reason for the unexpected turn in the sense.

Testaments do not need sureties, therefore the passage should be read, "Covenant." But why did he turn from the idea of priesthood to that of suretyship? How is our Lord Jesus a Surety? He is so, first, because we are absolutely certain that the Covenant of Grace will stand because the Redeemer has come into the world and has died for us. Brothers and Sisters, the gift of Christ is a pledge that the Covenant, of which He is the Substance, cannot be dissolved! Christ has been born into the world! God Himself has become Incarnate—that is done and can never be undone! How can the Lord draw back after going so far?

More, Christ has died! He bears in His flesh, today, the scars of His Crucifixion—that, also, is done, and can never be undone. If God had ever meant that this Covenant should be *temporary*, He would never have given His Son to bleed and die as the Substance of that Covenant! It cannot be that so vast an expense should be laid out upon a transient business. Moreover, Jesus lives and as long as He lives, the Covenant must be regarded as a reality. It cannot possibly be that a work should be regarded as fiction when it has been worked out by such an One as He is! The ever-living Son of God did not die to perform a mere representation—the abiding essence of the matter is in His work and He lives to prove that it is so.

The priests of the house of Aaron were poor sureties of the former Covenant, for they could not keep it themselves! But Christ *has* kept the Covenant of Grace. He has *fulfilled* all that was conditional in it and carried out all that was demanded on man's part. It was conditional that Christ should present a perfect Righteousness and a perfect Atonement—He has effected this to the fullest and now there is no, "if," in it. The Covenant now reads as a legacy, or a will—the will of God—the New Testament of the Most High! Christ has made it so and the very fact that there is such a Person as Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, living, bleeding, dying, risen, reigning—is the proof that this Covenant stands secure though earth's old columns bow!

But next, Christ is a Surety on *God's* part. I know that divines say that God does not need a surety, that He is to be trusted without it. This is true and He is to be relied upon without an oath, but even as He takes an oath for our sake, so He provides a Surety for our sake that we may believe with stronger confidence. Christ is the Bondsman of God on the Father's behalf, that the Covenant shall be fulfilled. "Look," says the Father, "have you ever doubted Me? Believe My Son. Have I not given Him to you? Is He not one with you in your nature? Has He not died for you? Surely, if I seem too great and, therefore, too terrible for the grip of your faith, you may lay hold on the Well-Beloved, your friend and kinsman—and you may

see that I give Him to be for Me the pledge that I intend to keep the Covenant of Grace.”

Now, as long as there is a Christ, God’s Covenant evidently stands fast, for all the promises are, “Yes and amen in Christ Jesus to the glory of God by us.” And until it can be proven that Christ has ceased to be, no man that believes in Him is in any mortal danger. Has He not said it, “Because I live, you shall live, also”? The life of every believing man and woman is bound up with the very existence of Christ as the gift of God! And that existence is Divine as well as human—and unless He can cease to be, He cannot cease to love, bless, keep His people and be for them all that a high priest and surety can be! He is God’s pledge to us that every word of promise shall stand.

But, then, He is mainly a Surety of the new Covenant on *our* behalf. Adam entered into a Covenant with God for us, but that Covenant went to pieces in a very short time. Then the Second Adam became our Covenant Head and Surety and represented us before God. “Lo, I come,” says He—this is the brief of it—“to stand in their place, to roll away the reproach of Your Law, and so to save that which is lost.” Now, the sinner is not saved in a way which casts a slight on Justice, for Jesus has honored the Law and borne its penalty on the behalf of the men whom the Father gave Him. It was a wonderful act of Grace, on Christ’s part, to become our Surety before the Throne of Justice, but He did it and smarted for it—and fulfilled all that it involved.

Beloved, I would not like to have gone to Heaven over a broken Law—no right-minded man could be eternally happy and yet know that the Law of God had to be dishonored before he could be rescued from Hell. What would the universe say but that God was unrighteous, for He had saved the ungodly and tarnished the honor of His justice by allowing sin to go unpunished—thus proving that the Law was needless and the punishment superfluous. But now they cannot thus speak concerning any of us who are saved in Christ Jesus! The saved one’s sins have been *punished*—every Believer has borne the punishment of his guilt in the Person of his great Substitute! The Law is satisfied—we owe it *nothing*, for we have *obeyed* it actively and passively in the Person of our Surety!

Even the infinite holiness of God can demand nothing of any Believer but what the Lord beholds and accepts on the Believer’s behalf in Christ Jesus our Representative. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? God that justifies?” No, the very act of justifying proves that He cannot lay anything to our charge, for that would be to nullify His own act. “Who is he that condemns? Christ that died?” What? Condemn those for whom He has shed His atoning blood? Rather, Christ has risen again. Shall He condemn those whom He has justified by His Resurrection? If so, He rose in vain! “Who sits at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” Shall He condemn those for whom He has taken possession of Heaven and for whom He offers perpetual intercession?

Impossible! Impossible! Our Surety, then, has rendered to the Law all its demands. Sing, O Zion! Rejoice, O you people of God, for God has rendered unto you double for all your sins! In the Person of your Substitute all that the Law could demand has been exacted and you are free! O blessed Melchisedec, High Priest forever living, we rejoice in You as the

Surety of the Covenant, itself, and also the Surety for both parties of that Covenant! We rejoice that You are the guarantee on *both* sides—Surety for God as you are God and Surety for man as you are Man—Surety of the Covenant as God-Man in one divinely blessed Person!

It comes to this, that we must believe in Jesus Christ and take Him to be our Priest or be out of the Covenant of Grace. God will not deal with us without a Mediator and, “there is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” Will you have Him? Will you have Him, or forever be excluded from the Covenant of Grace and, consequently, condemned under the Covenant of Works and cast away forever and ever? Will you, O unbelievers? Will you despise the oath of God? I spoke of it with trembling just now, feeling a solemn awe at the very mention of the oath of God. Will you give the lie to that oath? Will you say, “You have sworn to Christ that He shall be Priest, but He shall never be mine”? This would be the honest expression of what your heart feels if you refuse Jesus—will you venture to speak so? Will you reject Heaven’s own appointed Savior and deny the witness of the Lord?

See that you do not do this, for the Lord your God is a jealous God and if you touch His dignity, so far as to strike at His oath, what more atrocious crime can you commit? “He that believes not has made God a liar, because He has not believed on the Son of God.” Will you refuse the ever-living Savior? Is there one here so foolish as to be trusting to another priest? Oh, can it be that you are so far gone as to look to a *man* instead of looking to the Son of God? Dear Friends, if Christ deigns to be Priest for us, we ought gladly to accept Him—there ought to be a rush at Him! We are bound to cry, “Great Priest, intercede for me! Let Your Sacrifice avail for me! Wash me in the cleansing blood.” It ought to be a joy to all mankind to accept this Heaven-sent Priest and Surety! Will you refuse Him? Will you neglect His salvation?

If you do so, remember you shut yourselves out from the better hope and the better Covenant and the better promises—you are barring the door of Heaven against yourselves! He who rejects the Savior commits eternal suicide! His blood shall be upon his own head. This shall be the Hell of his Hell, the very center of its fire, the worm that never dies, that he, himself, put from him everlasting life and counted himself unworthy of the kingdom and would not have Christ, whom with an oath, God had set up that whoever believes in Him might live! God bless these all-important Truths of God to every heart for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 22, 1886,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this Man, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is able to save them to the uttermost who come to God by Him, seeing He lives forever to make intercession for them.”
Hebrews 7:23-25.***

THE Apostle Paul is very much at home with his theme whenever he is extolling his Master. When handling the Jewish types and figures, with which he was so familiar, he was charmed to point out how far superior the Lord Jesus Christ is to any and all the priests of the Old Testament dispensation. In this case he is dwelling upon the special honor of our Lord, because His Priesthood is without end, seeing, He, Himself is not put forth from the priesthood by reason of death. A common priest served from 30 to 50 years of age and then his work was done—priests of the house of Aaron, who became High Priests, held their office through life. Sometimes a High Priest would continue in his office, therefore, for a considerable length of time. But in many cases he was cut off as other men are by premature death and, therefore, there was priest after priest of the order of Aaron to go within the veil for the people.

Our Lord is of another race, being a Priest according to the order of Melchisedec, “having neither beginning of days nor end of life.” He was made a Priest not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. He continues to make intercession for the people of God by virtue of His eternal life and perpetual Priesthood. In this respect the true Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, rises above all former priests—they were, indeed, but types and shadows of Himself.

This superiority of our Lord Jesus Christ is a topic which will not interest everybody. To many persons it will seem a piece of devotional rapture, if not an idle tale. Yet there will always be a remnant according to the election of Grace to whom this meditation will be inexpressibly sweet. Who are the people that will be interested in this theme? They are indicated in the text—*they that come unto God by Jesus Christ*. The people who are in the habit of using Christ as their way of access to God are those who will value Him beyond all price—and such persons will delight to hear Him extolled in the highest terms.

We will begin our discourse, then, by the enquiry—Do we come unto God by Jesus Christ? Listen and answer for yourselves. Do we come unto God at all? Do we recognize the Lord our God as a Person who should be

approached? Are we now approaching Him? Are we among those who are always coming to God, to whom, at the last, the great Judge shall say, "You have been coming, continue to come. Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you"? Or are we departing from God by forgetting Him, or rebelling against Him, so that we shall be among that number to whom the Judge shall say, "You have long been departing, continue to do so. Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire in Hell, prepared for the devil and his angels"? Are we coming to God? That is the question. Is the direction of our lives towards God? We are either going *to* God or *from* God—and by this we may forecast our everlasting destiny. The direction in which the arrow is flying prophesies the target in which it will be fixed—the way the tree is leaning, that way foretells the place of its fall—and where the tree falls, there it will lie.

So let us judge ourselves this day! Which way are we drifting? Have we ever come to God by sincere repentance of our wanderings? Have we come to Him by faith and are we reconciled to Him? Do we come to Him in prayer? Do we come to Him day by day, speaking with Him and desiring to walk with Him? Do we come to God by communion with Him, having fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ? Do we, in fact, know the meaning of what it is to draw near to God? It is ill with us if we either have no God, or if He seems to be very far off, an almost unrecognizable phantom, an idea never fully realized, much less approached! Blessed are they that know the name of the Lord and that walk with Him, rejoicing in the light of His Countenance. It is to such that Jesus is precious as their way of access to the Father.

In the description there is a little word of distinction, for the people who are said to be saved by the great Intercessor are those who come unto God *by Him*. Certain persons talk of coming to God as Creator, Ruler and even as Father—but they do not think of His dear Son as their way of approach. They forget or otherwise deny the declaration of our Lord Jesus—"No man comes unto the Father, but by Me." Yet this saying is true. There is no true way of approach to God except through Jesus Christ, the one Mediator between God and man. A deep abyss divides us from God and only that ladder which Jacob saw can bridge the gulf. Our Lord Jesus, being God and Man in one Person, reaches from side to side of the chasm. Coming near to us, this ladder stands at our feet in the Human Nature of our Lord and it reaches right up to the Infinite Majesty by reason of the Divine Nature of our Redeemer. God and Man, in one Person, unites God and man in one league of love! We come unto God by Jesus Christ.

Prayers in which Christ is forgotten are insults to the God of Revelation! Faith in which Jesus is not the foundation of our hope is mere delusion! God cannot accept us if we will not accept His Son. O Sinner, God has opened one Door in Heaven—if you will not go in by that Door, you shall never enter within the walls of the New Jerusalem! God bids you come to Him by One in whom He is well pleased, but if you will not be pleased with Jesus, you can not come to the Father! O you who are daily users of this royal way to God, you will forgive me if I hide myself behind my Lord this day and seek to do nothing more than, in all simplicity, set forth His unchangeable Priesthood and endless life! Pray the Lord to help me to ex-

tol the great High Priest of our profession and also to help you all to join in the praise of Jesus in the power of His Holy Spirit!

In the text there are four subjects for your consideration—they are joined together as links of a golden chain—and they are all full of encouragement for you. Here is a great Savior with *an endless life*. Secondly, with *an endless Priesthood*. Thirdly, with *an endless intercession*. And fourthly, with *an endless salvation*—“He is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by Him, seeing He lives forever to make intercession for them.”

I. First, we have in our Lord Jesus Christ a Priest with AN ENDLESS LIFE. I want you to think earnestly upon this very simple theme—it is in the simplicities that we find our greatest consolations. Our Lord Jesus is not as Aaron, who had to be stripped of his garments on the top of Mount Hor and to die in the mountain. Neither is He like any of the sons of Aaron who, in due time, suffered the infirmities of age and at last bowed their heads to inevitable death. He died once, but death has no more dominion over Him—it is witnessed of Him that He lives!

We clearly perceive that our Lord Jesus possesses endless life as God, for how shall the Godhead expire? It is not possible for the Godhead to cease or to suspend its existence. Our Lord is “God over all, blessed forever” and, in this respect, He is necessarily everlasting as to His life.

But our Lord also always lives in respect to *His Manhood*. Though He died unto sin once, He soon rose again from the dead, His body never having seen corruption. He died *in His Priesthood* and *for His Priesthood*, but never *from His Priesthood*. By His Resurrection, His Manhood was fully restored to a life which dies no more. We speak of Him as, “He that lives, and was dead, and is alive forevermore.” This is a very sweet Truth of God to those who are in Christ Jesus. The Lord Jesus Christ had lived one life as a Man—why did He not end that life as a Man when He died on the Cross? It shows His deep attachment to our manhood, that He retained the Human Nature after His great Sacrifice had been presented and accepted. The fact that He again appeared as a Man among men and carried Human Nature into His glorified estate is clear evidence of His deep attachment to our humanity!

If some glorious spirit from on high, angel or archangel, had loved a race of ants and had condescended for the salvation of these tiny creatures to assume their nature. And if, in that nature, he had died for them, you would naturally expect that at the conclusion of his labors and sufferings he would lay aside the form of his humiliation and return to the greatness of his former estate. But our Lord Jesus Christ, whose stoop of condescension, when He assumed our Nature, was greater than any archangel could have achieved—having taken our Human Nature and having bled and died in it—continued to wear it after He had said, “It is finished,” after He had risen from the dead and after He had taken His seat at the Divine right hand! He has become so wedded to us, so *truly* one flesh with us, that He will not be divided from us in Nature. He sits upon the Throne of God, not in His pure Godhead, but as One that has been slain, clothed in a body like our own! What manner of love is this! What bliss to know that my Kinsman lives! Truly many waters could not quench His love to

manhood, nor could death, itself, destroy it! The Son of God is still the Son of Man! He whom angels worship is not ashamed to call us Brethren, for as partaker of our Nature, He lives and will live forever!

He always lives, then, as God and as Man and I prolong the blended thoughts by saying that He always lives *in His relationship to us*. This you have already seen to be the case because He lives in our Nature. But now I beg you to note that He lives as God and Man *for us*. I love to read these words—"He ever lives to make intercession for them." This is the one great objective for which He lives. To make intercession for those that come unto God by Him is the business of His life. Is not this wonderful? If some influential and powerful person should say to you, "I live to promote your interest. Wherever I go and whatever I do, whatever I seek and whatever I obtain, I live for you"—it would show great friendship and excite in us great expectations. Would it not? Yet here is the Lord Jesus declaring that He lives for us—for us He appears in the Presence of God! For us He has gone to the many mansions of the Father's house! For us He constantly intercedes with God! Oh, the deep debt of gratitude we owe to this glorious One who, having died for us, now lives for us!

It is more than if a brother should say, "I live my whole life for you" for, remember, this might be said to be the second life which our Lord gives to us. He lived for us here below a whole lifetime! He laid down that life for us and now He lives again for us. I know not how to speak what I feel concerning the surpassing greatness of His love. He could not be content to give His life once for us, but He must take it again and shall give it over again for us! See how He loves us—He died for us! See how He loves us—He lives again for us! He lives for sinners, for He lives to intercede—and for whom is intercession but for those who need an advocate? "If any man sin we have an Advocate." May I say that Jesus lives two lives for us?

Yet more, it is said, "He ever lives to make intercession for us" so that the whole life of Christ throughout eternity—His boundless, endless, glorified Existence is still for His people! He glorifies the Father and makes glad the hosts of Heaven, but still this is the set purpose of His heart—to live for us. "He loved me and gave Himself for me" is true. But we may read it in the present tense if we like, for it is still true—"He loves me and He gives Himself for me." Christ loved His Church and gave Himself for it—and now He *loves* His Church and *gives* Himself to it! What inspiration lies in the endless life of Christ for us! Let our lives be lived wholly for Him since He lives wholly for us.

This truth of the living Christ should be remembered in our greatest need. Dear Friends, there is an Almighty and Divine One in Heaven who always lives for our highest benefit! Let us adore Him most lovingly. This should show us how great our need is, that we always need a living Savior to interpose for us. A dying Savior was not enough! We still require, every moment of our lives, a living Savior engrossed with the care of our spirits, interposing on our behalf in all manner of ways and delivering us from all evil! Our hour of necessity is ever present, for Jesus is always guarding us and His work is never a superfluity. Herein should lie our great comfort—we should fall back upon this Truth of God whenever our burden presses too sorely upon our shoulders. Jesus lives! My great Redeemer lives for

me! He lives in all fullness of power and Glory and devotes that life, with all that pertains to it, to the preservation of my soul from every evil! Can I not rest in this? With such a Keeper, why should I be afraid? Must I not be safe when One so vigilant and so vigorous devotes His life to my protection? What innumerable blessings must come to those for whom Jesus spends the strength of His endless life!

II. Secondly, I must carry you on to another and kindred subject—ENDLESS PRIESTHOOD. Our Lord is ordained unto an unchangeable Priesthood or, rather, as the margin has it, to a priesthood “which passes not from one to another.” His office cannot be taken up by a successor—it is not transferable, but belongs to Him alone, seeing He always lives to carry it out Himself. We have only one Priest and that one Priest we have forever.

In this, we are *not like Israel of old*, for, as we have already seen, a High Priest would die. I can conceive that to many Jewish believers the death of a priest was a great affliction. I could imagine an Israelite saying, “And so he is dead—that good man, that tender-spirited minister, that gentle and affectionate shepherd. I have told him all my heart and now he is taken from me. I went to him in my youth in deep distress of conscience. He offered a sacrifice for me when I was unclean and brought me near to the Holy Place. Since then, I have gone to him when I have needed guidance. He has consulted the oracle on my behalf and my way has been made plain. He knows the secrets of my family. He knows those delicate griefs which I have never dared to tell to anybody else. Alas, he is dead and half my heart has perished! What a gap is made in my life by his decease!”

The mourner would be told that his son had become his successor, but I think I hear him say, “Yes, I am aware of it. But the young man does not know what his father knew about me and I could never again lay bare my heart. The son can never be in entire sympathy with all my sorrows as his good old father was. No doubt he is a good man, but he is not the same person—I revered every hair in the gray beard of the old High Priest. I have grown up with him and he has helped me so many, many times. It is so sad that I shall see his face no more.” There would always be the feeling, in some minds, that the next High Priest might not be quite so acceptable with God, or so tender towards the congregation as he who had passed away. He might be a man superior in education, but inferior in affection. He might be more austere and less tender. He might have greater gifts and less fatherliness.

At any rate, it would seem like having to begin again when one went, for the first time, to the new priest—it would be a break in the continuity of one’s comfort. The quiet flow of life would be marred, as when a river comes to its rapids and an impassable fall causes a break in the navigation—and a necessary unloading of the vessel and a laborious portage instead of an easy passage down a gently flowing stream. “Oh,” says one good Israelite, “the venerable High Priest who has just fallen asleep was my friend. We took sweet counsel together and walked to the House of God in company. He was in my house when my beloved child died. He was with me when the partner of my bosom, the light of my eyes, was taken

away from me at a stroke. His long experience he used for my instruction and comfort, but, alas, it is all gone, for the saint of God is dead!”

Beloved, here is our comfort—we have only one Priest and He lives forever! He had no predecessor and He will have no successor because He always lives, *personally*, to exercise the office of High Priest on our behalf. My soul reposes in the faith of His one Sacrifice, offered once and no more! There is but one Presenter of that one Sacrifice and never can there be another, since the One is all-sufficient and He never dies! Jesus reads my heart and has always read it since it began to beat—He knows my griefs and has carried my sorrows from of old and He will bear both them and me when old age shall shrivel up my strength! When I shall fall asleep in death, He will not die, but will be ready to receive me into His own undying blessedness! Brothers and Sisters, our Lord in Glory—

***“Looks like a lamb that has been slain,
And wears His Priesthood still.”***

Do we not rejoice in the unbroken continuity and everlasting perpetuity of the Priesthood of Christ?

Again, we are *not as Israel is at this moment*. Alas, poor Israel! After all her privileges of the past, where is she now? She is without a High Priest! She does not dare, even, to *think* of anointing one of her Cohens to that office. She is without an Altar or a Sacrifice. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, she has something which bears the shadow of sacrifice, but it is a worship of her own devising and not after the Law of Moses or the ordinances of God. She is left without Priest, Altar, Temple, or Sacrifice—and the outlook of her sons and daughters as to the future life is, for the most part, exceedingly dark and dismal. I am assured that nothing is more unwelcome to a Jew than the thought of death—and it may well be so. Beloved, we are not without a Priest! Our faith beholds Jesus passed into the heavens and abiding there in the Glory of His once-offered Sacrifice, always living to intercede for us.

Jesus is, to my soul, at this moment, as living a Person as I am, myself, and even more so! I have come to look on friends and dear ones as passing shadows. I see written across their brows the word, “mortal.” But Jesus is the only one Friend who has immortality and, therefore, can never be lost to me. His Sacrifice is forever effectual and His Priesthood is forever in exercise. Christ’s Priesthood remains without end! What bliss it is to be a believer in Jesus and thus to have one Priest and never to desire another!

We are *not as the votaries of Rome*. That Babylon has many priests within her borders. Some say that these priests are substitutes for Christ. If so, the assertion is a flat *blasphemy* against Him who is a Priest forever and *needs no substitute*. Others say they are the vicars of Christ, carrying on His work, now that He is gone, by presenting the unbloody “sacrifice of the mass.” This, also, is clean contrary to the teaching of the Apostle in this passage, wherein he proves that this Man, because He continues forever, has a Priesthood which cannot be passed from one to another. In this he shows that our Lord is different from the Aaronic priests who had their office taken up by those who followed them, whereas Jesus, like Mel-

chisedec, has no successor, but exercises His office in His own proper Person according to the power of an endless life.

We now know no priests on earth, save that in a secondary sense the Lord Jesus has made *all* Believers to be kings and priests unto God. We now have no special order of persons set apart to represent their fellows before God. Under the Mosaic dispensation there were many priests not allowed to continue by reason of death, but under the Christian dispensation we have only one Priest who continues always in a Priesthood that cannot be transferred—this is the Apostle's argument. But this is not true if bishops and presbyters are priests in the sense in which they now claim to be! I count the very thought of our having other sacrificing priests than the Lord Jesus to be derogatory to the one unique, completely-accomplished Sacrifice of our Great High Priest who alone abides in His personal office forever and ever! Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, despise in your very souls the pretensions of a human priesthood either in the Church of England or in the Church of Rome!

If any man calls himself a priest otherwise than as all the people of God are priests, we rate him at no higher value than Korah, Dathan and Abiram, to whom Moses said, "You take too much upon you, you sons of Levi." They claimed a priesthood which did not belong to them, as all men do who intrude into the priesthood in these days. Our Lord Jesus walks in that supreme, solitary majesty which was foreshadowed in Melchisedec—and in that spirit He fulfils a Priesthood which renders all other priests a superfluity and a mockery! What have we to do with more sacrifices when the one Sacrifice offered once and for all? Brethren, hold fast this precious Truth of God and rejoice in it!

III. Now I conduct you, thirdly, to the fact of ENDLESS INTERCESSION—"Seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them."

If I were to read this passage, "Seeing He ever lives to *interpose* for them," it would not be an incorrect reading. The Lord Jesus Christ, in His perpetual Priesthood, lives on purpose to be the Advocate, Defender, Patron, Mediator and Interposer for His people. You that come to God by Him will highly esteem this constant service rendered to you by your Lord. Whereas Christ, by His death, provided all that was necessary for your salvation, He, by His *life*, applies that provision which He made in His death. He lives on purpose to see brought home to you and enjoyed by you, all those blessed gifts and privileges which He purchased upon the Cross when He died in your place. Had He not lived for you, His death for you would have miscarried. He would then have begun the work and provided all the materials for its completion, but there would have been none to render those materials available and to complete the building whose foundation had been laid in so costly a manner.

We are pardoned by the death of Christ, but we are justified by His Resurrection. We are saved because He died, but that salvation is brought home and secured to us because He sits at the right hand of God and continually makes intercession for us. I want you, today, to think as much of a living Christ as you have ever thought of a dead Christ. You have sat down at the foot of Calvary, your eyes suffused with tears, and you have said how delightful it is to behold His love written out in crimson

characters in yonder streams of blood which His very heart pours out for our redemption! I want you, now, to sit at the foot of His Throne and, as far as your dim eyes will permit, behold His splendor and see how He spends His Glory-Life in perpetual intercession for you! He is as much ours on the Throne as on the tree. He is always living to apply to us with His own hands what He purchased by the nailing of those hands and the piercing of His heart upon the Cross of our redemption.

Why is it so necessary that Jesus, ever-living, should always be interceding for us? I answer, first, it is most becoming *God-ward*. The great principle which God would teach to men is this—that sin is so hateful to Him that the sinner can only approach His Justice through a Mediator. This Truth of God is most clearly set forth in the fact that even now that we are washed in the blood of the Lamb, there is no approach unto God except through the intercession of Christ. Does not this teach the grand principle of the evil of sin and teach it in the most plain manner? The distance which sin puts between the sinner and God—and the necessity of mediation in order that a just God may commune with the imperfect—are not these fully taught by the institution of the perpetual intercession of the Son of God? This is as much a declaration of the righteousness of God as was the substitutionary death on Calvary!

Moreover, the intercession of Christ is necessary *God-ward* to illustrate the union, co-operation, and inter-communion of the Divine Trinity in the work of our salvation. The Son of God intercedes in Heaven and the Holy Spirit intercedes on earth. If Jesus intercedes, it is of necessity that the Father be there with whom He may intercede. The Son pleads and the Father hears and answers and, in consequence, conveys to us by the Holy Spirit the blessings purchased by His Son. Thus, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are brought before our minds as all concurring in the Believer's salvation. A Mediator who is not only Man, but also one Person of the blessed Trinity, continues to intercede for us and thus we see how God remembers us.

Once again, our own communion with God is openly declared, while there sits on the Throne of God a Man who is also God, pleading with the Godhead! Man is always standing in Glory in connection with God. The perpetual intercession of Christ is a perpetual recognition of the communion which now exists between God and once fallen, but now restored, manhood! We ought to look upon Christ pleading in Glory as the sign, token and evidence that man is reconciled to God, that man speaks with God, that God speaks with man and that, once again, the old dominion is restored to man, for we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with Glory and honor.

The perpetual intercession is necessary *God-ward*. But it is even more necessary *man-ward*. Think, Brothers and Sisters, though we have been forgiven through the precious blood, yet we, in many things, offend and, therefore, every day we need a fresh application of the Blood of Sprinkling. Conscience accuses us for daily flaws and faults and it is, therefore, well for us that it is written, "He makes intercession for the transgressors." Where would our hope be of continual preservation from the weaknesses and sins of our nature did not Jesus constantly plead for us? The way is

rough, the world is sinful, our wanderings are many, our needs are incessant and, therefore, we need the eternal intercession. We are never out of danger and, therefore, always need the guardian prayer. We are never above weakness and folly and, therefore, require the perpetual patronage of our Protector.

What man is there among you that is not full of needs? What woman is there among you that does not need to come to the Mercy Seat many times a day? Jesus is always there, waiting to present our petitions—always making our persons, our petitions and our praise acceptable with God. Brethren, we are daily pressed either with conflict with inbred sin or suffering in the body, with service of our Lord or sympathy for our Brethren—and for all these we need help from the Holy Place—help which can only come by way of the Throne of the heavenly Grace. We need an Interposer, at whose feet we may lay down our burdens, into whose ears we may tell our sorrows! Therefore Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us.

Our great Intercessor also obtains for us those precious gifts and Graces which are necessary for our growth and usefulness. His is the hand which leads us onward to those attainments of the spiritual life which are necessary for our serviceableness in this world and for our meetness for the life to come. The higher virtues would be beyond our reach if His prayers did not bring us more and more of the Spirit of God to make us perfect in every good work to do His will.

Have you also forgotten that there is an enemy who is always alive and always full of malice? He acts as the accuser of the Brethren, who accuses them day and night before God. And were it not for our glorious Advocate, who, for Zion's sake, does never hold His peace, what would become of us? This accuser is also a tempter who subtly contrives plots for our overthrow. It is at times true of us as it was of Peter—"Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for you." How often are we hidden from evil by the prayers of Jesus! We do not know, my Brothers and Sisters, how many poisoned arrows are caught upon the shield of our Lord's intercession. The intercession of Christ, as with 10,000 hands, is always scattering benedictions. Job asks, "Have you entered into the springs of the sea?" Surely our Lord's intercession is the source of an ocean of blessedness! If we but had eyes enlightened by the Holy Spirit, we would see the mountain full of horses of fire and chariots of fire round about the people of God. Who guides those horses? Who directs those chariots? Who is the Captain of the hosts of spirits that encompass the camp of God? Who, but the Prince Immanuel, who by His all-powerful intercession rules all things for us!

The Lord Jesus, by His unceasing pleas, keeps all the powers of darkness in check and moves all the powers of the Light of God for our rescue. His prayers form an atmosphere of blessing in which we live and move. We do not know, we cannot begin to calculate the depths of our obligation to the ceaseless care of our unwearied Intercessor! Even when time shall be no more and all the saints shall be saved, their continuance in bliss will be due to His endless intercession.

Think of it—Jesus always praying, never ceasing! His very appearance in Heaven is a plea. The memory of His finished work is a plea. His constant thought of us is a pleading with God. Not with tears and cries will He pray, as He did in the days of His flesh. Nor, perhaps, even with words will He plead, for His Spirit speaks to the Spirit of God without such vocal instrumentality as creatures require. This much we know, He is always praying, always prevailing and, consequently, always showering down upon us blessings beyond all count, the most of which we scarcely recognize! And yet if they were withheld, we would perish miserably. Lord Jesus, Your dying blood is well matched by Your living pleas and our hearts rejoice in this because of these two sure proofs of Your love and Grace.

IV. That brings me to my fourth point which is—For this cause, therefore, there is ENDLESS SALVATION in the power of Jesus. “He is able to save without end, or to the uttermost, them that come unto God by Him.” That word, “uttermost,” includes within it *a reference to time*. Because our Lord Jesus never dies, He is endlessly able to save. At all times His power to save remains. He was able to save some of you 40 years ago, but you would not come to Him that you might have life. He is able to save you now though you have passed your fourscore years in impenitence. If you come to God by Him, He will save you however multiplied your sins!

Beloved, many years ago, as boys and girls, some of us put our trust in the Redeemer and He forgave us our trespasses. Happy day! Happy day! We are much further advanced in life at this time and our strength grows less as the shadows lengthen, but Jesus is always the same and is still able to save to the fullest! No diminution has taken place as to His ability to save. He that helped us in the seven struggles of our youth and the 70 burdens of our manhood, will help us to 70 times seven, if necessary! We need not fear old age or death, seeing He always has the dew of His youth and is always our Friend, laying out His life for us, even as once He laid it down for us.

He is abundantly able to save—*from the uttermost of evil to the uttermost of good He can save us*. As He ever lives in the fullness of life, so He can save to the fullness of salvation. His name is Jesus—the Savior—and as Jesus, the Savior, He lives! He has not renounced His office, nor allowed any part of His life to run to another purpose—He lives to save.

The Lord Jesus Christ is, now, “seeing He ever lives,” able to save to the uttermost *in point of our sin*. Whatever the sin of anyone here may be, if he comes to God by Jesus Christ, it shall be forgiven him! God forbid I should try to make a list of human crimes—what purpose would it serve? The reading of the details of vice is very defiling. I will not, therefore, attempt a list of crimes into which mortals sink. Sorry scoundrels come here at times—there may be dreadful characters at this moment mingled with this vast congregation—and truly, I am not sorry that they are hearing the Gospel! But whoever you may be, the text draws a circle of hope around you as it says—“He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.”

Whatever your offense, if you will now come to God and confess it, and ask mercy through the name of Jesus, He is able to save you to the extreme limit of your need. If you have gone as far in sin as is possible and

are forced to acknowledge that if you could have gone farther you would have done so, yet there is forgiveness! O my Hearer, though your hands are even red with murder, yet the blood of Christ can wash them clean! "All manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." Yes, let the silver trumpet sound it out! You chief of sinners, hear the news! The Savior lives that to the uttermost He may save such as you! Come, then, to your living Lord, you that groan under the load of deadly guilt, for He can take it all away!

So, too, He saves *to the uttermost of our need and misery*. One old divine says if we were to climb a great hill from which we could see wide fields of spiritual distress and poverty and, if all this represented our experience, yet the Lord is able to spread salvation all round the far-off horizon and encompass all our needs. Come, poor Trembler, climb the mountain and look far over this terrible wilderness! As far as you can see, or foresee of dreaded need in years to come, so far and much further can the salvation of Jesus reach! As far as with the telescope of apprehension you can spy out trials in life and woes in death, so far is Jesus able to save you! The uttermost will never be reached by you, but it has long ago been provided for by Him! All your capacious emptiness can ever need to fill it, He has provided. Though your heart should, like a horseleech, cry, "Give, give," Jesus can satisfy its hunger! Though like the sea that swallows up a navy and is not full, your soul should never cease its cravings, yet Jesus can make you content. All that you can require, He can surely give you since He always lives by the power of an endless life to be the fullness of every emptied soul!

Jesus can save you *to the uttermost of your desires*. I want you to think of all you would like to be in righteousness and true holiness—for all that will Jesus do unto you before He has done with you. I asked a young convert the other day "Are you perfect yet?" "Oh dear, Sir," she said, "No." I asked, "Would you not like to be?" Her eyes twinkled, as well they might, and she said, "That is what I long for." It will be Heaven to be perfect! Jesus is able to make us perfect and He has resolved to do it. As it is written, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Your likeness." In that likeness He will cause us to awake if we come unto God through Him! Jesus will save us to the highest degree.

The Lord Jesus Christ will also save us *entirely*—He will work out the salvation of the whole man—body, soul and spirit. He always lives to save His people to the utmost, that is to say, all His people and all of every one of His people. Nothing essential to manhood shall be left to perish in the case of those whom He redeems. All that which the first Adam ruined, the Second Adam shall restore. The Canaan of manhood from Dan to Beer-sheba shall be conquered by our Joshua! As yet the body is dead because of sin, though the spirit is life because of righteousness, but the day comes when the body shall also be delivered from the bondage which sin has brought upon it. Not a bone, nor a piece of a bone of a redeemed one shall be left in the hands of the enemy! God's deliverances are always complete. When the Lord sent His angel to bring Peter out of prison, he said to the slumbering Apostle, "Cast your garment about you, and follow me." That garment might be only a fisherman's cloak, but it must not be

left in Herod's hands! He also said, "Bind on your sandals," for when the angel of the Lord sets a man free, he will not leave even a pair of old shoes behind him! The redemption of Christ is perfect—it reaches to the uttermost. He seems to say to sin, Satan and death, as the Lord said to Pharaoh—"Not a hoof shall be left behind." All that He has redeemed by price, He will also redeem by power—and to that end He makes ceaseless intercession before God.

"To the uttermost," from all our doubts and fears, follies and failures, Jesus will bring us by His endless intercession. "To the uttermost," from every consequence of the Fall, personal sin and actual death, Jesus, by His intercession will save us. "To the uttermost." Oh, think of it! To the Resurrection Life, to clearance at the Judgment Seat and to the highest glories of Heaven and to boundless bliss throughout the ages He will save us. Right on while you endure, O Eternity, the pleading of the High Priest shall save the chosen company who, forever rising into something higher and yet higher, shall prove more and more the heights and depths of everlasting bliss! Because He lives we shall also live and because He always intercedes, we shall forever be glorified.

There I leave my subject, only coming back to the one enquiry, *Do you come to God by Jesus Christ?* If so, the text speaks comfortably to you. It speaks not only of the Church as a whole, but also of each individual Believer—Jesus intercedes for each one of those who "come unto God by Him." You, dear Friend, though unknown to fame, are known to Jesus! You, dear Sister, hidden away in obscurity, are not hidden from the all-seeing eyes of the Divine Mediator! His breastplate bears your name, yes, He has engraved it upon the palms of His hands and He will never forget those whose memorials are thus perpetually with Him! May the living blessing of the ever-living Savior be with you today and forever! Amen.

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SALVATION TO THE UTTERMOST

NO. 84

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, JUNE 8, 1856,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”
Hebrews 7:25.***

SALVATION is a Doctrine peculiar to Revelation. Revelation affords us a complete history of it, but nowhere else can we find any trace thereof. God has written many books, but only one book has had for its aim the teaching of the ways of mercy. He has written the great book of Creation, which it is our duty and our pleasure to read. It is a volume embellished on its surface with starry gems and rainbow colors and containing in its inner leaves, marvels at which the wise may wonder for ages and yet find a fresh theme for their conjectures! Nature is the spelling book of man in which he may learn his Maker's name. He has studded it with embroidery, with gold, with gems. There are Doctrines of Truth in the mighty stars and there are lessons written on the green earth and in the flowers springing up from the sod. We read the books of God when we see the storm and tempest, for all things speak as God would have them. And if our ears are open, we may hear the voice of God in the rippling of every rill, in the roll of every thunder, in the brightness of every lightning bolt, in the twinkling of every star, in the budding of every flower! God has written the great book of creation to teach us what He is—how great, how mighty. But I read nothing of salvation in Creation. The rocks tell me, “Salvation is not in us.” The winds howl, but they howl not salvation—the waves rush upon the shore but among the wrecks which they wash up, they reveal no trace of salvation! The fathomless overhangs of oceans bear pearls but they bear no pearls of Grace. The starry heavens have their flashing meteors, but they have no voices of salvation. I find salvation written nowhere, till, in this Volume of my Father's Grace, I find His blessed love unfolded towards the great human family, teaching them that they are lost, but that He can save them and that in saving them he can be “just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly.” Salvation, then, is to be found in the Scriptures and in the Scriptures, only—for we can read nothing of it elsewhere. And while it is to be found only in Scripture, I hold that the peculiar Doctrine of Revelation is salvation. I believe that the Bible was sent not to teach me history, but to teach me Grace. Not to give me a system of philosophy, but to give me a system of Divinity. Not

to teach worldly wisdom, but spiritual wisdom. Hence I hold all preaching of philosophy and science in the pulpit to be altogether out of place.

I would check no man's liberty in this matter, for only God is the Judge of man's conscience. But it is my firm opinion that if we profess to be Christians, we are bound to keep to Christianity! If we profess to be Christian ministers, but we drivel away the Sabbath, we fool our hearers. We insult God if we deliver lectures upon botany or geology instead of delivering sermons on salvation! He who does not always preach the Gospel, ought not to be accounted a true-called minister of God.

Well then, it is salvation I desire to preach to you. We have, in our text, two or three things. In the first place, we are told *who they are who will be saved*, "those who come to God by Jesus Christ." In the second place, we are told *the extent of the Savior's ability to save*, "He is able to save to the uttermost." And in the third place, we have *the reason given why He can save*, "since He always lives to make intercession for them."

I. First, we are told THE PEOPLE WHO ARE TO BE SAVED. And the people who are to be saved are "those who come to God by Jesus Christ." There is no limitation here of sect or denomination—it does not say the Baptist, the Independent, or the Episcopalian who comes to God by Jesus Christ—it simply says, "those," by which I understand people of all creeds, of all ranks, of all classes who do but come to Jesus Christ. They shall be saved, whatever their apparent position before men, or whatever may be the denomination to which they have linked themselves!

1. Now. I must have you notice, in the first place, *where these people come to*. They "come to God." By coming to God we are not to understand the mere formality of devotion, since this may be but a solemn means of sinning. What a splendid general confession is that in the Church of England Prayer Book—"We have erred and strayed from Your ways like lost sheep. We have done those things which we ought not to have done and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done and there is no health in us." There is not to be found a finer confession in the English language! And yet how often, my dear Friends, have the best of us mocked God by repeating such expressions verbally and thinking we have done our duty! How many of you go to Chapel and must confess your own absence of mind while you have bowed your knees in prayer, or uttered a song of praise? My Friends, it is one thing to go to Church or Chapel. It is quite another thing to go to *God*. There are many people who can pray right eloquently and who do so—they have learned a form of prayer by heart, or, perhaps, use an extemporaneous form of words of their own composing—but who, instead of going to God, are all the while going *from* God! Let me persuade you all not to be content with mere formality. There will be many damned who never broke the Sabbath, as they thought, but who all their lives were Sabbath-breakers. It is as much possible to break the Sabbath in a Church as it is to break the Sabbath

in the park. It is as easy to break it here, in this solemn assembly, as in your own houses. Everyone of you virtually break the Sabbath when you merely go through a round of duties and, having done so, you retire to your chambers fully content with yourselves and fancy that all is over—that you have done your day's work—whereas you have never come to God at all—but have merely come to the outward ordinance and to the visible means which is quite another thing from coming to God, Himself!

And let me tell you, again, that coming to God is not what some of you suppose—*now and then sincerely performing an act of devotion, but giving to the world the greater part of your life.* You think that if sometimes you are sincere, if now and then you put up an earnest cry to Heaven, God will accept you. And though your life may still be worldly and your desires still carnal, you suppose that for the sake of this occasional devotion, God will be pleased, in His Infinite Mercy, to blot out your sins! I tell you, Sinners, there is no such thing as bringing half of yourselves to God and leaving the other half away. If a man has come here, I suppose he has brought his whole self with him and so, if a man comes to God, he cannot, half of him come, and half of him stay away! Our whole being must be surrendered to the service of our Maker. We must come to Him with an entire dedication of ourselves—giving up all we are and all we shall ever be—to be thoroughly devoted to His service. Otherwise we have never come to God aright. I am astonished to see how people in these days try to love the world and love Christ, too! According to the old proverb, they, “hold with the hare and run with the hounds.” They are real good Christians, sometimes, when they think they ought to be religious. But they are right bad fellows at other seasons, when they think that religion would be a little loss to them! Let me warn you all—it is of no earthly use for you to pretend to be on two sides of the question—“If God is God, serve Him! If Baal is God, serve him.” I like an out-and-out man of any sort. Give me a man that is a sinner—I have some hope for him when I see him sincere in his vices and open in acknowledging his own character. But if you give me a man who is half-hearted, who is not quite bold enough to be all for the devil, nor quite sincere enough to be all for Christ, I tell you, I despair of such a man as that! The man who wants to link the two together is in an extremely hopeless case! Do you think, Sinners, you will be able to serve two masters, when Christ has said you cannot? Do you fancy you can walk with God and walk with mammon, too? Will you take God on one arm and the devil on the other? Do you suppose you can be allowed to drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of Satan at the same time? I tell you—you shall depart a cursed and miserable hypocrite if you come to God that way! God will have the whole of you, or else you shall not come at all! The whole man must seek after the Lord. The whole soul must be poured out before Him, otherwise it is no

acceptable coming to God at all. Oh, those of you haltering between two opinions—remember this and tremble!

I think I hear one say, “Well then, tell us what it is to come to God.” I answer, coming to God implies *leaving something else*. If a man comes to God, he must leave his sins. He must leave his righteousness. He must leave both his bad works and his good ones and come to God, leaving them entirely! Again—coming to God implies *that there is no aversion towards Him*, for a man will not come to God while he hates God. He will be sure to stay away. Coming to God signifies having *some love for God*. Again—coming to God signifies *desiring God*. Desiring to be near to Him. And, above all, it signifies *praying to God and putting faith in Him*. That is coming to God—and those that have come to God in that fashion are among the saved! They come to God—that is the place to which their eager spirits hasten.

2. But notice, next, *how they come*. They “come to God *by Jesus Christ*.” We have known many persons who call themselves natural religionists. They worship the God of Nature and they think that they can approach God apart from Jesus Christ. There are some men we know of who despise the mediation of the Savior, and who, if they were in an hour of peril, would put up their prayer at once to God, without faith in the Mediator. Do such of you fancy that you will be heard and saved by the great God, your Creator, apart from the merits of His Son? Let me solemnly assure you, in God’s most holy name, there never was a prayer answered for salvation, by God the Creator, since Adam fell, without Jesus Christ the Mediator! “No man can come to God but by Jesus Christ.” And if any of you deny the Divinity of Christ, and if any soul among you does not come to God through the merits of a Savior, bold fidelity obliges me to pronounce you condemned persons! However amiable you may be, you cannot be right in the rest unless you think rightly of Him! I tell you, you may offer all the prayers that ever may be prayed, but you shall be damned unless you put them up through Christ! It is all in vain for you to take your prayers and carry them, yourself, to the Throne. “Get you hence, Sinner, get you hence,” says God. “I never knew you. Why did you not put your prayer into the hands of a Mediator? It would have been sure of an answer. But as you presented it, yourself, see what I will do with it!” And He reads your petitions and casts them to the four winds of Heaven—and you go away unheard, unsaved! The Father will never save a man apart from Christ! There is not one soul, now in Heaven, who was not saved by Jesus Christ. There is not one who ever came to God aright, who did not come through Jesus Christ. If you would be at peace with God, you must come to Him through Christ, as the Way, the Truth and the Life, making mention of His righteousness and of His, only!

3. But when these people come, *what do they come for?* There are some who think they come to God, but who do not come for the right

thing. Many a young student cries to God to help him in his studies. Many a merchant comes to God that he may be guided through a dilemma in his business. They are accustomed, in any difficulty, to put up some kind of prayer, which if they knew its value, they might cease from offering, for, “the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.” But the poor *sinner*, in coming to Christ, has only one objective—if all the world were offered to him, he would not think it worth his acceptance if he could not have Jesus Christ! There is a poor man, condemned to die, locked up in the condemned cell—the bell is tolling—he will soon be taken off to die on the gallows. There, Man, I have brought you a fine robe. What? No smile? Look! It is stiff with silver! Can’t you see how it is bedizened with jewels? Such a robe as that cost many and many a pound and much fine workmanship was expended on it! Contemptuously he smiles at it! See here, Man, I present you something else—here is a glorious estate for you, with broad acres, fine mansions, parker and lawns—take that title deed, ‘tis yours. What? No smile, Sir? Had I given that estate to any man who walked the street, less poor than you are, he would have danced for very joy! And will you not afford a smile when I make you rich and clothe you with gold? Then let me try once more. There is Caesar’s purple for you. Put it on your shoulders—there is his crown! It shall sit on no other head but yours. It is the crown of empires that knows no limit! I’ll make you a king. You shall have a kingdom upon which the sun shall never set. You shall reign from pole to pole. Stand up, call yourself Caesar! You are emperor! What? Still no smile? What do you want? “Take away that bauble,” he says of the crown. “Tear up that worthless parchment. Take away that robe. Yes, cast it to the winds. Give it to the kings of the earth who live. But I have to die and of what use are these to me? Give me a pardon and I will not care to be a Caesar. Let me live a beggar, rather than die a prince.” So is it with the sinner when he comes to God—he comes for *salvation*. He says—

**“Wealth and honor I disdain.
Earthly comforts, Lord, are vain!
These will never satisfy—
Give me Christ, or else I die.”**

Mercy is his sole request! O my Friends, if you have ever come to God, crying out for salvation and for salvation, only, then you have come to God aright! It were useless, then, to mock you! You cry for bread—should I give you stones? You would but hurl them at me! Should I offer you wealth? It would be little. We must preach to the sinner who comes to Christ, the gift for which he asks—the gift of salvation by Jesus Christ the Lord—as being his own by faith!

4. One more thought upon this coming to Christ. In *what style do these persons come?* I will try and give you a description of certain persons, all coming to the gate of mercy, as they think, for salvation. There

comes one, a fine fellow in a coach and six! See how hard he drives and how rapidly he travels? He is a fine fellow. He has men in livery and his horses are richly ornamented. He is rich, exceedingly rich. He drives up to the gate and says, "Knock at that gate for me. I am rich enough, but I dare say it would be as well to be on the safe side. I am a very respectable gentleman. I have enough of my own good works and my own merits—and this chariot, I dare say, would carry me across the river death and land me safely on the other side! But still, it is fashionable to be religious, so I will approach the gate. Porter! Undo the gates and let me in—see what an honorable man I am." You will never find the gates undone for that man. He does not approach in the right manner. Here comes another. He has not quite as much merit, but still, he has some. He comes walking along and, having leisurely marched up, he cries, "Angel! Open the gate for me, I am come to Christ—I think I should like to be saved. I do not feel that I very much require salvation—I have always been a very honest, upright, moral man—I do not know myself to have been much of a sinner. I have robes of my own. But I would not mind putting Christ's robes on. It would not hurt me. I may as well have the wedding garment. Then I can have my own, too." Ah, the gates are still hard and fast and there is no opening of them! But let me show you the right man. There he comes, sighing and groaning, crying and weeping all the way! He has a rope on his neck, for he thinks he deserves to be condemned. He has rags on him. He comes to the heavenly Throne and when he approaches Mercy's gate, he is almost afraid to knock. He lifts up his eyes and he sees it written, "Knock and it shall be opened to you." But he fears lest he should profane the gate by his poor touch. He gives at first a gentle rap—and if mercy's gate opens not, he is a poor dying creature. So he gives another rap, then another and another and although he raps times without number, no answer comes! Still he is a sinful man and he knows himself to be unworthy—but he still keeps rapping. And at last the good angel, smiling from the gate, says, "Ah, this gate was built for beggars, not for princes. Heaven's gate was made for spiritual paupers, not for rich men. Christ died for sinners, not for those who are good and excellent. He came into the world to save the vile—

'Not the righteous —

Sinners, Jesus came to call.'

Come in, poor man! Come in. Thrice welcome!" And the angels sing, "Thrice welcome!" How many of you, dear Friends, have come to God by Jesus Christ in that fashion? Not with the pompous pride of the Pharisee, not with the cant of the good man who thinks he deserves salvation, but with the sincere cry of a penitent, with the earnest desire of a thirsty soul after living water, panting as the thirsty hart in the wilderness after the water brooks, desiring Christ as they that look for the morning! I say, *more* than they that look for the morning. As my God who sits in Heaven

lives, if you have not come to God in this fashion, you have not come to God at all! But if you have thus come to God, here is the glorious Word of God for you—"He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God by Him."

II. Thus we have disposed of the first point, the coming to God. And now, secondly, WHAT IS THE MEASURE OF THE SAVIOR'S ABILITY? This is a question as important as if it were for life or death—a question as to the ability of Jesus Christ! How far can salvation go? What are its limits and its boundaries? Christ is a Savior—how far is He able to save? He is a Physician—to what extent will His skill reach to heal diseases? What a noble answer the text gives! "He is able to save to the uttermost." Now, I will certainly affirm and no one can deny it, that no one here knows how far the *uttermost* is. David said if he took the wings of the morning to fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there should God reach him. But who knows where the uttermost is? Borrow the angel's wings and fly far, far beyond the most remote star—go where wings have never flapped before, and where the undisturbed ether is as serene and quiet as the breast of Deity itself—you will not come to the uttermost! Go on still—mounted on a morning ray, fly on still, beyond the bounds of Creation, where space, itself, fails and where chaos takes up its reign—you will not come to the uttermost! It is too far for mortal intellect to conceive of! It is beyond the range of reason or of thought. Now, our text tells us that Christ is "able to save to the uttermost."

1. Sinner, I shall address you, first. Saints of God, I shall address you afterwards. Sinner, Christ is "able to save to the uttermost," by which we understand that the *uttermost extent of guilt* is not beyond the power of the Savior. Can anyone tell what is the uttermost amount to which a man might sin? Some of us conceive that Palmer has gone almost to the uttermost of human depravity. We fancy that no heart could be much more vile than that which conceived a murder so deliberate and contemplated a crime so protracted. But I can conceive it possible that there might be even worse men than he—and that if his life were spared and he were set at large, he might become even a worse man than he is now! Yes, supposing he were to commit another murder and then another and another—would he have gone to the uttermost? Could not a man be yet more guilty? As long as he lives, he may become more guilty than he was the day before! But yet my text says Christ is, "able to save to the uttermost." I may imagine a person has crept in here who thinks himself to be the most loathsome of all beings, the most condemned of all creatures. "Surely," he says, "I have gone to the utmost extremity of sin. None could outstrip me in vice." My dear Friend, suppose you *had* gone to the uttermost—remember that even *then* you would not have gone beyond the reach of Divine Mercy! For He is, "able to save to the uttermost," and it is possible that you, yourself, might go a little further and, therefore, you

have not yet gone to the uttermost! However far you may have gone—if you have gone to the very arctic regions of vice, where the sun of mercy seems to scatter but a few oblique rays—there can the light of salvation reach you! If I should see a sinner staggering on in his progress to Hell, I would not give him up, even when he had advanced to the last stage of iniquity! Though his foot hung trembling over the very verge of the pit of Hell, I would not cease to pray for him! And though he should, in his poor drunken wickedness, go staggering on till one foot were over Hell and he were ready to perish, I would not despair of him! Till the pit of Hell had shut her mouth upon him, I would believe it still possible that Divine Grace might save him! Look, he is just upon the edge of the Pit, ready to fall. But before he falls, Free Grace bids, “Stop that man!” Down Mercy comes, catches him on her broad wings and he is saved—a trophy of redeeming love! If there are any such in this vast assembly—if there are any of the outcast of society here, the vilest of the vile, the scum of this poor world—oh, you chief of sinners—Christ is “able to save to the uttermost!” Tell that everywhere in every attic, in every cellar, in every haunt of vice, in every kennel of sin—tell it everywhere! “To the uttermost!” “He is also able to save to the uttermost.”

2. Yet again—not only to the uttermost of crime, but to *the uttermost of rejection*. I must explain what I mean by this. There are many of you here who have heard the Gospel from your youth up. I see some here who, like myself, are children of pious parents. There are some of you upon whose infant forehead the pure heavenly drops of a mother’s tears continually fell. There are many of you here who were trained up by one whose knees, whenever bent, were always bent for you. She never rested in her bed at night till she had prayed for you, her first-born son. Your mother has gone to Heaven, it may be, and all the prayers she ever prayed for you are as yet unanswered. Sometimes you wept. You remember well how she grasped your hand and said to you, “Ah, John, you will break my heart by this, your sin, if you continue running on in those ways of iniquity—oh, if you did but know how your mother’s heart yearns for your salvation, surely your soul would melt and you would fly to Christ.” Do you not remember that time? The hot sweat stood upon your brow and you said—for you could not break her heart—“Mother, I will think of it.” And you did think of it. But you met your companion outside and it was all gone—your mother’s expostulation was brushed away, like the thin cobwebs of the gossamer, blown by the swift north wind, not a trace of it was left! Since then you have often stepped into hear the minister. Not long ago you heard a powerful sermon. The minister spoke as though he were a man just started from his grave, with as much earnestness as if he had been a sheeted ghost come back from the realms of despair! He told you of his own awful fate and warned you of it. You remember how the tears rolled down your cheeks, while he told you of sin,

of righteousness and of judgment to come? You remember how he preached to you, Jesus, and salvation by the Cross—and you rose up from your seat in that Chapel and you said, “Praise God. I am spared another day. I will turn to Him with full purpose of heart”? And there you are, still unchanged—perhaps worse than you were! And you have spent your Sunday afternoons, the angel knows where—and your mother’s spirit knows where you have spent it, too, and could she weep, she would weep over you who have this day despised God’s Sabbath and trampled on His Holy Word! But do you feel in your heart, tonight, the tender motions of the Holy Spirit? Do you feel something say, “Sinner! Come to Christ now”? Do you hear Conscience whispering to you, telling you of your past transgression? And is there some sweet angel voice, saying, “Come to Jesus, come to Jesus. He will save you yet”? I tell you, Sinner, you may have rejected Christ to the very uttermost—but He is still able to save you! There are a thousand prayers on which you have trampled. There are a hundred sermons all wasted on you! There are thousands of Sabbaths which you have thrown away—you have rejected Christ—you have despised His Spirit! Still He ceases not to cry, “Return, return!” He is, “able to save you to the uttermost,” if you come to God by Him!

3. There is another case which demands my particular attention tonight. It is that of the man who has gone to *the uttermost of despair*. There are some poor creatures in this world who, from a course of crime, have become hardened. And when, by God’s Grace, they are at last awakened by remorse and the pricking of conscience, there is an evil spirit which broods over them. It tells them it is hopeless for such as they are to seek salvation. We have met with some who have gone so far that they have thought that even devils might be saved rather than they could! They have given themselves up for lost and signed their own death warrant. And in such a state of mind they have positively taken the halter in their hand, to end their unhappy lives! Despair has brought many a man to a premature death. It has sharpened many a knife and mingled many a cup of poison. Have I a despairing person here? I know him by his somber face and downcast looks. He wishes he were dead, for he thinks that Hell, itself, could be scarcely worse torment than to be here expecting it! Let me whisper words of consolation to him. Despairing Soul! There is yet hope for you, for Christ, “is able to save to the uttermost.” And though you are put in the lowest dungeon of the Castle of Despair. Though key after key has been turned upon you and this iron grating of your window forbids all filing—and the height of your prison wall is so awful that you could not expect to escape—yet let me tell you, there is One at the gate who can break every bolt and undo every lock! There is One who can lead you out to God’s free air and save you, yet, for though the worst may come to the worst, He “is able to save you to the uttermost.”

4. And now a word to the saint, to comfort him, for this text is his, also. Beloved Brothers and Sisters in the Gospel! Christ is able to save you to the uttermost! Are you brought very low by *distress*? Have you lost house and home, friend and property? Remember, you have not come “to the uttermost” yet. Bad off as you are, you might be worse. He is able to save you. Suppose it should come to this—that you had not a rag left, nor a crust, nor a drop of water—still He would be able to save you, for “He is able to save to the uttermost.” So with temptation. If you should have the sharpest *temptation* with which mortal was ever tried, He is able to save you! If you should be brought into such a predicament that the foot of the devil should be upon your neck and the fiend should say, “Now I will make an end of you,” God would be able to save you even then! Yes, and in the uttermost *infirmity* should you live for many a year, till you are leaning on your staff and tottering along your weary life, if you should outlive Methuselah, you could not live beyond the uttermost—and He would save you even then! Yes, and when your little boat is launched by *death* upon the unknown sea of eternity, He will be with you. And though thick vapors of gloomy darkness gather round you and you can not see into the dim future—though your thoughts tell you that you will be destroyed, yet God will be “able to save you to the uttermost.”

Then, my Friends, if Christ is able to save a Christian to the uttermost, do you suppose He will ever let a Christian perish? Wherever I go, I hope always to bear my hearty protest against the most accursed doctrine of a saint’s falling away and perishing! There are some ministers who preach that a man may be a child of God (now, angels, do not hear what I am about to say! Listen to me, you who are down below in Hell, for it may suit you) that a man may be a child of God, today, and a child of the devil tomorrow! That God may acquit a man and yet condemn him—save him by Grace and then let him perish—allow a man to be taken out of Christ’s hands, though He has said such a thing shall never take place! How will you explain this? It certainly is no lack of *power*. You must accuse Him of a lack of love and do you dare to do that? He is full of love! And since He has also the power, He will never allow one of His people to perish. It is true and always shall be true, that He will save them to the very uttermost!

III. Now, in the last place, WHY IS IT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS “ABLE TO SAVE TO THE UTTERMOST”? The answer is, that He “always lives to make intercession for them.” This implies that *He died*, which is, indeed, the great source of His saving power! Oh, how sweet it is to reflect upon the great and wondrous works which Christ has done whereby He has become “the High Priest of our profession,” able to save us! It is pleasant to look back to Calvary’s hill and to behold that bleeding form expiring on the tree. It is sweet, amazingly sweet, to pry with eyes of love between

those thick olives and hear the groans of the Man who sweat great drops of blood.

Sinner, if you ask me how Christ can save you, I tell you this—He can save you because He did not save Himself! He can save you because He took your guilt and endured your punishment! There is no way of salvation apart from the satisfaction of Divine Justice. Either the sinner must die, or else someone must die for him. Sinner, Christ can save you because if you come to God through Him, then He died for you! God has a debt against us and He never remits that debt. He will have it paid. Christ pays it and then the poor sinner goes free.

And we are told another reason why He is able to save—not only because He died but *because He lives to make intercession for us*. That Man who once died on the Cross is alive! That Jesus who was buried in the tomb is alive! If you ask me what He is doing, I bid you listen. Listen, if you have ears! Did you not hear Him, poor penitent Sinner? Did you not hear His voice, sweeter than harpers playing on their harps? Did you not hear a charming voice? Listen! What did it say? “O My Father! Forgive them!” Why, He mentioned your own name! “O My Father, forgive _____. He knew not what he did. It is true he sinned against light, knowledge and warnings. He sinned willfully and woefully. But, Father, forgive him!” Penitent, if you can listen, you will hear Him praying for *you*. And that is why He is able to save!

A warning and a question, and I have done. First, a warning. Remember, *there is a limit to God’s mercy*. I have told you from the Scriptures that “He is *able to save to the uttermost*.” But there is a limit to His purpose to save. If I read the Bible rightly, there is one sin which can never be forgiven. It is the sin against the Holy Spirit. Tremble, unpardoned Sinners, lest you should commit that! If I may tell you what I think the sin against the Holy Spirit is, I must say that I believe it can be different in different people. But in many persons, the sin against the Holy Spirit consists in stifling their convictions. Tremble, my Hearers, lest tonight’s sermon should be the last you hear! Go away and scorn the preacher, if you like. But do not neglect his warning. Perhaps the very next time you laugh over a sermon, or mock a prayer, or despise a text—the very next oath you swear—God may say, “he is given to idols, let him alone, My Spirit shall no more strive with that man. I will never speak to him again.” That is the warning.

And now, lastly, the question. *Christ has done so much for you—what have you ever done for Him?* Ah, poor Sinner, if you knew that Christ died for you—and I know that He did, if you repent—if you knew that one day you will be His, would you spit upon Him now? Would you scoff at God’s Day, if you knew that one day it will be your day? Would you despise Christ if you knew that He loves you, now, and will display that love, by-and-by? Oh, there are some of you who will loathe yourselves when

you know Christ because you did not treat Him better! He will come to you, one of these bright mornings, and He will say, “Poor Sinner, I forgive you,” and you will look up in His face and say, “What? Lord, forgive *me*? I used to curse You, I laughed at Your people, I despised everything that had to do with religion. Forgive *me*?” “Yes,” says Christ, “give Me your hand. I loved you when you hated Me—come here!” And surely there is nothing that will break a heart half as much as thinking of the way in which you sinned against One who loved you so much!

Oh, Beloved, hear again the text—“He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God by Him.” I am no orator. I have no eloquence. But if I were the one, and had the other, I would preach to you with all my soul! As it is, I only talk right on and tell you what I do know. I can only say once more—

***“He is able
He is willing—doubt no more!
Come, you thirsty, come and welcome!
God’s free bounty, glorify!
True belief and true repentance
Every Grace that brings us near—
Without money
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.”***

“For He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God by Him.” O Lord! Make sinners come! Spirit of God! Make them come! Compel them to come to Christ by sweet constraint and let not our words be in vain, or our labor lost. For Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

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

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

PRIEST AND VICTIM

NO. 2693

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1900.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 28, 1881.

“He offered up Himself.”
Hebrews 7:27.

I DO not know when I have ever felt a more decided conflict of emotions in my own heart than I do just now. Happy is the man who has such a message as that in my text to deliver to his fellow men—but burdened is the man who feels that the message is far too great for his lips, or, indeed, for any human tongue to convey. To be allowed to announce to men that our Lord Jesus Christ “offered up Himself” on their behalf is, indeed, an errand which angels might envy, but the theme is too great for any human being to compass. I comfort myself with the reflection that it does not require any excellence of speech to tell it—the excellence lies in the Truth itself. And if men’s minds are in a right condition—if they are conscious of their lost state and they really desire to know what Christ has done to save them from it—they will need no garnishing or tawdry fripperies of human eloquence. All they will need will be to hear, as plainly and as earnestly as it can be spoken, the message of reconciliation which God has sent through Jesus Christ, His Son. Yet I cannot help feeling that the meaning of my text is so weighty that it may break the backs of the words that attempt to bring it to us. The axles of my human medium of conveyance are ready to snap when freighted with such a load of Infinite Love and Wisdom as comes to us in my short, full text—“He offered up Himself.”

But, to begin, I would remind you, dear Friends, that the idea of a sacrifice for sin is, in some sense or other, found in almost all human religions. I believe that some of the most ignorant tribes of Africa, and also Unitarians, have been found without the doctrine of an atoning sacrifice in their religion, but I do not think there are any other persons so benighted as these to be found anywhere. Go where you may, you will discover that as soon as ever people begin to say, “God,” the next thing they say is, “sacrifice.” And though their idea of God is often distorted and their idea of sacrifice is also distorted, yet both ideas are there. Man, however degraded, cannot altogether forget that there is a God and then, shrinking back from the awful majesty of the Divine holiness, he at least hopes that there is a sacrifice by which his sins may be put away. He feels that there must be one if he is ever to be brought into connection with God and so, in some form or other, the notion of sacrifice crops up

wherever there is any religion at all. It may be in the ghastly form of human sacrifice, which is a hideous misinterpretation which has crept in under the darkness and gloom of heathenism or false teaching. Or it may appear in the continued sacrifice of bulls, or lambs, or other victims, but, somehow or other, the idea is there. Man seems to know, in his inmost nature, that he must bring a sacrifice if he would appear before God, and this is, by no means, an error on his part. However erroneous may be the *form* it takes, in its essence there is truth in it.

Brothers and Sisters, did you ever know this Truth of God in your own souls? Has not the conviction come to you, under a sense of sin, as an absolute certainty, that sin must be punished? I will not say that you have thought so when you have imagined yourself to be all right, or, at least, to be pretty nearly clear of anything wrong. No, but when conscience has been awakened and has begun to speak in the quiet night watches, in times of sickness, or when you have seemed to be on the brink of eternity, I ask you, has there not come the thought that sin would surely be visited with punishment? That—

“Dread of something after death”

of which the world’s poet speaks, is an indication of belief in the Truth of God which is most sure, that the Judge of all the earth will not suffer His Laws to be trampled on with impunity, but that He will certainly punish iniquity, transgression and sin.

Then there has also come to your mind, I feel sure—at least I remember well when it came to mine—the thought that God could not pardon me without punishing my sin—or that, if He did, His moral government of the whole universe would be weakened. If He permitted the guilty to enjoy the same rewards as the righteous received, where would be His justice? An amnesty to the guilty would, practically, be an abolition of His Law—it would be tantamount to saying, “It does not matter how you live, all will come right at last.” There are some who teach that doctrine, nowadays, and, to state it in plain English, this is the doctrine that they teach—that we may rebel against God, we may blaspheme God, we may despise God—we may cheat, we may lie, we may murder, and so on—but it shall be just as well with us one day as it will be with the best man that lives! Does not the least atom of common morality that remains in man compel him to shrink back from teaching so intolerable as that? It cannot be right! We need not argue about the matter, it is impossible that it should be so, for human society would go to pieces under such an arrangement as that and the Judge of all the earth would have to abdicate His Throne before this could be! Many years ago, I put into words for myself, when I was under a sense of sin, a feeling which I believe others must have had under similar circumstances. I said, “If God does not punish me for my sin, He ought to do so.” I felt that if He did not condemn me for my sin, my conscience would condemn Him and that if He allowed me to go unpunished when I was guilty, in some way or other He would cease to be a just God and would no longer be worthy of the respect of my own conscience.

Now, that is a truth, a great truth, a terrible truth and hence it is that the mind of the convinced sinner is driven to the hope of an atonement.

If God is to pardon sin, there must be something done by which His Law can be honored, His justice can be vindicated and His truthfulness can be established. In fact, there must be an atonement! That is what it all comes to, or else pardon is impossible and you and I would be lost forever. I would to God that we all not only believed this Truth—as I suspect that the most of us do—but that we felt it to be the case in our own personal experience, that we realized our need of an atoning Sacrifice in order that God might be just, and yet be the Justifier of the ungodly—that the honor of His Law might shine out in unsullied purity like the terrible crystal and yet that “a rainbow round about the Throne, in sight like unto an emerald,” might be seen by the sons of men, reminding them of the Covenant made between the Father and the Son concerning all who believe in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior!

This brings me to the blessed announcement of the text, that the Atonement which men have blindly sought after has been made! That the Sacrifice which the conscience longs for has been presented! Here is the best possible news in four words—“He offered up Himself.” Spirit of God, help us to think about this sublime Truth and to speak of it aright!

I. Here is, first, THE PRIEST—“HE offered up Himself.” Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world and “offered up Himself” as a Sacrifice for sin. The Great High Priest, who officiated on the occasion of that wondrous and unique Sacrifice, was Jesus Christ Himself.

“He,” who was of *infinite dignity*—He who, in His first estate as very God of very God, was worshipped and obeyed by all the angels of Heaven—He who was with the Father when He spanned the heavens and laid the foundations of the universe—He it was, this Son of God, who “offered up Himself.” No inferior priest was there. There were wicked men who were the instruments employed in accomplishing His death, but, after all, the great hand that presented the Lamb of God as the one Sacrifice for sin was the hand of the Christ of God—“He offered up Himself.” Our High Priest is of such dignity that none can be compared with Him. He is the Son of the Highest, the equal of the Father. I want you to think of this Truth of God because it may help you to see how great must have been the merit of the Sacrifice when it was *God Himself* who “offered up Himself.” He was no mere delegated or elected priest, but Christ Jesus, Himself, in whom “dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily”—Christ, who is the brightness of His Father’s Glory and the express image of His Person, He it was who stood at the altar presenting “Himself” to God as the one and only Sacrifice for sin! O sinful men, come here, for here is a Sacrifice which may well satisfy the demands of the Divine Law, since Christ Himself puts on the priestly garments and offers it to God!

“He offered up Himself,” that is to say, *He voluntarily agreed to be the Victim for this wondrous Sacrifice*. Did you not notice this Truth in the chapter we read just now? “Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me), to do Your will, O God.” Christ was not compelled to come to earth except by the sweet compulsion of His own love. And with that as His master-motive—

***“Down from the shining seats above
With joyful haste He fled.”***

Voluntarily He took upon Himself our nature and was born at Bethlehem, and voluntarily did He tarry here for 33 years. He might have gone back when “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not,” but He had come in order that He might be a Sacrifice for sin, so He remained until the hour appointed for His death. And, even then, He was not forced to die—“He offered up Himself.” Pilate’s servants and Herod’s soldiers could not have slain Him unless He had been willing to die. He had but to breathe the wish and the legions of Heaven would have burned up the legions of Herod as chaff is consumed in the furnace! Neither the Romans nor the Jews could have nailed Him to the tree, nor could all their priests, nor all the ribald mob have put Him to death without His own consent. When He did but speak to them in the Garden of Gethsemane, they went backward and fell to the ground! He that made the earth to quake and open when He died could have shaken them off the earth, or buried them in it while He lived, if He had so pleased. But He voluntarily delivered Himself up to death.

To the very last there was no compulsion upon Him to die, except that compulsion of love of which I have spoken. You and I must die. The infirmities of nature will compel us to give up the ghost, but He was strong and vigorous even at the moment of His death. That glorious shout, “*Consummatum est*”—“It is finished!”—came from One who was still in the vigor of His strength and just entering on His eternal victory! When He bowed His head, it was because He would do it and willingly yielded up His soul, committing His spirit to the Father—not under constraint, but, “He offered up Himself.” Oh, this makes the Sacrifice of Christ so blessed and glorious! They dragged the bullocks and they drove the sheep to the altar. They bound the calves with cords, even with cords to the altar’s horn, but it was not so with the Christ of God! None compelled *Him* to die—He laid down His life voluntarily, for He had power to lay it down and to take it up again. “For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame.” “He offered up Himself.”

From this great Truth of God, we may learn two or three practical lessons. The first is the blasphemy of supposing that any so-called “priest” can offer up Christ. There are men who say that in the “unbloody sacrifice of the mass, there is offered to God a true, proper and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead.” Stand back, Beloved! Withdraw from the sons of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, lest the earth should again open and swallow them up, and they should perish alive in their iniquity! “He offered up Himself,” and yet these fools say that they offer Him again! God have mercy upon them, and open their blind eyes that they may no longer thus perpetrate an infamous blasphemy against His holy name!

But there is also a lesson for *us* to learn and that is the folly of our attempting to offer any sacrifice whatever to God in and of ourselves, for, Brothers and Sisters, there never was such a Sacrifice as Christ on earth. It was the best Sacrifice that could ever be, yet nobody offered that but Christ Himself. What are your sacrifices and mine? They are very poor things—so shall we *dare* to offer them to God? No, let us ask Christ to offer all our sacrifices for us. If the best Sacrifice needed Christ to pre-

sent it to His Father, then our imperfect sacrifices can only be offered by Jesus Christ our Great High Priest. And though we, who trust Him, and love His name, are all priests, for He “has made us kings and priests unto God,” yet we are only priests *in Him*, and our sacrifices are only presented in and through Him. It must be so, for, if the chief Sacrifice is offered by Him, all the minor ones must also be presented by Him if they are to be accepted by God.

And, dear Brethren, here is another lesson, namely, the security of those who trust in the Sacrifice of Christ, for if I accept the Sacrifice of Christ for me and trust in it, if I am not saved by it—suppose that to be possible—then it follows that the Great High Priest, when “He offered up Himself,” did not perform an effectual work. That would be a terrible imputation upon His honor. God forbid that we should entertain it for a single moment! Much, it is said, in the offering of the “mass” in the Roman Catholic Church, depends upon the intention of the priest. I should think so, but we know what the intention of our High Priest was! We dare not rely upon the intention of any *human* priest, but we know that our Lord Jesus Christ “offered up Himself”—not in fiction or hypocrisy, but in reality and with His whole heart and soul—and we are certain that He offered an acceptable and an effectual Sacrifice to God, and that we who trust in it must be saved. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the effect of that dread Sacrifice must stand, for He who offered it is the Son of God! Fall back, my Soul, on this firm Rock and rest there securely whatever doubts may come to assail you!

II. Now, in the second place, I shall ask you carefully to look at THE SACRIFICE. “He offered up Himself.” That is to say, Jesus Christ did not offer lamb or ram, bird or bullock, but “Himself.”

That is a great word and it means that His whole Nature as Man was offered up in death as an Atonement for us—His whole Nature as Man, perfect and sinless, and indissolubly united with His Divine Nature. I do not say that God died, nor would I put it quite so, but I will say that He who died was God, though Man, and that “He offered up Himself”—the whole of Himself—in Sacrifice to God on our behalf. His precious body suffered pains which are indescribable, but which I pray you never to undervalue or forget. I have seen criticisms concerning what is called “the sensuousness” of certain of our hymns that speak of His wounds, and so on. Never mind the criticism—be willing to be called sensuous—Holy Scripture might be condemned on the same ground. You will never understand the agony of Christ’s soul if you despise the agony of His body, for, while the sufferings of His soul were the soul of His sufferings, yet the sufferings of His body were the body of His sufferings and he who does not think much of the body of the sufferings is not likely to know much about the soul of them.

His body was given for you and for me and, then, His spiritual Nature—His mind, His intellect, His heart, His imagination—every pure unspotted faculty of that blessed Soul of His—He gave up all for us! The alabaster box, His body, was broken, and the precious nard, His Soul, was poured out like a Divine perfume upon the head of our poor human-

ity. It was all given for us! “He offered up Himself.” Not His garments only, though He was stripped naked—not His Glory only, though He emptied Himself—not His life only, though He laid down His life for us—but “He offered up Himself.” Oh, it is a great word, but it describes a great Sacrifice and it needed all that to make an Atonement for our sins—and all that He gave.

“He offered up Himself,” that is, He presented Himself to God as a Sacrifice and He did actually die. O Brothers and Sisters, I cannot describe that wondrous death! You and I have never died. We have been sick, but to actual death we have never yet come. Some of us never shall know death as Christ knew it, for, remember, death was death to Him, but for His saints the bitterness of death is past. Christ had to endure death in all its bitterness, but He has taken away the wormwood and the gall of death for us who believe in Him. Many of those who were martyred for His name’s sake, when they burned at the stake could sing as they died! They counted the flames as though they were but beds of roses, for He was with them, and God was with them to sustain them. But, for Him, there was no such succor, no Divine support. “Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani?” was the cry into which more grief was packed away than can even be found in any sufferer in Hell! For, remember, the griefs of Christ were not the griefs sufficing for one lost man, but for *unnumbered myriads* who would otherwise have been banished from the Presence of God forever. “He offered up Himself.” Oh, see Him die, if you can bear the sight! His blessed soul exhaled, His body left behind to be buried in the tomb. “He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.”

I always think, with regard to that offering up of Himself, that it was a very mysterious transaction into which you and I must not pry with any sinful curiosity. Yet, as I meditated upon this subject, it appeared to me that the Cross, which seemed so small a thing out yonder on that little rising ground of Golgotha—that one Cross, standing in the center of the three, appeared to me to be the center of the entire universe, and so it is. If the inhabitants in all the stars did not see Christ die. If from all worlds they could not behold the dreadful sight, yet they must have heard of it in many a star by this time. Swift spirits have told, in those bright orbs where myriads of unfallen creatures dwell, the story that on this little dusky planet, sin struggled against Incarnate Love, and Love, to conquer it, died and, in the dying, won the victory. I cannot tell you how many races of intelligent beings there are beside the hierarchy of angels, but it is not at all improbable that there are as many worlds as there are grains of sand upon the seashore—and perhaps every one of these teems with inhabitants more than our earth does—and they have heard and they keep on hearing, and the news keeps spreading everywhere that the God who made them all took human form and died to put away human sin!

And, supposing this is the case, what do you think all these intelligent beings say? It must be that the impression made upon them is that sin is a horrible thing since it stabs at God Himself! All intelligences must also feel that God is just, since He will sooner, Himself, die than let sin go

unpunished. It further rings throughout the spheres that God is Love—that He will sooner bleed to death than let His creatures perish! And that here He once proved, in His death, that He was Infinite both in His vengeance and His mercy! All the universe throughout eternity shall hear this wondrous story! It is so marvelous that it will never grow stale. They are telling it, tonight, to wondering assemblies, compared with which this vast congregation is but a drop in a bucket. Standing in some central star, some mighty intelligence is proclaiming this story, perhaps to as many worlds as there are men and women in this building. Certainly, it is worthy of such an audience, for never was there such news as that the Infinite, Immortal, Eternal, Invisible, Almighty loving God did come and take upon Himself the sin of men—and at last suffered and died in the place of guilty sinners!

You say, perhaps, that I am dreaming while talking to you thus. But dear Friends, we sometimes learn more truth in dreams than when we are awake! At any rate, this I know, I would sooner be mistaken in enlarging too much upon the wondrous fact and efficacy of the Cross than I would ever become one of those who shrivel up the Atonement till there is little or nothing of it left. I believe that there was such a necessity for Christ to die as you and I have never yet imagined—that He did not die merely because His death was necessary upon this planet, but that it was necessary through every province of the infinite dominions of God—and that it was necessary to the very Nature of God, Himself, which is saying still more. There was a supreme necessity that Christ should die. I am sure of it, for otherwise He would not have died. The Father would never have given up His Son to the death of the Cross unless it had been imperative that this Sacrifice should be offered, or else that men should suffer forever. Oh, wonder of wonders! Tell it everywhere and never cease to tell it! “He offered up Himself.”

III. Now, lest I should weary you, I will, in closing, only say a little upon the third point, which is, CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THIS TRUTH WHICH ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO US.

The first is this. “He offered up Himself,” but He did not offer up Himself for Himself. That is an offering which cannot be imagined. So far as Christ was Himself, alone, concerned, there was no necessity that He should die. He was infinitely glorious and blessed. “He offered up Himself,” but not for Himself. Then, for whom did He die? For men. We are told that He took not up angels, but He took up the seed of Abraham. He took up sinful men. O poor Sinner, I want you to think of this! Let your soul see Jesus on the Cross—bleeding, writhing, suffering, tortured, dying, dead. And then remember that there was not one pang, or groan, or sigh for Himself—it was all for others—for His enemies. I wish we could all say, one by one, “It was for *me*. He loved me and gave Himself for me. He endured the Cross for me. His blood was shed for me. Those agonies and cries and griefs were all for me. For me the death-pang and the expiring groan—all for me, for me.” If you believe in Jesus, it is so. There must have been something great done for you there. Your great sin must have been buried there. The great Hell which you ought to have endured

must have been extinguished there. So far as you are concerned, the great Heaven which you could never have entered must have been opened there, if He died there for you! Untold blessings are insured to you in that matchless death. Dwell on that thought, Beloved. "He offered up Himself," but not for Himself. It must have been, then, for the guilty! O my Soul, it must have been—it was—for you if you believe in Him!

Next, notice that *this great deed of love was really done*. "He offered up Himself." He did really do it! I know that when I am preaching, some of you seem to think that I am only talking about fanciful or imaginary matters. If I were to begin to speak of President Garfield and his sickness, or about the wet weather and the harvest, you would say, "These are facts." O Sirs, but this also is a fact, and the greatest of all facts—"He offered up Himself." It happened long ago, but it is true that He did this! That same God that painted every flower—that spread the skies—the God that made us—came here in human form and, after living here a life of blessing and beneficence, He died as a Sacrifice for human guilt! This is not something that is yet to be done. It is all over! Jesus Himself said, "It is finished." If I had to tell you that God would come here and become Man and die for us, you might say, "It may not be—it is too great a condescension. Do you know how great God is and can it be imagined that He should come down to earth, be veiled in human flesh and in that flesh should suffer and die? It cannot be!" But I have to tell you that it *has* been done—it is an accomplished fact! He did it—"He offered up Himself." It may sometimes have been a question among Believers who lived before Christ died—"Will He really die?" But it is no question to you and me, for He *has* died—His great deed of love is done!

And He so completely did this that it will never be done again. If you will not accept this Christ, there will never be another, and if you will not be saved by His redemption, you will never be redeemed at all! And there is this comfort about it—that He only died once because there is no need that He should ever die again! His one death has slain death for all who trust Him. His one bearing of sin has put their sin away forever. God can now justly forgive the believing sinner and He may well blot out the debt when it has been paid by His Son. Well may He remit the sentence against us, now that His Son has stood in our place and borne the penalty due to our sin. God is therefore just when He justifies those for whom Christ died. Where would His justice be if He did not? Did Christ pay my debts and am I arrested for them? Did He die for me and shall I perish? Where, then, is the Atonement? Beloved, if you believe in Jesus, be glad that He died once and be still more glad that He cannot die again, and that there is no need that He should! The Atonement is completed. You are saved and you shall never come into condemnation. How I wish that I could preach on such a theme as this as it deserves! But I do not know how it is to be done. It does not seem to me as if any human words could ever fittingly set forth such a wondrous mystery. No, though they were written across the face of the sky—unless God Himself wrote them with a finger of lightning—I know of no way in which this Truth of God could be fitly set out—"He offered up Himself."

But, my dear Hearers, I wish you would all lay hold of this blessed Truth! When I laid hold of it, it was the crisis in my whole history—and to this hour it is the joy of my soul! I could not give up this blessed belief—that “He offered up Himself” in the place of all His people, of all who believe in Him and that, therefore, they are safe forever!

I must sum up, in a few words, much more than I might have said. And, first, this Truth quiets the conscience. “He offered up Himself.” Conscience never murmurs after the blood of Jesus has been applied to it. I say to myself, “Jesus died for me. Jesus suffered in my place. Jesus took my guilt. Jesus bore my punishment.” And my conscience says, “That is enough. That is all I need!”

This Truth of God also satisfies my understanding. Let those who will, sneer at the simple Gospel and the Doctrine of Substitution, but I have no understanding that is too large to be satisfied with these things. It seems to me that if God appointed Christ to be an Atonement for sin, and if He is satisfied with His Sacrifice, I may well be content. Surely, if my great Creditor and Judge is appeased by what His Son has offered on my behalf, it is not for me to begin to quibble at it! I know how some criticize the great central Truth of the Atonement. I care not how they criticize it so long as God has accepted it! And since He has also accepted me in Christ Jesus, my Lord and Savior, my soul feels perfectly content and understands why she is contented.

And, oh, how this Truth also wins the affections of men! Can you help loving the Christ who offered up Himself for you? And loving Him, do you not desire to honor and glorify Him? Do you not feel that you hate the sin that made Him die? Do you not wish to be like He and in everything give Him pleasure by a life of holiness, self-denial and self-sacrifice? I know you do! It must be so. Because Jesus sacrificed Himself for you, you feel that you must love Him with all your heart.

Does not this Truth of God also awaken your admiration? Say, Brothers and Sisters, is there anything that can move you like this glorious Truth of which I have been speaking? Does it not awaken your highest admiration when you remember that the Lord Jesus Christ took your sin upon Himself and suffered in your place? I know that there is no hand that can sweep the strings of my heart with such power as can the hand that was pierced for me! This theme enkindles my enthusiasm and stirs my passions to a flame—and makes me wish for the tongues of men and of angels that I might be able to tell out this story of “love so amazing, so Divine.” I would ask no other Heaven, if I might have my choice, than having to meditate upon the passion of my Lord and to tell it out to others—and then to fall at His dear feet and worship Him, world without end, for He was slain and has redeemed me by His precious blood! You take Christ out of the Gospel and out of your preaching, and see whether you will awaken any enthusiasm among your people!

There is a cold, steely religion, sharp and deadly, out of which the Atonement has gone. But was it ever a power in this land, or any other, or will it ever be? Only preach the Christless Gospel and you shall have spiders in abundance in your places of worship—but very few men and

women! They run away, if they are wise, from the place where Christ is not preached and His atoning blood is not constantly set forth! Point that place out to me on the map of London and I will show you the spot where there is a beggarly array of empty benches, and few hearers, for they flee, and rightly so, as hungry men flee from the place where there is no bread! And as the thirsty in the wilderness turn away from the dried-up well, they get still more thirsty as long as they stay by the empty mockery, so they hasten away from it.

But preach Jesus Christ and Him Crucified—preach the atoning Sacrifice—and see how the people flock together! Let them believe this Truth, let them love it, and their whole spirit is stirred within them and everyone becomes a soldier of the Cross, a warrior for Jesus Christ! I am sure it is so and what I feel within my own spirit I know that you all feel, too, for, “as in water, face answers to face, so the heart of man to man.”

And, finally, this Truth of God that Christ offered up Himself, leads us who accept it to be ready for self-sacrifice. It makes the believing man say, “As He offered Himself for me, I must give myself for Him.” It teaches the doctrine of the self-sacrifice of men for God and of men for men. This is the nursery of brave spirits and the school in which true heroes are trained. None have been bolder for the truth and for the right, and for the advancement of the ages, and for the Glory of God, than those who have enshrined the blood-red Cross within their hearts, and who have been prepared, for love of it, even to die. O Christ of God, You who have offered Yourself for us, we offer ourselves to You! Accept us now! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: HEBREWS 10:1-22.

Verse 1. *For the law*—The old ceremonial law of Moses—

1. *Having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.* Those that were sprinkled with the blood of the Old Testament sacrifices did not feel that their sin was forever put away. They went back, after the victim had been offered, with a certain measure of rest and relief, but not with that perfect rest which is the accompaniment of the pardon that Jesus gives to those who come unto God through Him.

2. *For*—If the worshippers had thus been made perfect. If they had been completely cleansed and accepted through these sacrifices—

2. *Then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.* The fact that there was a lamb to be offered every morning and every evening, and that there was a great Day of Atonement to be observed every year, proved that there was sin still remaining, which had not been put away, and that the worshippers needed to come again, and again, and yet again, with fresh sacrifices for their fresh sins. The Apostle’s argument is unanswerable.

3, 4. *But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.* Your common sense tells you “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” Although rivers of such blood should continually be flowing, what efficacy could there be in them to put away the moral stain of guilt and transgression against God?

5. *Therefore when He comes into the world—That great HE—that Divine HE—our Savior and our God. “When He comes into the world.”*

5-7. *He said, Sacrifice and offering You would not, but a body have You prepared for Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me), to do Your will, O God.* That will had not been done, although myriads of sacrifices had been offered. But Christ came to do that will by offering Himself as the one and only acceptable Sacrifice.

8, 9. *Previously when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin You would not, neither had pleasure therein; which are offered by the Law; then said He, Lo, I come to do Your will O God. He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.* An end was made of the types and shadows of the Ceremonial Law, that the real substance might be introduced by Christ. Never imagine, dear Friends, that the old Jewish Ceremonial Law is to drag on its existence, and to be intermingled with the Christian dispensation. Ah, no! As the shadows of the night vanish when the sun arises. As the lamps in yonder street are put out when daylight returns, so was it with all the types and shadows of the ancient Law when the great Antitype appeared!

10. *By that will.* That is, the will of God as done by Christ—“By that will.”

10-12. *We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all. And every priest stands daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this Man, after He had offered one Sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.* Oh, what a blessed doctrine this is—that the one Offering of Christ has done what the tens of thousands of offerings under the old Law never could accomplish! All the work of man is but the spinning of a righteousness which is undone as quickly as it is spun, but Christ has finished the seamless and spotless robe of His righteousness which is to last forever! By His one Sacrifice He has ended all the fruitless labor of the ages! And now, all of us who have believed in Him have all the benefits of His perfect work! Having completed his great task, He “sat down at the right hand of God.”

13. *From henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. “Expecting.”* That was the subject of this morning’s sermon. [Sermon #1616, Volume 27—*Saved in Hope*—read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>] We are expecting something better than we have yet seen. “We were saved in hope.” We are expecting that which is yet to be revealed and our Covenant Head is expecting, too! This is the age of expectancy. We have not yet come to the fullness of the blessing that is ours in Christ Jesus. The mercy of God is, at present, only in the

bud—the fully-developed flower has yet to be seen. Christ is expecting. His saints are expecting. The whole creation is expecting!

14-17. *For by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Spirit also is a witness to us: for after that He had said before, This is the Covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put My Laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.* Oh, what a blessed Covenant this is! Christ's death has established a Covenant of Grace in which there is no flaw and no possibility of failure, for the one condition of the Covenant has been fulfilled by Christ! And now it stands as a Covenant of "shalls" and "wills" on God's part from which He will never run back. It is not, "If they do this, and if they do that, I will do the other," but it is all, "I will." "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

18. *Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.* No more offering for sin is needed, for the work of Atonement is fully done, and done forever. As the sin of all who believe in Jesus is put away, what need is there of any further sacrifice on account of it? The Atonement is complete! Let us, therefore, rejoice in it and praise God for it!

19-22. *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"— 555, 299, 289.

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

GOD'S LAW IN MAN'S HEART

NO. 2506

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1897.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 28, 1885.**

*“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.”
Hebrews 8:10.*

WHEN God gave Israel His Law—the Law of the First Covenant—it was such a holy Law that it ought to have been kept by the people. It was a just and righteous Law, concerning which God said, “You shall do My judgments, and keep My ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore keep My statutes, and My judgments: which if a man does, he shall live in them: I am the Lord.” The Law of the Ten Commandments is strictly just—it is such a Law as a man might make for himself if he studied his own best interests and had wisdom enough to frame it aright. It is a perfect Law in which the interests of God and man are both studied. It is not a partial Law, but impartial, complete, and covering all the circumstances of life. You could not take away one command out of the ten without spoiling both tables of the Law and you could not add another command without being guilty of making a superfluity. The Law is holy, just and good—it is like the God who made it—it is a perfect Law. Then, surely, it ought to have been kept. When men revolt against unjust laws, they are to be commended, but when a law is admitted to be *perfect*, then disobedience to it is an act of exceeding guilt.

Further, God not only gave a Law which ought to have been kept because of its own intrinsic excellence, but He also gave it in a very wonderful way which ought to have ensured its observance by the people. The Lord came down upon Mount Sinai in fire and the mountain was altogether on a smoke—and the smoke thereof ascended “as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.” And the sight that was then seen on Sinai and the sounds that were there heard, and all the pomp and awful grandeur were so terrible that even Moses—that boldest, calmest, quietest of men said, “I do exceedingly fear and quake.” The children of Israel, as they heard that Law proclaimed, were so amazed and overwhelmed with God’s display of His majesty and might, that they were ready enough to promise to keep His Commandments. The Law of God could not have been made known to mankind in grander or more sublime style than was displayed in the giving of that Covenant on Mount Sinai.

And, dear Friends, after the giving of the Law, did not God affix to it those terrible penalties which should have prevented men from disobeying His commands? "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them." "The soul that sins, it shall die." It was the capital sentence that was to be pronounced upon the disobedient—there could be no heavier punishment than that! God had, as it were, drawn His sword against sin, and if man had been a reasonable being, he ought *at once* to have started back from committing an act which he might be sure would make God his foe.

Moreover, the blessings that were appended to the keeping of the Law ought to have induced men to keep it. Look again at those words I quoted just now—"You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments: which if a man does, he shall live in them: I am the Lord." This did not mean that the man who kept God's Law should merely exist—there are some in these degenerate days who seek to make out life to be existence and death to be annihilation, but there is little likeness between the words, or between what those words mean. "He shall live in them," said the Lord concerning the man who kept His Law—and there is a fullness of blessedness couched in that word, "live." If men had kept the Covenant of the Lord—if Adam, for instance, had kept it in the Garden of Eden, the rose would have been without a thorn to tear his flesh, and the enjoyment of life would never have been marred by the bitterness of toil or grief.

But, alas, notwithstanding all these solemn sanctions of the ancient Covenant, men did not keep it. The promise, "This do, and you shall live," never produced any doing that was worthy to be rewarded with life, and the threat, "Do this, and you shall die," never kept any man back from daringly venturing into the wrong road which leads unto death! The fact is, that the Covenant of Works, if it is looked upon as a way of safety, is a total failure! No man ever persevered in it unto the end and no man ever attained unto life by keeping it. Nor can we, now that we are fallen, ever hope to be better than our unfallen covenant-head, Adam. Nor may we, who are already lost and condemned by our sinful works, dream for a moment that we shall be able to save ourselves by our works. You see, dear Friends, the first Covenant was in these terms—"You do right and God will reward you for it. If you deserve life, God will give it to you." Now, as you all know right well, that Covenant was broken all to pieces—it was unable to stand by reason of the weakness of our flesh and the corruptness of our nature!

So God set aside that first Covenant. He put it away as an outworn and useless thing and He brought in a new Covenant—the Covenant of Grace—and in our text we see what is the tenor of it. "I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." This is one of the most glorious promises that ever fell from the lips of Infinite Love. God said not, "I will come again, as I came on Sinai, and thunder at them." No, but, "I will come in gentleness and mercy, and find a way into their hearts." He did not say, "I will take two great tablets of stone and with My finger write out My Law before their eyes." No, but, "I will put My finger

upon their hearts, and there will I write My Law.” He did not say, “I will give promises and threats that shall be the safeguard of this new Covenant,” but, “I will, with My Spirit, graciously operate upon their minds and their hearts, and so I will sweetly influence them to serve Me—not for reward, nor from any servile motive, but because they know Me, and they love Me, and they feel it to be their delight to walk in the way of My Commandments.” O dear Sirs, may you all be sharers in the blessings of that new Covenant! May God say this of you and do this to you! And if so, we shall meet in the land of Glory, to sing unto the Grace of that eternal God who has worked so wondrously with us, and in us, and for us!

Coming directly to the text, I shall, first of all, speak upon the *meaning of this blessing*. Secondly, upon the *means whereby God bestows this blessing upon us*, trying to show you with what pencil the Lord writes upon the human heart. And, thirdly, I shall dwell for a few minutes upon the *exceeding Grace of this blessing*.

I. First, then, I am to speak upon THE MEANING OF THIS BLESSING—“I will put My Laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.” It means, first, that when God comes to deal with His own chosen people, to really save them, He makes them to know His Law. The Law still stands in the Old Testament and our blessed Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, has condensed it into one word, “Love.” And then He has expanded it throughout the whole of His earthly life to show us how it ought to be kept. So we sing—

***“My dear Redeemer and my Lord,
I read my duty in your Word,
But in Your life the Law appears
Drawn out in living characters.”***

But although we can read that Law in the Scriptures and see it worked out in the life of Christ, yet it is necessary that the Spirit of God should come and enlighten us with regard to it if we are *really* to know what it is. Otherwise, a man may hear the Ten Commandments read every Sunday and go on breaking them without ever knowing that he is breaking them! He may be keeping the letter of the Commandments and yet, all the while, be violating their spirit.

When the Holy Spirit comes to us, He shows us what the Law really is. Take, for instance, the Commandment, “You shall not commit adultery.” “Well,” says one, “I have not broken *that* Commandment!” “Stay,” says the Spirit of God, “till you know the spiritual meaning of that Commandment, for whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.” There is, also, the Commandment, “You shall not kill.” “Oh,” says the man, “I *never* killed anybody, I have not committed murder!” “But,” says the Spirit of God, “whoever hates his brother is a murderer.” When the Lord thus writes His Law upon our heart, He makes us to know the far-reaching power and scope of the Commandment. He causes us to understand that it touches not only actions and words, but *thoughts*, yes, and the most transient *imagination*s—the things that are scarcely born within us—the sights that pass in a moment across the mind, like a stray passenger who passes in front of the camera when a photographer is taking a view! The Spirit of

God teaches us that even these momentary impressions are sinful and that the very thought of foolishness is sin.

Did you, dear Friend, ever have the Truths of God truly written on your heart? If so, I will tell you how you felt—you abhorred yourself and you said, “Who can stand before this terrible Law? Who can ever hope to keep these Commandments?” You looked to the flames that Moses saw on Sinai and you shrank and trembled almost unto despair! And you entreated that these terrible words should not be spoken to you any more. Yet it was good for you to thus be made to know the Law of God—not in the letter of it, only, but in its cutting, crushing, killing spirit—for it works death to self-righteousness and death to all carnal boastings! When the Law comes, sin revives and we die—that is all that can come of it by itself. Yet it is necessary that there should be such a death as that and that there should be such a revival of sin that we may know the truth about it—and under the force of that truth may be driven to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the “end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes.” So, then, writing the Law in our heart means, first, making us know what the Law really is.

If that is done, the Lord is pleased, next, to cause His people to *remember that Law*. When a thing is “learned by heart,” you know the common meaning of that expression, even among our children. If they have learned a thing by heart rather than merely by rote, they have made it their own and it remains with them. A man with whom God the Holy Spirit deals is one who does not have to go to the 20th of Exodus to know what the Law is. He does not need to stop and ask concerning most things, “Is this right?” or, “Is this wrong?” He carries within him a balance and a scale, a standard and test by which he can try these things for himself! He has the Law of his God written upon his heart, so that, almost as soon as he looks at a thing, he begins to perceive whether there is evil in it or whether it is good. There is a sort of sensitiveness in his soul which makes him discern between good and evil. When God the Holy Spirit is dealing with him, there is a true, enlightened conscience within him, so that he no longer puts bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, or darkness for light and light for darkness—something within him tells him, “This is right,” or, “That is wrong.” It is a most blessed thing when this is the case and it is *always* the work of the Spirit of God!

I know that there is some sort of a conscience in most men. I am afraid it is a very small rush light in some and that it is almost blown out by their evil habits. They can even make themselves think that they are doing right when they are as wrong as wrong can be! But in a child of God there is a burning and a shining light which reveals the truth concerning sin. There is within him a something that cannot be silenced—this is that principle or power which John Bunyan calls, in his, *Holy War*, “Mr. Conscience the Recorder of Mansoul.” You know that when the city of Mansoul rebelled against the great King Shaddai and came under the sway of Diabolus, they shut Mr. Recorder Conscience up in a dark room, for they did not want to let him see what was being done. Yet, notwithstanding, when the old gentleman had his fits, he used to sorely

trouble the inhabitants of the guilty town—so they kept him under lock and key as much as possible. But when Mr. Recorder Conscience gets full liberty and lifts his brow into the sunlight, ah, Sirs, then are we guided in a very different way from that of ungodly men who follow their own evil course! Then does the Lord say, “I will put My Laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.” The Law is there to censure or to cheer! It is there to let us hear its voice say, “This is the way, walk in it.” Or it is there to say, “Stay where you are, go no farther.” Or, “Return, you backsliding daughter, and seek mercy of the Lord.”

God does more than that for His people. When He writes His Law in our heart, He makes us to *approve it*. An ungodly man wishes to alter God's Law. “There,” he says, “I do not like *that* Commandment, ‘You shall not steal,’ I should like to be a little bit of a trickster.” Another says, “I do not like that purity of which the minister spoke just now, I should like to indulge myself a little. Am I to have *no* pleasure?” But when the Law of the Lord is written in his heart, the man says, “The Law is right.” He would not alter it if he could! There is nothing that he hates more than the lowering of the tone of the Law of God, for he does not want a lax morality. “Oh, no,” he says, “let us have the highest form of righteousness that can be—and may God help me to live up to it!” Paul says, “I delight in the Law of God after the inward man.” And so is it with every true child of God—he cannot think of the holiness of God without, at once, saying, “I would not have Him other than He is—let Him be holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, for as such I can worship Him. But if He were less than that, I could not esteem Him.” If he hears of God's Justice, he delights even in that stern attribute, for he would not have an unjust God! It is a great thing when God leads a man to approve of all that is right. I do not mean merely to acknowledge that it is right, but to be *glad* that it is so, and to wish that in his own soul he were conformed to it.

There is a further writing of the Law in the heart when the man of God is made to *appropriate that Law*—not only to approve of it, but to approve of it for himself. There are many people who approve of laws as far as they keep their fellow men in check, but they do not want laws for themselves. “Oh,” says such a person, “of course everybody ought to be honest! My servants ought not to embezzle, they ought not to rob me, they ought to give me a good day's work for their wage.” When the argument is turned round and the question is about giving a good day's *wage for the work*, then they talk about political economy—which means that it is absolutely necessary that men should be dishonest! That is the pith and marrow of that political science—that every man will be selfish and that there is no hope that people will be otherwise. A man speaks that which is not true and sees no evil in it! But if another should say anything against his character, that is a very different matter, it is quite unpardonable! He may walk through the earth and devour men's characters as much as he pleases—that, of course, is mere criticism such as we ought all to expect. But if *he* is touched and there is a word spoken against him, it is cruel and unkind, and ought to be put down at once! When God writes the Law in a man's heart, he takes the Law more to himself

than he applies it to anybody else and his cry is not, "See how my neighbors sin," but, "See how I sin!" His clamor is not against his brother's fault, but against his own fault. No longer does he look out for motes in other men's eyes, but he is most concerned about the beam which he is quite sure is in his own eye—and he prays the Lord to remove it.

But, Brothers and Sisters, the Law is not fully written in the heart till a man, approving the Law and appropriating it to himself, feels he delights to obey it. "There," he says, "O my God, my highest happiness lies in doing as You would have me to do. I do not want any excuse or indulgence for sin, I want, above everything else, to be holy! It shall be my greatest pleasure to be pure. It shall be my perfect bliss to be perfectly holy. You have so written Your Law in my heart that every time my heart beats, it seems to beat for holiness. All the inclinations of my new-born nature are towards right, towards Your Truth, towards goodness, towards God." This, dear Friends, is to have the Law of the Lord written in your heart so as to delight in it after the inward man and to delight to practice it with the outward man, daily striving to make the entire life to be in accordance with the dictates of God's will! O Brothers and Sisters, is it not a wonderful thing that God shall ever make it as natural for us to be holy as once it was natural for us to be unholy? And that then we shall find it as much a joy to serve Him as once we thought it a pleasure *not* to serve Him, when, indeed, to deny ourselves shall cease to be self-denial? It shall be enjoyment to us to be *nothing*! It shall be delight to renounce everything of self and to cling close to God, and to walk in His ways! Then will be fulfilled in our experience the promise of our text, "I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts."

There is an old Latin proverb which says that "things that are written remain," and I quote that proverb, here, believing that it is intended in the text to teach us that when God's Law is written in our hearts, it is retained there. The lawyer always says, "You had better be careful what you say, but when you go to law, *never write* anything—hold back from the use of pen and ink, for that which is written remains." When God writes His Law in our hearts, He writes that which will never be blotted out! Once let Him take the pen in His hand and begin to write. "Holiness unto the Lord" right across a man's heart—and the devil, himself, can never remove that sacred line! So it is meant in our text as a part of the Covenant, that God will write, "holiness," so deeply upon the nature of His chosen people that they may sooner cease to be than cease to be holy! He will so put His Law into their hearts that you must tear their hearts out before you can tear out their conformity to the mind of God! Is not this a wonderful method of writing the Law in the heart? This is sanctification, indeed! May God work it in each one of you! And He will if you are Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, for if you trust in Christ you are in the Covenant! And being in the Covenant, this is the promise concerning you, "I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people."

Thus have I spoken upon the meaning of this blessing.

II. Now, for a few minutes, I am going to speak upon THE MEANS BY WHICH THIS BLESSING IS GIVEN—the pens that God uses when He writes upon human hearts—for I want you to notice this interesting process.

First, God writes his Law upon His people's hearts with *the pen of gratitude*. He tells them that Jesus Christ loves them and gave Himself for them. He gives them a sight of the bleeding Savior and tells them that their sin is put away by His death. Then, in return, they love the Lord with all their heart, mind, soul and strength, The best way to make a man keep a Law of God is to make him love the Law-Giver. We thought at one time that God was a cruel tyrant, but we have learned that He is our loving Father. We could not have thought that He would have given His only-begotten Son to die as the Substitute for us, but now that He has done so, we love Him with all our heart. There is one way of writing the Law of God in our heart by giving us gratitude as the motive of a new life. The natural man's only motive for being good is, "If I am good, I shall go to Heaven. And if I am bad, I shall go to Hell." That is the slave's motive, but the child of God is no more a slave—he has been delivered from his former bondage. He says, "I am saved by Sovereign Grace, therefore I shall go to Heaven. I shall never go to Hell—that cannot be! I am God's chosen one, washed in the blood of the Lamb and—

***'Now for the love I bear His name,
What was my gain I count my loss!
My former pride I call my shame,
And nail my glory to His Cross.***

Chosen, not for any goodness of my own, but entirely of the free and Sovereign Grace of God; tell me now what I can do to show my gratitude to such a gracious God." That is one way in which the Law of the Lord gets written in the hearts of His people.

Again, the Law is written in the heart by *repentance working hatred of sin*. Burnt children, you know, are afraid of the fire. Oh, what a horror I have had of sin ever since the day when I felt its power over my soul! It was enough to drive me mad when I felt the guilt of sin! It would have done so, I sometimes think, if I had continued much longer in that terrible condition. O Sin, *Sin*, I have had enough of you! You did never bring me more than a moment's seeming joy and with it there came a deep and awful bitterness which burns within me to this day! And now, being set free from sin, can I go back to it? Some of you, my Brothers and Sisters, came to Christ with such difficulty that you were saved, as it were, by the skin of your teeth. You were like Jonah. You had to come up from the bottom of the mountains—and out of the very belly of Hell you cried unto God! Well, that experience has made sin so bitter to you that you will not go back to it. The Law has been written in your heart with the steel pen of *repentance* and God has made sin to be a horrible evil to you!

Farther than that, and deeper than that, God also writes His Law upon the heart *in regeneration, wherein He creates in man a new and better life*. In regeneration, if I understand it at all, there is born in us a new nature. Our old nature is all sin and it will never be anything. You may doctor it as you will, but it is a body of sin and death, and it will always

remain so. But the new nature, which is born in us at our new birth, cannot sin because it is born of God! It is a living and incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever—and that new heart, that right spirit, from its very birth, from its very origin, from its very *nature*—has the Law and will of God engraved upon it. To the new nature, it is as natural to obey as to the old nature, it is natural to disobey. To the new nature, it is as much its element to live in holiness, as to the old nature, it is its element to live in sin. Thus, by regeneration, the Law of the Lord is written in the heart of His people.

Again, God writes His Law the more fully in the heart of His people *as they increase in knowledge*. The more we know of God, of this life, of the life to come, of Heaven and Hell, of the Person of Christ, of the Atonement and of every other subject that is taught us in the Scriptures, the more we see the evil of sin and the more we see the delights of holiness! Why, at the very first moment of his conversion, man is afraid of sin because of what he has seen of it, but as he begins to perceive how sin put the Christ to death, how sin dug the pit of Hell, how sin brought all the plagues and curses upon the human family and will continue to curse generations yet unborn—then the man says—“How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” Trained and educated in the school of Christ, the more he knows, the more he delights in the Law and the will of God!

And farther than this, dear Friends, the Law is written in the heart as God makes the new life in us to grow and increase. Some Christians, I am sorry to say, have but little spiritual life. I spoke yesterday with a man of God who has been preaching the Gospel in the New Hebrides where, till lately, the people were cannibals and, by God's Grace, he has brought hundreds, if not thousands of the former savages to become Christians! And the good Brother, when he spoke of his hardships, said, “Ah, but you do not know, in England, the joys of those who preach to cannibals!” True, most of the missionaries who first went out were killed and eaten—and our friend escaped by the skin of his teeth! I looked at him again to hear what his special and peculiar joys were. “Oh,” he said, “the joy of converting a cannibal to Christ is a greater blessing than can be known by you, who only bring ordinary people to the Savior! And,” he added, “I tell you that there are no Christians that I know of that excel my converted cannibals. If you want to see the Sabbath sacredly kept, you must come into my place and see how these people who used to be cannibals keep it! Those who were accustomed to eat their fellow men, now never rise without prayer, and never sit at the table without asking a blessing. There is not a Christian household but has family prayer in it, morning and evening. These people walk with God,” said the missionary, “and live close to Christ. And as I look at them, it seems such a joy to have been the means of bringing these cannibals to Christ.”

I am afraid there are many nominally Christian people who are not half as good as those converted cannibals. What is the reason? It is because they seem to have God's life poured into them abundantly, while some among us have but little of it. Now, when a man gets the life of God

abundantly poured into him, he is sensitive against sin, for he has the Law of God written in his heart and, thereby, God has made his conscience—

“Quick as the apple of an eye.”

He cannot bear to hear an ill word from others, or himself have an evil thought without being grieved and troubled. I have seen men who have professed to be Christians do many questionable things and yet never feel that they were doing any wrong. But as for the true Christian who lives near to God and who has been acting perfectly right as far as other people could judge, when he gets home, he begins blaming himself for something he did not do! As far as you can see, he has said and done the right thing, but he says, “No, I did not say it as earnestly as I ought to have said it. I did not do it as I ought to have done it.” As for myself, I know that when I live nearest to God, I am most conscious of sin and I believe that in proportion as you get away from God, you will begin to think that you are perfect. But if you live in the light of the Lord, sin will be a daily plague to you and you will be crying for the precious blood to wash you and make you clean! It is the man who is spiritually blind who talks about his holiness. But it is the one whose eyes have been opened of God—the really holy man whom God has brought near to Himself—who still cries out, “Holier! Holier! Higher.”—

***“Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!
Even though it is a cross that raises me.
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee!
Nearer to Thee!”***

And this is how God writes His Law in His people's hearts, by giving them so much light that they become tender and sensitive at the very approach of sin!

And, once more, *communing with Christ* is the best way of getting the Law written in the heart. He who is with Christ from morning to noon, and from noon to dewy eve and who can say at night—

***“Sprinkled afresh with pardoning blood,
I lay me down to rest,
As in the embraces of my God,
Or on my Savior's breast”***

he is the man who will have the Law of God written in his heart. How can he sin whose garments smell of the myrrh and aloes and cassia of communion with Christ? How can he come out of the ivory palaces of fellowship with his Lord and then go and live as others do, and sin against his God?

Thus, you see, dear Friends, how it is that the Lord writes His Law in the hearts of His people.

III. I have but a minute or two in which to speak upon THE GREAT GRACE WHICH IS CONTAINED IN THIS BLESSING. I do not know a greater gift than this that even God can bestow—the gift of His only-begotten Son! “I will put My Laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.”

O you poor Sinners, I may exhort you to keep the Law, but without the Spirit of God working within you, nothing will come of it! But if God puts His Law into your hearts, then you will keep it. Oh, that He might even now lead you to His dear Son that you might see His Law in the hand of Christ, and then feel that pierced hand dropping it into your heart to abide there forever!

The great Grace of this blessing lies here. First, *God does what man would not and could not do*. Man would not keep the Law. He refused to obey it, so God comes, in the splendor of His Grace, and changes his will, renews his heart, alters his affections so that what man would not do, God does! Man has also become so fallen that he cannot keep the Law. Sooner might the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots, than he that is accustomed to do evil learn to do well. But what man cannot do, by reason of the perversity of the flesh, God performs within him, working in him to will and to do of His good pleasure. Oh, what amazing Grace is this, which while it forgives our lack of will, also removes our lack of power!

And, dear Friends, is it not a wonderful proof of Grace that *God does this without destroying man in any degree whatever?* Man is a creature with a will—a “free will” as they sometimes call it—a creature who is responsible for his actions. So God does not come and change our hearts by a physical process, as some seem to dream, but by a *spiritual* process in which He never mars our nature, but sets our nature right! If a man becomes a child of God, he still has a will! God does not destroy the delicate machinery of our nature, but He puts it into proper gear. We become Christians with our own full assent and consent and we keep the Law of God not by any compulsion except the sweet compulsion of love! We do not keep it because we cannot do otherwise, but we keep it because we would *not do otherwise* because we have come to delight, therein—and this seems to me the greatest wonder of Divine Grace!

See, dear Friends, how different is the Lord's way of working and ours? If you knock down a man who is living an evil life and put him in chains, you can make him honest by force—or if you set him free and hem him round with Acts of Parliament, you may make him sober if he cannot get anything to drink! You may make him wonderfully quiet if you put a gag in his mouth, but that is not God's way of acting! He who put man in the Garden of Eden and never put any palisades around the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, but left man a free agent, does the same in the operations of His Grace. He leaves His people to the influences that are within them and yet they go right because they are so changed and renewed by His Grace that they *delight* to do that which once they loathed to do! I admire the Grace of God in acting thus. We would have taken the watch to pieces and broken half the wheels, and made new ones, or something of the kind. But God knows how to leave the man just as much a man as he was before his conversion and yet to make him so entirely a new man that old things have passed away, and all things have become new!

And this is very beautiful, too, that when God writes His Law in His people's hearts, He makes this the way of their preservation. When God's Law is written in a man's heart, that heart becomes divinely royal property, for the King's name is there and the heart in which God has written His name can never perish! Some years ago, my esteemed Brother, Mr. John B. Gough, out of his great love for me, sent me a very valuable walking stick. It must have cost him a large sum of money, for it was made of ebony and it had a gold head to it, with pieces of Californian quartz curiously worked into the head of the stick. I cannot say that it was of much practical use to me, but still I valued it as a present from Mr. Gough. One night a thief got into my house and stole my walking stick, and the man, of course, broke up the stick and took the gold from the head. He brought it down to a pawnbroker's not far from here. He had hammered and battered it as much as he could, but when the pawnbroker looked carefully at it, he saw the letters, "S-p-u-r-g-e-o-n."

"Oh," he said, to the man, "you stop a bit," which, of course, was just what the thief did not do! I got my gold back because my name was in it. Though the man hammered it, there was my name, and the gold was bound to come back to me—and so it did. Now, when the Lord once writes His name in your heart, He writes His Law within you. And though the devil may batter you, God will claim you as His own! Temptation and sin may assail you, but if the Law of the Lord is in your heart, you shall not give way to sin. You shall resist it, you shall be preserved, you shall be kept—for you are the Lord's.

This is the only way of salvation that I know of for any of you. First, you must be washed in the fountain filled with blood, and next, you must have the Law of God written in your inward parts. Then shall you be safe beyond fear of ruin. "They shall be Mine," says the Lord of Hosts, "in that day when I make up My jewels." Oh, blessed plan of salvation! May it be accepted by every man and woman here! And it can only be so by the work of the Spirit of God leading you to a simple trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Trust Christ to save you and He will do it, as surely as He is the Christ of God. God help you to trust Him now! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY. C. H. SPURGEON.

JEREMIAH 31:27-37.

Verses 27-33. *Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build and replant, says the Lord. In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But everyone shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eats the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge. Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I*

took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My Covenant they broke, although I was an husband unto them, says the Lord: but this shall be the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, says the Lord, I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. This is the central Truth of all Scripture. It is the basis of all Scripture. When Paul desires to set forth the Covenant of Grace, he appeals to this passage. Twice, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, he bases an argument upon it, and after quoting it, adds, "Whereof the Holy Spirit also is a witness to us." Brothers and Sisters in Christ, under the first Covenant we are ruined! There is no salvation for us but under this new Covenant—therefore let us read to our joy and comfort what the promises and provisions of that new Covenant are.

34. *And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, says the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.* Pardoned sin, as well as the change of nature, is implied in the writing of the Law upon the heart. Oh, what a privilege it is to be among these covenanted people! How shall we know whether we belong to them? The seal of the Covenant is faith in Christ—I mean the personal seal upon the heart and conscience. You believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are trusting alone to His atoning Sacrifice, then God is in Covenant with you, for Jesus is the Mediator of the new Covenant—and he who has Christ has the Surety of the Covenant—and he shall have, in due time, every blessing which that Covenant guarantees!

35-37. *Thus says the LORD, which gives the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divides the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of Hosts is His name: if those ordinances depart from before Me, says the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever. Thus says the LORD; If Heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, says the LORD.* Now Israel still stands as a people separate from all others and there is still before the literal seed of Israel a great and glorious future. But as for the *spiritual* Israel, who worship God in the Spirit and have no confidence in the flesh, God will sooner blot out the sun and moon than cast away His people, or any one of them. They shall all be His people and He shall be their God. He will preserve them and He will keep His Covenant with them forever and forever, blessed be His holy name, the name of Jehovah, the God of the Covenant which cannot be broken!

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

THE WONDROUS COVENANT

NO. 3326

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1912.

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

***“For this is the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put My Laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people.”
Hebrews 8:10.***

THE Doctrine of the Divine Covenant lies at the root of all true theology. It has been said that he who well understands the distinction between the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace is a master of divinity. I am persuaded that most of the mistakes which men make concerning the Doctrines of Scripture are based upon fundamental errors with regard to the Covenants of Law and of Grace. May God grant us now the power to instruct—and you the Grace to receive instruction on this vital subject.

The human race in the order of history, as far as this world is concerned, first stood in subjection to God under the Covenant of Works. Adam was the representative man. A certain Law was given him. If he kept it, he and all his posterity would be blessed as the result of obedience. If he broke it, he would incur the curse, himself, and entail it on all represented by him. That Covenant our first father broke. He fell—he failed to fulfill his obligations—and in his fall he involved us all, for we were all in his loins and he represented us before God. Our ruin, then, was complete before we were born! We were ruined by him who stood as our first representative. To be saved by the works of the Law is impossible, for under that Covenant we are already lost. If saved at all, it must be all quite a different plan, not on the plan of doing and being rewarded for it, for that has been tried—and the representative man upon whom it was tried has failed for us all. We have all failed in his failure! It is hopeless, therefore, to expect to win Divine favor by anything that we can do, or merit Divine blessing by way of reward!

But Divine Mercy has interposed and provided a plan of salvation from the Fall. That plan is another Covenant, a Covenant made with Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who is fitly called by the Apostle, “the Second Adam,” because He stood again as the Representative of man. Now, the Second Covenant, *as far as Christ was concerned*, was a Covenant of Works quite as much as the other! It was on this wise. Christ shall come into the world and perfectly obey the Divine Law. He shall also, inasmuch as the first Adam has broken the Law, suffer the *penalty of sin*. If

He shall do both of these, then all whom He represents shall be blessed in His blessedness and saved because of His merit. You see, then, that until our Lord came into this world, it was a Covenant of Works towards Him. He had certain works to perform, upon condition of which certain blessings would be given to us. Our Lord has kept that Covenant! His part in it has been fulfilled to the last letter! There is no commandment which He has not honored. There is no penalty of the broken Law which He has not endured! He became a Servant and obedient, yes, obedient to death, even the death of the Cross. He has thus done what the first Adam could not accomplish and He has retrieved what the first Adam forfeited by his transgression. He has *established* the Covenant, and now it ceases to be a Covenant of Works, for the works are all done!—

**“Jesus did them, did them all,
Long, long ago.”**

And now what remains of the Covenant? God on His part has solemnly pledged Himself to give undeserved favor to as many as were represented in Christ Jesus. For as many as the Savior died for, there is stored up a boundless mass of blessing which shall be given to them—not through their works, but as the Sovereign gift of the Grace of God, according to His Covenant promise by which they shall be saved!

Behold, my Brothers and Sisters, the hope of the sons of man! The hope of their saving themselves is crushed, for they are already lost! The hope of their being saved by works is a fallacious one, for they cannot keep the Law—they have already broken it! But there is a way of salvation opened on this wise—whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ—receives and partakes of the bliss which Christ has bought! All the blessings which belong to the Covenant of Grace through the work of Christ shall belong to every soul that believes in Jesus! Whoever works not, but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, unto him shall the blessing of the new Covenant of Grace be undoubtedly given!

I hope that this explanation is plain enough. If Adam had kept the Law, we would have been blessed by his keeping it. He broke it and we have been cursed through him. Now the Second Adam, Christ Jesus, has kept the Law—we are, therefore, if Believers, represented in Christ and blessed with the results of the obedience of Jesus Christ to His Father’s will. He said of old, “Lo, I come to do Your will, O God! Your Law is My delight.” He has done that will and the blessings of Grace are now freely given to the sons of men!

I shall ask your attention then, first, *to the privileges of the Covenant of Grace*. Secondly, *to the parties concerned in it*. This will be quite enough, I am sure, for consideration this evening during the brief period allotted to our sermon.

I. As to THE PRIVILEGES OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

The first privilege is that *to as many as are interested in it there shall be given an illumination of their minds*. “I will put My Law in their minds.” By nature we are dark towards God’s will. Conscience keeps up in us a

sort of broken recollection of what God's will was. It is a monument of God's will, but it is often hardly legible. A man does not care to read it—he is averse to what he reads there. "Their foolish heart was dark," is the expression of Scripture with regard to the mind of man. But the Holy Spirit is promised to those interested in the Covenant. He shall come upon their minds and shed light instead of darkness, illuminating them as to what the will of God is. The ungodly man has some degree of light, but it is merely intellectual. It is a light that he does not love. He loves darkness rather than light because his deeds are evil. But where the Holy Spirit comes, He floods the soul with a Divine luster in which the soul delights and desires to participate to the fullest degree! Brothers and Sisters, the renewed man, the man under the Covenant of Grace, does not need constantly to resort to his Bible to learn what he ought to do, nor to go to some fellow Christian to ask instructions. He has not got the Law of God now written on a tablet of stone, or upon parchment, or upon paper—he has got the Law written upon his own mind! There is now a Divine, Infallible Spirit dwelling within him which tells him the right and the wrong—and by this he speedily discerns between the good and the evil. He no longer puts darkness for light and light for darkness, bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! His mind is enlightened as to the true holiness and the true purity which God requires!

Just mark the men to whom this Light of God comes. By nature some of them are deeply depraved. All of them *are* depraved, but by *practice* some of them become yet further dark. Is it not marvelous that a poor heathen who scarcely seemed to recognize the distinction between right and wrong before the Spirit of God entered his mind, has afterwards, without needing to be taught all the precepts, individually, received at once the quick Light of a tender conscience which has led him to know the right and love it, and to see the evil and eschew it? If you want to civilize the world, it must be by preaching the Gospel! If you want to have men well instructed as to the right and the wrong, it must be by this Divine Instruction which only God, Himself, can impart. "I will do it," and oh, how blessedly He does it when He takes the man that loved evil and called it good, and so sheds a Divine beam into his soul that henceforth he cannot be perverse, cannot be obstinate, but submits himself to the Divine Will! That is one of the first blessings of the Covenant—the illumination of the understanding.

The next blessing is, "*And I will write My Law in their hearts.*" This is more than knowing the Law—ininitely more. "I will write the Law, not merely on their understandings, where it may guide them, but in their hearts where it shall lead them." Brothers and Sisters, the Holy Spirit makes men love the will of God, makes them delight in all in which God delights and abhor that which the Lord abhors! It is well said in the text that God will do this, for certainly it is not what a man can do for himself. The Ethiopian might sooner change his skin or the leopard his

spots! It is not what the minister can do, for though he may preach to the ears, he cannot write God's Law on the affections. I have marveled at the expression used in the text, "I will write My Law in their hearts." To write *on a heart* must be difficult work, but to write *in* a heart, in the very center of the heart—who can do this but God? A man cuts his name upon a tree in the bark and there it stands. And the letters grow with the tree—but to cut his name in the heart of the tree—how shall he accomplish this? And yet God does Divinely engrave His Will and His Law in the very heart and nature of man!

I know what the notion is about Christian people—that they do not conform to this and that custom because they are afraid—they would like to revel in the vanities of the world, but they do not care to encounter the penalties. Ah, you sons of men, you comprehend not the mysterious work of the Spirit! He does nothing of this sort! He makes not the child of God to be a serf, a slave, in fear of bondage, but He so changes the nature of men that they do not love what they once loved! They turn away with loathing from the things they once delighted in and can no more indulge in the sins which were once sweet to them than an angel could plunge himself down and wallow in the mire with the swine! Oh, this is a gracious work! And this is a blessed Covenant in which it is promised that we shall be taught the right, to know and love the right, and to do the right with a willing mind!

Am I addressing some tonight who have been saying, "I wish I could be saved." What do you mean by that? Do you mean you wish you might escape from Hell? Ah, well, I would to God you had another wish—namely, "Oh, that I could escape from sin! Oh, that I could be made pure, that my passions could be bridled! Oh, that my longings and my likings could be changed!" If that is your wish, see what a Gospel I have to preach to you! I have not come to tell you—do this, and do not do that. Moses tells you that—and the preacher of the Law speaks to you after that fashion—but I, the preacher of the Gospel, unveiling the Covenant of Grace tonight, tell you that Jesus Christ has done such a work for sinners that God, now, for Christ's sake, comes to them, makes them see the right and by a Divine work *upon* them and *in* them, makes them love holiness and follow after righteousness!

I count this one of the greatest blessings of which ever tongue could speak! I would sooner be holy than happy if the two things could be divorced. Were it possible for a man to always sorrow and yet to be pure, I would choose the sorrow if I might win the purity, for, Beloved, to be free from the power of sin, to be made to love holiness though I have spoken after the manner of men to you, is true happiness! A man that is holy is in order with the Creation—he is in harmony with God! It is impossible for that man to suffer long. He may for awhile endure for his lasting good, but as sure as God is happy, the holy must be happy! This world is not so constituted that in the long run holiness shall go with sorrow, for in eternity God shall show that to be pure is to be blessed, to be obedient

to the Divine Will is to be eternally glorified! In preaching to you, then, these two blessings of the Covenant—I have virtually preached to you the open Kingdom of Heaven—open to all such whom God’s Grace shall look upon with an eye of mercy!

The next blessing of the Covenant is—“*I will be to them a God.*” If any ask me what this means, I must reply, Give me a month to consider it. And when I had considered the text for a month, I should ask another month! And when I had waited a year, I should ask another year—and when I had waited till I grew gray, I would still ask the postponement of any attempt to fully open it up until eternity! “*I will be to them a God.*” Now, mark you, where the Spirit of God has come to teach you the Divine Will and make you love the Divine Will, God becomes to you—what? A Father? Yes, a loving, tender Father. A Shepherd? Yes, a watchful Guardian of His flock. A Friend? Yes, a Friend that sticks closer than a brother. A Rock? A Refuge? A Fortress? A high Tower? A Castle of defense? A Home? A Heaven? Yes, all that, but when He said “*I will be their God,*” He said more than all these put together, for, “*I will be to them a God,*” comprehends all gracious titles, all blessed promises and all Divine privileges! It comprehends—yes, now I stop, for this is Infinite, and the Infinite comprehends all blessings. “*I will be to them a God.*” Do you need provision? The cattle on a thousand hills are His—it is nothing to Him to give! It will not impoverish Him! He will give to you like a God! Do you need comfort? He is the God of all consolation—He will comfort you like a Lord. Do you need guidance? There is infinite wisdom waiting at your beck and call! Do you need support? There is eternal power, the same which guards the everlasting hills waiting to be your stay! Do you need Grace? He delights in mercy and all that mercy is yours! Every attribute of God belongs to His people in covenant with Him. All that God is or can be—and what is there not in that?—all that you can conceive and more! All the angels have and more! All that Heaven is and more! All that is in Christ, even the boundless fullness of Godhead—all this belongs to you, if you are in covenant with God through Jesus Christ! How rich, how blessed, how august, how noble are those in covenant with God, confederate with Heaven! Infinity belongs to you! Lift up your head, O child of God, and rejoice in a promise that I cannot expound, and you cannot explore! There I must leave it—it is a deep which we strive in vain to fathom!

Notice the next blessing, “*And they shall be to Me a people.*” All flesh belongs to God in a certain sense. All men are His by rights of Creation and He has an Infinite Sovereignty over them. But He looks down upon the sons of men and He selects some, and He says, “*These shall be My people, not the rest. These shall be My peculiar people.*” When the King of Navarre was fighting for his throne, the writer who hymns the battle, says—

***“He looked upon the foemen, and his glance was stern and high.*”**

He looked upon his people, and the tear was in his eye.”

And when he saw some of the French in arms against him—

***“Then out spoke gentle Henry, No Frenchman is my foe
Down, down, with every foreigner, but let your brethren go.”***

The king looked for his people even if they were in rebellion against him! He had a different thought towards them from what he had towards others. “Let them go,” he seemed to say, “they are my people.” So, mark you, in the great battles and strifes of this world, when Lord lets loose the dread artillery of Heaven, His glance is stern upon His enemies, but the tear is in His eyes towards His people. He is always tender towards them. “Spare My people,” He says, and the angels interpose lest these chosen ones should dash their feet against a stone!

People have their treasures, their pearls, their jewels, their rubies, their diamonds—and these are their peculiar stones. Now, all in the Covenant of Grace are the peculiar stones of God. He values them above all things else! In fact, He keeps the world spinning for them! The world is but a scaffold for the Church. He will send Creation packing when once it has done with His saints. Yes, sun, moon and stars shall pass away like worn-out rags when once He has gathered together His own elect and enfolded them forever within the safety of the walls of Heaven! For them time moves! For them the world exists! He measures the nation according to their number and He makes the very stars of Heaven to fight against their enemies and to defend them against their foes! “They shall be to Me a people.” The favor which is contained in such love it is not for tongue to express. Perhaps on some of those quiet resting places prepared for the saints in Heaven, it shall be a part of our eternal enjoyment to contemplate the heights and depths of these golden lines!

II. And now, Brothers and Sisters, I wish I had time to go over the other parts contained in the 11th and 12th verses of the Chapter, but I have not, for I have a practical business to do, and it is to enquire—FOR WHOM HAS GOD MADE THIS COVENANT?

I said He made it with Christ, but He made it with Christ as the Representative of His people. The question tonight for you, and for me, and for each one is, “Am I interested in Christ? Did Christ Jesus stand for me?” Now, if I were to say that Christ was the Representative of the whole world, you would not find any substantial advantage in that because the great proportion of mankind being lost, whatever interest they may have in Christ, it is certainly of no beneficial value to them as to their eternal salvation! The question I ask is—have I such a special interest in Christ that this Covenant holds good towards me so that I shall have, or so that I now have the enlightened mind, the sanctified affections and the possession of God to be my God? Be not deceived, my Brothers and Sisters—I cannot and you cannot turn over the leaves of the book of destiny! It is impossible for us to force our way into the cabinet chamber of the Eternal! I hope you are not deluded by superstitious ideas that you have had a Revelation made to you, or that there has been

some special sound or dream which makes any one of you think you are a Christian!

Yet on sounder premises I will try to help you a little. Have you already obtained any of these Covenant blessings? Have you got an enlightened mind? Do you now find that your spirit tells you which is the right and which is the wrong? Better still, have you got a love for that which is good? Have you got a hatred for that which is evil? If so, as you have got one Covenant blessing, all the rest go with it! Now, men and women, have you passed through a great change? Have you come to hate that which you once loved? If you have, the Covenant lies before you like Canaan before the ravished eyes of Moses on top of the mountain! Look now, for it is yours! It flows with milk and honey and it belongs to you—and you shall inherit it! But if there has been no such change worked in you, I cannot hold you out any congratulations, but I thank God I can do what may serve your turn! I can hold you out Divine Direction—the direction for the obtaining an interest in this Covenant and for clearing up your interest in it is simple. It is contained in few words. Mark well those three words—“Believe and live,” for whoever believes in Christ Jesus has everlasting life—which is the blessing of the Covenant. The argument is obvious. Having the blessing of the Covenant you must be in the Covenant! And being in the Covenant, Christ evidently must have representatively stood Sponsor for you. But says one, “What is it to *believe* in Christ?” Another word is a synonym to it. It is—*trust* Christ. “How do I know whether He died for me in particular?” Trust Him whether you know that or not. Jesus Christ is lifted up upon the Cross of Calvary as the Atonement for sin and the proclamation is given out, “Look, look, look and live!” And whoever will cast away his self-righteousness, cast away everything upon which he now depends—and will come and trust in the finished work of our exalted Savior, has, in that very faith, the token that he is one of those who were in Christ when He went up to the Cross and worked out eternal redemption for His elect! I do not believe that Christ died on the tree to render men salvable, but to save them! Not that some men might be saved “if,” but to really redeem them! And He did then and there give Himself a ransom. He paid their debts there. There cast their sins into the Red Sea and there made a clean sweep of everything that could be laid to the charge of God’s elect. You are one of His elect if you believe! Christ died for you if you believe in Him and your sins are forgiven you. “Well but,” says one, “how about that change of nature?” It always comes with faith! It is the next akin to faith. Wherever there is genuine faith in Christ, faith works love. A sense of mercy breeds affection. Affection to Christ breeds hatred to sin. Hatred to sin purges the soul—the soul being purged, the life is changed!

You must not begin with mending yourselves externally—you must begin with the new internal life and it is thus to be had—the gift of God through simply believing in Jesus! A slave who had been for some time

attending a place of worship, had imbibed the idea and a very natural one, too, that he was saved because he had been baptized. He had been to one of those places where they teach little children to say after this fashion, "In my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." "Now," said he, very simply and very plainly, for so the catechism teaches—and a gross delusion it is—"I am saved because I have been baptized! That has made me a child of God." Now the good man who sought to instruct him better could find no metaphor to suit his intellect better than taking him into the kitchen and showing him a bottle of black ink. "Now," he said, "I will wash it," and he washed the outside of the bottle and invited the man to drink out of it because it was clean. "No," said the man, "It is all black! It is all black—it is not clean because you have washed the *outside*." "Ah," said he, "and so it is with you! All that these drops of water could do for you—all that baptism could do for you is to wash the outside—but that does not make you clean, for the filth is all within!" Now, the work of the Covenant of Grace is not to wash the outside, not to clean the flesh, not to pass you through rites and ceremonies and Episcopal hands, but to wash the *inside*—to purge the heart, to cleanse the vitals, to renew the soul—and this is the only salvation that will ever bring a man to enter Heaven! You may go tonight and renounce all your outward vices—I hope you will. You may go and practice all church ceremonies. And if they are Scriptural, I wish you would. But they will do nothing for you, nothing whatever as to your entering Heaven if you miss one thing else—that is, getting the Covenant blessing of the renewed nature which can only be had as a gift of God through Jesus Christ—and as the result of a simple faith in Him who did die upon the tree!

I press the work of self-examination upon you all. I press it earnestly upon you Church members. It is of no avail that you have been baptized! It is of no avail that you take the sacrament. Avail? Indeed it shall bring a greater responsibility and a curse upon you unless your hearts have been by the Holy Spirit made anew according to the Covenant of Promise! If you have not a new heart, oh, go to your chambers, fall upon your knees and cry to God for it! May the Holy Spirit compel you to do so! And while you are pleading, remember the new heart comes from the bleeding heart, the changed nature comes from the suffering nature. You must look to Jesus, and looking to Jesus, know that—

***"There is life in a look at the Crucified One!
There is life at this moment for you!"***

These blessings I have spoken of seem to me to be a *great consolation and inspiration*. They are a great consolation to Believers. You are in the Covenant, my dear Brother, but you tell me you are very poor. But God has said, "I will be your God." Why, you are very rich! A man may not have a penny in the world, but if he has a diamond, he is rich. So if a man has neither penny nor diamond, if he has his God, he is rich! Ah, but your coat is threadbare and you do not see where means are to come

from to renew your apparel. “Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” You have the same God that the lilies have—shall He so clothe the grass of the field which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, and shall He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? I also said it was an inspiration and I think it is. It is an inspiration for us all to work for Christ because we are sure to have some results. I would, indeed I would, that the nations were converted to Christ. I would that all this London belonged to my Lord and Master and that every street were inhabited by those who loved His name! But when I see sin abounding and the Gospel often put to the rout, I fall back upon this—“Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure. The Lord knows them that are His.” He shall have His own! The infernal powers shall not rob Christ! He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied! Calvary does not mean defeat! Gethsemane a defeat? Impossible! The Mighty Man who went up to the Cross to bleed and die for us, being also the Son of God, did not there achieve a defeat but a victory! He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His day, and the pleasure in the Lord shall prosper in His hands! If some will not be saved, others shall. If, being invited, some count themselves not worthy to come to the feast, others will be brought in, even the blind, the crippled and the lame—and the supper shall be furnished with guests! If they come not from England, they shall come from the east, and from the west, from the north and from the south. If it should come to pass that Israel is not gathered, lo, the heathen shall be gathered unto Christ! Ethiopia shall stretch out her arms! Sinim shall yield herself to the Redeemer! The desert ranger shall bow the knee and the far-off stranger enquire for Christ! Oh, no, Beloved, the purposes of God are not frustrated! The eternal Will of God is not defeated! Christ has died a glorious death and He shall have a full reward for all His pain. “Therefore, be you steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ROMANS 5:1-11; PSALM 81:1-14.**

Romans 5:1. *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* The Gospel is full of “therefores,” it is above reason, but it is never against reason—it is the most reasonable thing under Heaven! “Therefore”—it is a matter of argument. You will have to read the previous Chapters to see how this conclusion flows naturally from what he had before taught by the Holy Spirit.

Let us linger over these sentences while we read them. “Being justified by faith.” Is it so? Are you, indeed made just by faith in Jesus Christ your Righteousness? Then you have peace this day and hour—peace

within your own conscience and with your fellow men—but what is much better, you have peace with God! As soon as we are justified by reliance on Jesus, we cease to have any quarrel with God and He has no quarrel with us! We are allies, we are in happy union, we have peace with God! Not shall have it by-and-by, but we have it *now* as our present glad possession because we are justified by faith. We are now in the enjoyment of perfect peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. “By whom also we have access by faith into this Grace wherein we stand.” Since we are at peace with God, we may enter His house. His door is open to us—we have Divine welcome unto His Grace and we abide in it—abide in it with certainty and full assurance!

2. *By whom also we have access by faith into this Grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the Glory of God.* Oh, what a comfort this is to be rejoicing, especially to be rejoicing in hope! It is better ahead—there may be clouds and darkness, here, but we can see the sunlight breaking yonder—“until the day breaks and the shadows flee away,” we will make hope to be our bright candle of the Lord! We “rejoice in the hope of the Glory of God, and not only so.” When we once get into God’s house, we rise higher in it—we go up another pair of stairs. “Not only so,” though that seems to be enough—to be rejoicing in the hope of the Glory of God, and to have access into His Grace and to have peace with Him because we are justified! But it is not only so—“we Glory in tribulations also.” We transform our troubles into gladness and glorying! We get spiritually enriched by tribulation!

3, 4. *And not only so, but we Glory in tribulations, also, knowing that tribulation works patience and patience, experience and experience, hope.* Another hope, or rather the same hope rising up into another form. We begin with rejoicing in the hope of the Glory of God by faith. Now we get a further hope which is born of experience—the things we have tasted and handled of the love of God create in us a more radiant hope inferred from what we have enjoyed.

5, 6. *And hope makes not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.* What is the connection here? Is it not this—that the Holy Spirit makes us feel what a wonderful love the love of God is to us because when we were without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly? Wonderful love! When we were Godless and Christless, in due time Christ *died* for us!

7. *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die.* Nobody would feel impelled to die for a man who is severely and strictly just. He may command our admiration, but not our affection. Aristides the Just is, indeed, at last banished—men cannot bear a man whose whole character is bare justice, for they are themselves usually so unjust. But “a good man”—he commands our love. A man of that character who is gratuitously kind, gracious and be-

nevolent, *perhaps*—and it is a bare *perhaps*—somebody might be found to die for such as he. It is not, however, very probable.

8. *But God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* He did the utmost for us when we were the least deserving of it! Oh, what a love is this! Let it be shed abroad in our poor stony hearts and commended by us to others.

9. *Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.* This is a resistless argument and should be the deathblow to all misgiving. If He died for us when we were unjust, will He let us perish, now that He has made us just and completely justified us? Impossible!

10. *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.* There are three points which strengthen the argument here, which you will readily see by reading it at your leisure. The Lord our God who justified us when we were enemies, by the death of His Son, will save us now that we are friends through the life of His Son. “And not only so.” Here we ascend again—it is ever higher and higher, something yet more—so that we are never at the end of this blessed record of mercy and Grace!

11. *And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the Atonement.* We are at one with God. We are perfectly reconciled to Him and we have at present, at this very moment, a great joy and delight in God!

Now we shall read together the 71st Psalm, just in order that we may see how good men in all ages have been assisted by their experience and their hope—and how their hope has grown out of their tribulation, their patience and their experience. The Old Man’s Psalm. You can remember it, dear Friends, who are aged, by its being 71—it is just past the three-score years and ten!

Psalms 71:1. *In You, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.* There is his trust and there is his fear. His trust he dares to avow, his fear he turns into a prayer.

2, 3. *Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline Your ear unto me, and save me. Be You my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: You have given commandment to save me; for You are my rock and my fortress.* “Be you my strong habitation whereunto I may continually resort.” Not merely now and then a hiding place in emergencies, but my constant abode, my home—so that from morning to night I may come to You and feel myself secure. “You have given commandment to save me; for You are my rock and my fortress.” You see he knows that God has commanded Nature, Providence and His Grace to protect him! He has commanded His angels—indeed, He has commanded all His forces to protect David for this reason—that David feels an inward rest and peace in God. That calm, that Divine repose expressed in the

words “You are my rock and my refuge,” are the tokens that God has given commandment to save us.

4. *Deliver me, O my God, out of the hands of the wicked, out of the hands of the unrighteous and cruel man.* Two iron hands are trying to pull him down, but he cries to God, whose one almighty hand can set him free!

5. *For You are my hope, O Lord God: You are my trust from my youth.* Happy man that can look back upon a youth spent in God’s fear, for if we have trusted God in our youth, depend upon it, He will never cast us away!

6. *By You have I been held up from the womb: You are He that took me out of my mother’s womb: my praise shall be continually of You.* When we could not help ourselves, in the very moment of our birth, God took care of us! And He will take care of us even to the end. Men and women who are old should remember how carefully the Lord nursed them when they were infants—and if you come to a second childhood, you shall still have the same God!

7. *I am as a wonder unto many.* They cannot make me out! I am a blessed problem and puzzle to them—it seems so strange that being so much afflicted I am yet so much upheld!

7. *But You are my strong refuge.* Yes! There is the answer to the riddle. If God is with us, men may well wonder, but He will always help us.

8-9. *Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your honor all the day. Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength fails.* A prayer which both young and old may offer, for if we live long enough, that time of weakness will surely come. There are many men who cast off their old servants—but God does not. When we are worn out, He will still bless us.

10-14. *For my enemies speak against me and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, saying, God has forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him. O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help. Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonor that seek my hurt. But I will hope continually and will yet praise You more and more.* In the 8th verse he had said, “Let my mouth be filled with Your praise.” That is a mouthful! Now he says, “I will praise You more and more.” As if he needed more mouths wherewith to praise! More room for his heart’s grateful thanksgiving to God! “I will praise You more and more.”

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

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

AN EARNEST WARNING AGAINST UNBELIEF NO. 3217

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1910.

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

***“And to whom swore He that they should not enter into His rest,
but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not
enter in because of unbelief.
Hebrews 8:18, 19.***

ALL the histories of Scripture are written for our examples, but especially the story of the Israelites in the wilderness, which is given to us at a length far exceeding the value of the narrative unless it is intended for purposes of spiritual instruction, for it occupies four books of the Old Testament and those, by no means, short ones! These things were written that we might see ourselves in the Israelites as in a mirror—and so might be warned of dangers common to us and to them—and be guided to a worthier use of the privileges which we enjoy. Always read Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy with this view—“This is the story of the Church of God in the wilderness—I would see how God dealt with them and how they dealt with Him, and from this learn lessons that may be useful to me in my own pilgrimage to the eternal rest.”

The great promise which was given to Israel was Canaan, that choice land which God had of old allotted to them. “When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.” He made Palestine to be the center of worship, the joy of all lands, the seat of His oracle and the place of His abode. In the wilderness the tribes were journeying towards this country and it was a very short distance from Egypt, so that they might almost at once have taken possession of the land, and yet it cost them forty years’ travelling! If you trace their travels, you will see that they ran a perpetual zigzag, backward and forward, to the right and to the left. Sometimes they were actually journeying away from the promised rest, plunging into the deeps of the howling wilderness—and all, we are told, because of their unbelief! The land itself flowed with milk and honey. It was a land of brooks and rivers, a land upon the surface of which all choice fruits would grow, and out of whose bowels they could dig copper and iron. It was the choicest of all lands and will yet again become so when there is an end of the accursed rule which now makes it desolate. Once more, under decent, settled rule and properly irrigated, it will again bloom and become such a country as all the world besides cannot match! This was the promised land and into it they were to enter—and there to multiply and increase as the stars of Heaven—and to be a nation of kings and priests unto God.

But “they could not enter in because of unbelief.” This, alone, shut them out.

Brothers and Sisters, Canaan is a type to us of the great and goodly things of the Covenant of Grace which belong to Believers. But if we have no faith, we cannot possess a single Covenant blessing! This day, in the proclamation of the Gospel, the demand is made of faith in God. And if there is no faith, no matter how rich the Gospel, how full its provisions and how precious the portion which God has prepared, none of us can ever enter into the enjoyment of them!

Some of you, because of unbelief, have not entered into the rest which God gives to His people even here below (“for we which have believed do enter into rest”) and into the rest which remains—the blessed *Sabbath* of the skies—you will not be able to enter because of unbelief. This pains and troubles me, but so it is. Moses wrote a mournful Psalm which began, “Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations,” and then he went on to weep and bewail the transitory nature of man’s estate. He wrote it while he was seeing forty funerals, at least, every day, for it required an average of forty deaths per diem to carry off all the people that came out of Egypt in the forty years. Their days were spent in bewailing the dead so that it *was true of them as it is not true of us*, “All our days are passed away in Your wrath.” They had to mourn and sigh with Canaan but a little way ahead! They might have been laughing in its glades, sunning themselves in its plains, feasting on its figs and grapes and corn, but instead, there they were—pining and dying, digging graves and expiring—for “they could not enter in because of unbelief.” Many, many, many this day are tormenting themselves with needless despondency, shivering in fears they need not know and vexed with plagues they need not feel because they fail to rest in Christ through unbelief! Alas, myriads more are descending into the lake that burns with fire and they know no rest—and never shall know any! For them the harps of angels never sound! For them the white robes are not prepared because the unbelieving must have their portion in the Lake of Fire! Oh, that God would now deliver them from this dreadful sin of unbelief!

I have only three remarks to make. And the first is that *these were a highly-favored people, yet they could not enter in because of unbelief*. Secondly, that *the sole and only thing, according to the text, which shut them out was unbelief*. And that, thirdly, *there were other people, their own sons and daughters, who, being delivered from this unbelief, did enter in*. That must have made the case more clear against them because their little ones, who they said should be prey, were, nevertheless, permitted, each one, to stand in his lot. God’s purpose was not frustrated because of man’s unbelief! “If we believe not, yet He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself.”

I. First, then—THESE WERE A HIGHLY-FAVORED PEOPLE, YET THEY COULD NOT ENTER IN BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF.

Mark you, this was not said of Egyptians, Amorites or Philistines! No, it was said of Israelites who occupied the position of those who, in the New Testament, are called the “children of the kingdom”—many of whom will be cast out. These are the persons to whom it may be truly said, “Be

you sure of this, that the Kingdom of God is come near unto you.” The dust of the feet of God’s servants will be shaken off against you, but yet you have heard the message of mercy and you have been as highly favored as Bethsaida and Chorazin when they heard the Word of God which, through its rejection, worked for them a more intolerable doom!

Now, think of it. *These Israelites had seen great wonders worked.* These men were in Egypt during those marvelous plagues. What times to live in, when they heard of miracle after miracle, peals of God’s great thunder when He made His storm to beat about the head of proud Pharaoh! These men had seen the waters turned into blood and the fish floating dead upon the stream. They had seen the diseases on the cattle and the great hailstones which destroyed the harvest. They had been in the light when all the Egyptians were in the darkness that might be felt! They had seen the plagues of locusts and of lice—and all the terrors of the Lord when Jehovah took arrow after arrow out of His quiver and shot them against the hard heart of Pharaoh. They had all eaten of the paschal lamb on that dread night when Egypt sorely wept because the chief of all their strength had been killed in all the dwellings of the sons of Ham! They had gone out with their kneading-troughs in haste to escape from the land of bondage—brought forth with a high hand and an outstretched arm. These very men had been with Moses when Pharaoh pursued them and when that lifted rod split the Red Sea and Israel found an open channel where of old the waves had perpetually rolled! They had marched through the depths as through the wilderness and they had seen the eager waters leap back again into their place and drown all Egypt’s chivalry! They had heard the song of Miriam, “Sing you to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” Yet “they could not enter in because of unbelief.”

And, oh, Brothers and Sisters, there are some among you who have seen great marvels worked by God! You have known the gift of His dear Son so as to be assured of the fact—and to see it with your mind’s eyes—though you have not believed unto salvation. You know what God has worked for His people! You know how He delivered them and saved them by the blood of His Son. You have been present when the power of the Lord has swept through the audience as the wind sweeps through the forest and breaks the cedars of Lebanon! You have known the mighty works which God has done in the midst of the congregation! Your eyes have seen them and your fathers have also told you of the wondrous things which He did in their day and in the old time before them! And yet, with all this before you, and your mother in Heaven, and your sister in the Church of God, and your friends saved, you cannot enter in because of unbelief! Ah, the Lord will not have mercy upon you because of what you have seen, for so much light is but an aggravation of the guilt of your unbelief! And, instead of pleading in your favor, it demands justice on those that believe not after all they have seen!

To these Israelites great things had been revealed, for during their sojourn in the wilderness, they had been scholars in a gracious school. You, yourselves, have marvelled that they did not learn more. What glo-

rious marches those were through the wilderness when the mountains saw You, O God, and they trembled when Sinai was altogether on a smoke! To what other people did God ever speak as He spoke to them? To whom did He give the tablets of Divine Commandments written with His own mysterious pen? Where else did He dwell between the cherubim and shine forth with glorious majesty? Where else did He reveal Himself in type and shadow, by priest and sacrifice and altar? Where else was heard so sweetly holy Psalms and daily prayer? Where else smoked the morning and the evening lamb, God teaching by all these? And yet, when they heard, they provoked! When they were taught, they refused to learn! When they were called, they went not after Him. Their hearts were hardened and they believed not the Lord their God!

We too, have enjoyed a clear Revelation. We have heard the Gospel more plainly than the Israelites ever did. This blessed Book has more light in it than Moses could impart and the preaching of the Gospel, where it is done affectionately and earnestly, and by the help of the Spirit of God, is a greater means of Grace to the soul than all the sacred rites of the tabernacle! Shall it be with us as with them? "They could not enter in because of unbelief"—shall we labor under the same disability? Sharers in solemn feasts and yet their carcasses fell in the wilderness! Partakers of countless blessings, favored with the Light of God and yet shut out from Jehovah's rest because they believed not! Will this also be our portion?

Remember, also, that *they were a people with whom God had great patience*. Has it ever struck you—the great patience which must have been exercised in 40 years of provocation? I put it to any man here who has a good temper and is very calm and cool and singularly forgiving—how long could you stand provocation? Brother, if they did always provoke you intentionally, willfully and repeatedly, how long could you bear it? Ah, you could not be *provoked* one-half as long as you think you could, without, at least, coming to blows. When Jesus said to His disciples that if a brother should trespass against them seven times in a day, and seven times a day should turn and say, "I repent," they should forgive him—the very next thing we read is that the Apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith," as much as to say, "Flesh and blood can never attain to *that*, Lord! You must increase our faith if we are to do *that*." But *forty years' provocation*—what do you think that can do? Some men bear provocation well because they cannot return it, on the principle mentioned in Cowper's ballad—

***"So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright."***

But when a man knows his power to end the provocation and to deliver himself, he is not so slow to ease him of his adversary. See the gentleness of the Lord! Forty years He is provoked! One would have thought that, surely, in that time these people would turn and repent. Moses, himself, I think, in the greatest agony of his prayer, could only have said, "Lord, give them 12 months in which they may mend their ways." That gracious intercessor who is mentioned in the parable of the fig tree only said, "Let it alone this year, also." That was all. But this was *forty years!*

A fruitless tree standing for 40 years! Why cumberst it the ground? Oh, the stupendous mercy of God! But they could not enter into His rest after all. Will it be the same with you who have heard the Gospel for many years? What is to become of you? When so much patience is lost upon you, what must happen next? I scarcely feel as if I can pity you. I seem as if I pitied God that He has borne your indifference so long as the only return for His great love! In what manner has He acted that you should so ungenerously treat Him and continue to provoke Him? I fear it will, before long, be said of you, “they could not enter in because of unbelief.”

Once more, only, on this point. *These people had also received great mercies.* It was not merely what they had seen, what they had been taught and the long-suffering they had enjoyed—they had received very remarkable favors. They drank of the Rock which followed them. And the manna fell every morning fresh from Heaven for them. Men did eat angels’ food! They had a cloudy pillar to guide and shield them by day—and that same pillar at night became a light of fire and so lit up the canvas city all night long. The Lord was a wall of fire round about them and a glory in their midst! Will you think, dear Friend, what God has done for you from your childhood until now? Perhaps you found yourself upon a mother’s lap and she was singing of Jesus. And as you grew up, you dwelt in a family circle where that dear name was a household word. By-and-by, you were led to a godly teacher to be taught more about Jesus. And since then you have heard from the pastor’s mouth, a message which he tries to steep in love whenever he delivers it. Then think of the Lord’s gracious Providence. You have been fed and cared for. Perhaps you have been brought very low, but you have had food and raiment. Others are pining in the workhouse and you have, probably, a competence—or you are in health and are able to earn your livelihood. And in times of sickness, God hears you and keeps you from death. You have been preserved in accidents and here you are, kept alive with death so near! Will you not turn unto the Lord? For if not, He will not always spare you. Earth feels your weight too much for her and almost asks God to let her open a grave for the wretch who refuses to love His Creator! Time, itself, is getting impatient of your sin and hurrying on the hour when your allotted span will be over—and you will be forced into a dread eternity! O Soul, Soul, highly-favored as you are, it seems so sad a thing that of you it should be said, “*He* could not enter in,” or, “*she* could not enter in”—“because of unbelief.”

II. And now a few words upon our second head. NOTHING BUT UNBELIEF SHUT THEM OUT. “They could not enter in because of unbelief.”

It was not through great sin in other respects although they were a sinful people. God was ready to forgive them everything else but unbelief. And had they been but willing and obedient, the times of their ignorance He would have winked at. He had provided sacrifices on purpose to take away sins of ignorance and multitudes of other sins, but nothing takes away the sin of unbelief, as long as it remains in the heart. You must be Believers, or the blood of Jesus Christ, itself, shall never be sprinkled upon you to your cleansing! However great your sins may have been, all

manner of sin and iniquity shall be forgiven you if you believe. The greatness of your sin shall not shut you out of Heaven—only unbelief will stop the way.

Neither, my dear Brothers and Sisters, *would their other evil tendencies have kept them out of Canaan*. God knew what they were. They had been a race of slaves in Egypt and it is not easy for a nation, long in bondage, to rise to the dignity of freedom—the Israelites in the wilderness were people of a low type, much degraded by slavery—and God was therefore lenient with them. Many laws He did not make because He knew they would not keep them—and there were some things which He permitted them which could not be permitted us. “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to put away your wives,” said Jesus. The Lord was very gentle towards their moral weakness and bore with them as a nurse with her children. But when it came to unbelief—a doubt of Him who was so clearly God, a denial of His power, His faithfulness, His Truth—then they were shut out of Canaan as with an iron gate.

My Brothers and Sisters, they were *not unbelieving from lack of evidence*, yet they had not more than you have, because most of you have abundant evidence of the truth of the Gospel. The Bible to you has been God’s Book from your childhood and you take its Inspiration for granted and it is, therefore, inexcusable if you do not trust Christ! If a man’s skepticism includes a doubt of the existence of God, or the truth of Scripture, we will talk to him another time. But with most of you there are no such questions, and the Lord Jesus might well demand of you, “If I tell you the truth, why do you not believe Me?” If before the Judgment Seat of Christ a man shall be forced to confess, “I believe the Bible to be God’s Word,” I cannot imagine the apology which he can frame in his heart for not having believed in Jesus Christ! To you, then, there is no lack of evidence—and if you are shut out of Heaven, your own willful unbelief must bear the blame!

The Israelites were *not unbelieving from lack of encouragement* for as I have already shown you, the Lord sweetly encouraged them to believe in Him by the great things He did for them and by His gentle dealings day by day. Most of you have been gently persuaded and encouraged to trust in the Lord Jesus. How blessedly the Word of God has worded its invitations so as to suit the timorousness of poor trembling sinners! And as a preacher, I can honestly say that I lay out all my wits to think of Truths of God which might cheer desponding souls! God, who abounded to me in all goodness and mercy and is bringing me tenderly to His feet, has made me long after souls that I may bring them to Him! If you have not believed, it has not been for lack of invitations, expostulations, encouragements and words of consolation. No, you will not be able to blame the Bible or the preacher! Unbelief of the most wanton kind will be chargeable to you and will shut you out of God’s rest!

Nor would it have been true if the Israelites had said that they could not enter in because of difficulties. There was the Jordan before them and when they entered the land, there were cities walled to Heaven, and giants before whom they felt like grasshoppers. Yes, but that did not hinder them, for God divided the Jordan, made the walls of Jericho to fall

flat to the ground and sent the hornets before them to chase out the giants! Israel had little more to do than to go up and take the spoil!

Now, Soul, there is no difficulty between you and eternal life which Christ either has not removed already or will not remove as you believe in Him. As for your iniquities, when you believe, they are gone—the Jordan is divided. As for your inbred sins, He will surely drive them out, little by little, when you believe in Him. As for your old habits, which are like the high walls of the Canaanite cities, they shall fall down at the sound of the ram's horn of faith! Only believe and you shall enter into rest! Trust in God, and impossibilities shall vanish and difficulties shall become a blessing to you. Nothing hinders you except that *you will not believe*. And if you will not believe, neither shall you be established. "If you believe not," says Christ, "that I am He, you shall die in your sins." "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." This is the sin of which I pray the Spirit of God to convict you—"Of sin because they believe not on Me."

III. The third head is that SOME DID ENTER IN. These were their own children and I have been wondering whether if I should preach in vain to a whole generation of those who reject Christ, I might yet hope that their children would rise up to call the Redeemer blessed! Dear young man, do not follow in your unbelieving father's footsteps! Dear girl, do not imitate the indecision, the limping between two opinions which you have seen in your mother! If her carcass must fall in the wilderness, there is no reason why yours should. Is it not a great mercy that the Lord does not reject us because of the sins of our fathers? Though you were a child of shame, yet you may be a child of Divine Grace! Though your pedigree were dishonorable, your end may be glorious! If the history of your ancestors is full of unbelief and rejection of the Lord, yet this need be no reason why you should perish with them!

Look at the effect of this upon the fathers, as they looked upon their sons and said, "That boy of mine will have a house and home in the holy land, but I must die in the desert. That girl of mine will be among the merry wives that make joy in Eshcol and that go up to the house of the Lord in Zion—but I must be buried in this waste of sand, for the Lord has sworn in His wrath that I shall not enter into His rest." Fathers and mothers, how do these things suit you? I am sure if it were my lot to see my boys rejoicing in the Lord while I was an unbeliever and could not enter in because of unbelief, I could not bear it! I could not bear it! How I wish that your children would entice you to Christ! I have known it happen by the influence of dear departing infants. Many a time the Lord has taken a babe away from its mother's breast, to her grief at first, but to her salvation in the end! The shepherd could not get the sheep to follow till he took up its lamb and carried it in his bosom—then the mother would go wherever he liked. Perhaps the Lord has done that with some of you on purpose that you may follow Him. Do you want Him to come and take another little one? Ah, He may, for He loves you! If one is not enough, He may take another till, at last, you follow the Shepherd's call. If you will not follow Jesus, you cannot enter where your babes have

gone! Unbelieving Mother, you shall not see the heavenly field wherein your little lambs are resting—you are divided from them forever! Unbelieving Father, you cannot follow your sons—your believing offspring are with God, but you must be cast out from His Presence. Can you endure this?

O, impenitent Sinner, do you not know that God's purpose shall not be frustrated? If *you* will not have Christ, others will! If *you* will not come to the banquet of His love, He will gather the wanderers and the outcasts, for His wedding shall be furnished with guests! As surely as the Lord lives, Christ shall not die in vain! Heaven shall not be empty and the sacred orchestra of the skies shall not lack musicians! If you count yourselves unworthy, others whom you have despised shall be welcomed to the feast of love! Harlots and outcasts, His mighty Grace will save—but you, the children of the kingdom—shall be cast into outer darkness where weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth are heard! Can you bear it? Can you bear to think of it? If *you* can, I cannot! When I think of any of my hearers perishing, I feel like Hagar when she could not help her child and, therefore, laid him under the bushes and went away saying, "Let me not see the death of the child!" One of you lost? One of you lost? It is too much for me to think of! Yet to many of you the Gospel has been preached in vain, for the hearing of it has not been mixed with faith. The Lord have mercy upon you!

To me it is especially appalling that a man should perish through willfully rejecting the Divine salvation. A drowning man throwing away his lifebelt, a poisoned man pouring the antidote upon the floor, a wounded man tearing open his wounds—any one of these is a sad sight—but what shall we say of a soul putting from it the Redeemer—and choosing its own destruction? O Souls, be warned and forbear from eternal suicide! There is still the way of salvation—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." To believe is to trust. I met with one the other night who had imbibed the notion that saving faith was simply to believe that the Doctrines of the Word of God and the statements therein made are true. Now faith *includes* that, but it is much more! You may believe all this Book to be true, and be lost notwithstanding your belief! You must so believe it as to act upon it by trusting. "Trust what?" you ask. Let us alter the question before we answer it. "Trust *Whom*?" You have to trust in a living Person—in the Lord Jesus Christ who died as the Substitute for those who trust Him—and lives to see that those whom He bought with blood are also redeemed from their sins by power and brought home to Heaven. Trust Jesus Christ, Soul! Have done with yourself as your confidence and commit your soul unto the keeping of the faithful Redeemer!

Have you done so? Then, even if the clock has not ticked once since you believed in Jesus Christ, you are as surely saved as if you had been a saint these 20 years, for he that believes in Him is not condemned! This declaration makes no stipulation as to time. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." God grant that you may obey the heavenly precept, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
HEBREWS 2; 3.**

Hebrews 2:1. *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.* That is to say, because Jesus is so great, because the Truths which He came to reveal are so infinitely important, “therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.” For sometimes, we seem to let them slip. We grow old. Our mind is dull. Our heart is occupied with other matters and we let these heavenly things leak out, or drift by us, as if we were not concerned in them.

2, 3. *For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?* Listen! “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” Not if we resist it, reject it, despise it, oppose it—but if we *neglect* it! If a man is in business, it is not necessary that he should commit forgery in order to fail—he can fail by simply neglecting his business. If a man is sick, he need not commit suicide by taking poison—he can do it just as surely by neglecting to take proper medicines! So is it in the things of God—neglect is as ruinous as distinct and open opposition! “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?”

3, 4. *Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?* Observe, then, that this Gospel comes to us by Christ and it is confirmed to us by His Apostles, and further confirmed by those signs and wonders, and divers miracles which God sent as the seals of Apostolic teaching! So that this spell is not one about which we can raise any question whatever—it comes by a Medium which we must not dare to question—it has confirming seals in it which it is blasphemous for us to dispute! Oh, how gladly should we receive it! How tenderly should we treat it! How devoutly grateful should we be for it and how earnestly should we comply with all its requirements!

5. *For unto the angels has He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.* God has not made angels to be the preachers of the Gospel. Doubtless they derive some happiness from it, if only from the sight of those converted under it, but it is in no sense under the government of angels.

6-8. *But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that You are mindful of him? Or the son of man, that You visit him? You made him a little lower than the angels; You crowned him with glory and honor, and did set him over the works of Your hands: You have put all things in subjection under his feet.* It is so, in a measure, in the natural world. Man is made to be the master of it—and the ox and the horse, with all their strength—must bow their necks to man. And the lion and the tiger, with

all their ferocity, must still be cowed in the presence of their master. Yet this is not a perfect kingdom which we see in the natural world. But, in the spiritual world, man is *still* to be supreme for the present and, therefore, Christ becomes not an angel, but a man! He takes upon Him that nature which God intends to be dominant in this world and in that which is to come.

8. *For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.* We see not yet man the master of everything. Not even Christ, the model Man, the Head of all men. While He was here below, He was not a ruling Lord, but a suffering Servant. He said to His disciples, "I am among you as He that serves." Yet it is in Him that the dominion once given to man is to be seen most clearly displayed.

9. *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor.* We see that by faith. We see Jesus not merely as God, but as the God-Man exalted "far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion."

9, 10. *That He, by the Grace of God, should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.* [See Sermon #2619, Volume 45—THE CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Not that Christ needed to be made perfect in Nature, but perfect in His capacity to be the Captain of our salvation—complete in all the offices which He sustains toward His redeemed people. He must be a Sufferer that He may be a Sympathizer—and hence His sufferings made Him perfect.

11. *For both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one.* [See Sermon #2418, Volume 41—"ALL OF ONE"—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] He who sets them apart and they who are set apart "are all of one." They are of one nature and they have one destiny before them.

11. *For which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.* Does not this bring very sweetly before you the close relationship of Christ to His people? He has espoused their nature and He acknowledges it by calling them brethren!

12. *Saying, I will declare Your name unto My brethren, in the midst of Your church will I sing praise unto You.* The Apostle was writing to Hebrews and, therefore, he quoted from the books with which they were familiar. He here quotes the 22nd Psalm as the words of the Messiah.

13. *And again, I will put My trust in Him. And again, Behold I and the children which God has given Me.* There are some passages which we should never have thought related to the Messiah if the New Testament had not told us that they do. Hence I have no doubt that we much more often err in not seeing Christ in the Old Testament than in seeing Him there, for there may be many other passages besides these which are supposed to speak of Christ which do speak of Him.

14. *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He*

might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. [See Sermon #166, Volume 4—THE DESTROYER DESTROYED—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] By His own death, Christ broke that evil power which brought death into the world with its long trail of woe! He did this, not by His example, not even by His life, but by His death! Therefore let those who speak slightingly of His atoning Sacrifice see their folly, for it is through death that Christ destroys “him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

15, 16. *And deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.* [See Sermon #90, Volume 2—MEN CHOSEN—FALLEN ANGELS REJECTED—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Christ’s great mission was not to save angels, but to save men. Therefore He came not in the nature of angels, but in the nature of men.

17, 18. *Therefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.*” And this is the reason why He suffered—and why He became a man capable of suffering—that He might be able to succor the tempted. It was for this that Christ left Heaven, for this He was born of the virgin, for this He lived and for this He died, that He might be “able to succor them that are tempted.” [See Sermons #487, Volume 9—A TEMPTED SAVIOR—OUR BEST SUCCOR; #1974, Volume 33—THE SUFFERING SAVIOR’S SYMPATHY and #2885, Volume 50—CHRIST’S SYMPATHY WITH HIS PEOPLE—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

Hebrews 3:1. *Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.* Think of Him, think how great He is, think what attention He deserves from all who believe in Him!

2-6. *Who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this Man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who has built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by one man; but He that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over His own house.* See the superiority of Christ over Moses—Moses is honored by being called the servant of God, but Jesus is the Son of God, and as Son, Master over His own house.

6. *Whose house are we.* Christ built the house. He laid us together like stones upon the great foundation. Moses is but a caretaker in the house.

6. *If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.* Final perseverance is an absolute necessity of a child of God. We do not prove ourselves to be a part of the house if we move about like loose stones!

7-10. *Why (as the Holy Spirit says, Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was grieved with that generation, and said,*

They do always err in their heart; and they have not known My ways. Do not provoke your God by your quibbling, or your murmuring, or your idolatry—act not as those unbelievers did who died in the wilderness.

11, 12. *So I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest). Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* [See Sermon #2552, Volume 44—“TAKE HEED, BRETHREN”—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] There was that “evil heart” in the Israelites—is there not a danger that it may be in you, also, who are partakers of the like nature?

13. *But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* [See Sermon #620, Volume 116—A WARNING AGAINST HARDNESS OF HEART—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] If sin came to you openly proclaiming itself as sin, you would fight against it. But it is very cunning and deceitful and it gradually petrifies the heart and especially the heart of those who think that they will never provoke God by their sin. Pride has already begun to work in them—and where pride can work, every other sin finds elbowroom. God save us from the deceitfulness of sins!

14. *For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.* [See Sermon #1042, Volume 18—A PERSUASIVE TO STEADFASTNESS—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] You are to hold fast, to hold on and to hold out to the end—and the Grace you need in order to do this is waiting for you if you will but look for it and daily live under the power of it!

15, 16. *While it is said, Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.* All but two that came out of Egypt died in the wilderness—only Joshua and Caleb were found faithful among the faithless.

17. *But with whom was He grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?* See how the Apostle speaks of them! He does not say that their bodies were buried, but that their carcasses fell in the wilderness! Unbelief degrades us into beasts whose carcasses fall beneath the battle-axe of Judgment. Oh, that we might all be rid of unbelief—that degrading, desecrating, defiling, destroying thing!

18, 19. *And to whom swore He that they should not enter into His rest but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.* It was not the sons Anak that kept them out! It was not the waste howling wilderness! It was nothing but their own unbelief!

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

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

OUR LORD'S ENTRANCE WITHIN THE VEIL

NO. 2075

DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, MARCH 17, 1889,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***“Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once and for all, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”
Hebrews 9:12.***

UNDER the old covenant the Lord was set forth to the people as dwelling apart, within the veil. A thick tapestry hung before the Most Holy Place and thus concealed the light which symbolized the Presence of God. Within the inner sanctuary Jehovah dwelt apart and none entered the sacred precincts except one man, and he, but once a year. The great teaching was that God is hidden from men—sin has made a division between man and God. The way of approach is not yet made manifest. Yet, even then, there was a hint given that an entrance would be made manifest eventually.

Remember, the division was not a piece of brickwork, nor even an arrangement of cedar overlaid with gold—it was a veil which, once each year was solemnly lifted, that the high priest might pass beneath. This hinted that sinful men were yet to be permitted to draw near unto the Most Holy God, through the Christ of God. That, I say, was implied—if men had faith enough to spy it out. Three hundred and sixty-four days in the year the teaching was, “No admission”—one day out of the three hundred and sixty-five, the teaching was, “A way of access will yet be shown.”

Now, beloved Friends, the priests of old, the holy and the Most Holy Place were only “patterns of things in the heavens.” They were not the things, themselves. In them we see instructive types and symbols but nothing more. How greatly we may rejoice as we read the eleventh verse of the chapter before us! It begins with “But.” And, oh, what a blessed “but” for you and for me! Up till then religion dealt with *externals* such as meats and drinks and washings and carnal ordinances and priests who could only offer the blood of bulls and of goats. But the coming of the Messiah changed all this. We pass from shadow to substance—

***“Finished all the types and shadows
Of the ceremonial Law.”***

Now have Divine Grace and the Truth of God come by Jesus Christ. Read on—“Christ came.” How the bells ring out joyously—“Christ came.” It was the music of Bethlehem—“Christ came.” It was the song of Anna and Simeon—“Christ came.” This will be the joy of the whole earth when once earth understands her truest privilege—“Christ came.” The good things were still come for many a year. But now “Christ came,” we have

them in possession. No son of Aaron stands before us but the Christ, the truly Anointed One, commissioned of the Lord to introduce man to his offended God. Anointed by the eternal Spirit without measure, the Lord Jesus Christ appears in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself and then to destroy the separating veil by going in unto the Father.

If I had to tell you today that a Savior would in due time be born and would offer a sacrifice for sin, there would be great joy in the news—but we have something far better. For the Anointed One has appeared and fulfilled His course. He has been here among the sons of men. The Incarnate God—"Immanuel, God with us," the true High Priest for men in things pertaining to God. Again, I say, let the bells joyously ring out—"Christ came." He is "an High Priest of good things to come." Things which were in the olden time "things to come," are things present at this hour. For Jesus has brought to light the precious things of the Covenant, which kings and Prophets desired to see. Yet even now there are good things in the future. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him."

The Lord Jesus has brought all good things to those who believe in Him, that they may rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Good things to come find their way here by the Mediator. God Himself has come among men in the Person of the Lord Jesus who has taken our nature into union with His Godhead. Our Immanuel was born at Bethlehem, He dwelt at Nazareth, He died on Calvary and He has now gone up on High because His work is finished and the reward of it is given.

The striking point to which I call your attention is this—while our Lord was here, He was comparable to the high priest when he stood on the outside of the veil. I want you to remember that fact. *Outside* is the place of sinful men. Did the holy Jesus ever stand there? He did. His sacrifice was of necessity offered *without the veil* and as a sign thereof—"He suffered without the gate." The fact is evident that our Lord suffered by being forsaken of God. The veil hung thick between Him and God till His great sacrifice was accepted—in testimony whereof hear you not that bitter cry, the bitterest that ever came from human lips—"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Our High Priest then stood on the outside of the veil. But after He had presented His sacrifice, after it had been consumed with fire, He passed *within* the veil and rose to the Throne of the eternal God. He entered Heaven as a priest, in all the solemnity of accomplished sacrifice. "He entered the Most Holy Place once and for all, having obtained eternal redemption." Upon that august entrance I shall try to speak this morning. But I am very conscious of my want of power to do so. Thought is shallow, speech is stammering in the presence of a theme so high, so deep. Come, Holy Spirit, and in Your infinite compassion, reveal our great High Priest to all Your waiting ones now!

I. First, Beloved, I shall call your attention to THE SACRIFICE OF HIS ENTERING. "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered." We have, this morning, taken for our lesson the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus—may I ask you all to study it with care? There we saw that the high priest, once each year entered the Most Holy Place but "not without blood." Our Savior, as God and Man in one Person, standing in the sinner's place, could not enter within the veil until first He had presented a sacrifice. By blood even He must enter. That blood must be His own. Let us think about His sacrifice.

We note concerning it, first, that the sacrifice presented by our Lord was unique. It was "His own blood" that he offered—blood from the veins of a man. But what a man! Remember how He Himself said it—"Sacrifice and offering you would not: but a body have You prepared Me." The body of Christ was especially prepared of God for this great sacrifice. Though we rightly speak of our Lord as "clothed in a body like our own," yet we may not forget that, in some points, His humanity was peculiar. He was without spot. In His birth He received no taint of original sin. Was it not said to the virgin, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you: therefore also that holy *Thing* which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God"?

Thus the Person of our Lord was unique among men and it is that pure Personality which was presented as an offering to the Lord. He was pure and holy, and therefore able to bear the sin of others, since He had none of His own. God especially prepared His body for the indwelling of the Deity and He stands before us as a Personage, the likes of which neither Heaven nor earth contains. God is pure Spirit but this sacred Person has a Body—man has no pretensions to Divinity but this glorious One counts it not robbery to be equal with God. He is God and Man in one Person by a marvelous unity which we believe but can never comprehend. And as our Mediator, by the eternal Spirit, He offered Himself without spot unto God. This singular sacrifice deserves our singular faith.

The sacrifice of our Lord was, in the highest sense, substitutionary. The penalty of sin is death. And Jesus died. All through the old Law there is no atonement except by the death of a victim. Indeed, this is what God has said from the beginning, even in the Garden. Still is this the sentence of the Law—"The soul that sins, it shall die." Sin necessitates death. The Lord Jesus Christ did not come to earth to make a reconciliation by the holiness of His life, or by the earnestness of His teaching but by His *death*. The text says, "With His own blood he entered."

He must die in the place of guilty men before He could enter Heaven on their behalf. Just as the calves and the bullocks in the type were slain and their blood poured out before God, so must Jesus be slain in the sinner's place. O Beloved, let us cling to the great Truth of God of the vicarious sacrifice which is the chief teaching of this sacred Book. Take this away

and I do not see anything left in the Bible at all which can be called good news. The very soul of the doctrine of Christ is atonement by His death—

**“He bore, that we might never bear,
His Father’s righteous ire.”**

The victim was killed, but it was also consumed by the holy fire upon the altar of God. Our Lord offered up Himself unto God, not only by the death which came from the Cross, but by the consuming of soul which came from the horror of bearing human sin.

The tempest of sin’s consequences burst upon the innocent head of the great Substitute—the thunder cloud emptied its dire contents upon His soul. He, voluntarily putting Himself in our place, bore the result of that substitution. Out of infinite love Jesus became an offering for sin. Not of compulsion but of His own sacred choice He became the sin-offering for the sinner, that the sinner might be made the righteousness of God in Him. “Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” This we know and in this great truth we steadfastly abide. What other hope have we?

The sacrifice which our Lord presented before He went within the veil was *personal*. Stress should be laid upon the word “own” here. “Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His *own* blood.” The Lord Jesus did not bring before God the sufferings of others or the merits of others but His *own* life and death. “He poured out His soul unto death.” I will repeat the text which I quoted just now, for it is well worth repeating a thousand times. “Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” Aaron could not do this—the blood he brought was not his own. And if he could by any strange imagination be supposed to bring his own blood, yet it could only have been for himself, since his death was due to God as the punishment of his own individual sin.

Our Lord owed nothing to the justice of God on His own account—He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” And, therefore when He took our place it was that He might voluntarily offer up His own sacrifice of personal suffering and personal death—yielding up His whole being as a sacrifice in our place. When He hangs naked upon the tree, I dare not look—but with tears in my eyes, I worship. I acknowledge with deepest love how absolutely He gave up everything on my behalf, reserving not even a rag of Himself nor an atom of Himself. “He saved others, Himself He could not save.” It was, in the most emphatic sense, a personal sacrifice.

In that sacrifice none could share and in the after-entrance none could have a part at the time. Read Leviticus 16:17—“There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make an atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out that he may make an atonement for himself, for his household and for all the assembly of Israel.” Even in sympathy we cannot enter the inner shrine of His sacrifice. In their innermost depths they are unapproachable. Jesus treads the winepress alone. Geth-

semene—who can stand in the garden and view the bloody sweat and hear the deep groaning of that mighty heart? Even the favored three are overcome with sorrow and fall asleep—

***“Who can penetrate through you,
Lonesome, dark Gethsemane?”***

But as for Calvary, where the darkness was denser still—till midday turned to midnight, as an emblem of what was going on—into that awful blackness we cannot peer. “Your unknown sufferings” still remains one of the best descriptive expressions concerning that which can never be described. All this, I say, was His own personal grief for sins in which He had no personal share—this was His sacrifice of entrance.

I cannot dwell long on any one point. But, I pray you, treasure these Truths of God which are more to be valued than much fine gold. This sacrifice of His was of transcendent value. Think who He was that was offered! The Son of the Highest offered His own self unto God. There was never such another as He, as we have already said, for He was God and Man in one Person. And it was this Divine Person that was offered up a sacrifice without the veil, that He might enter within it. I cannot imagine a limit to the value of the sacrifice of Christ—I hope none of you will ever try to do so. When He gave Himself up as a sacrifice, there was a greater recompense made to the justice of God than if the whole human race had been consumed.

When God Himself comes here to stand in the sinner's place, the Law obtains a fuller vindication than if worlds of guilty ones had borne its penalty. When the Law-Giver Himself bears the penalty of the breaking of the Law, the Law is made honorable and it is plainly demonstrated that God will not spare the guilty but that every transgression must receive its penalty. When even the innocent Substitute is made to die because sin is laid upon Him, we are sure that sin is exceedingly hateful to God. Therefore the sacrifice of our Lord was of transcendent value.

This sacrifice, let men nowadays say what they will, was made in reference to human guilt. The passage I read to you in Leviticus insists upon this. The blood was sprinkled in the Holy Place, “because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel and because of their transgressions in all their sins.” Our Lord Jesus has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. His death was not merely an example, nor simply a display of Divine love. “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” His death dealt with our uncleanness—it cleans us from all sin. “Once at the end of the ages has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” And this had reference to God. The sacrifice of the Day of Atonement was not seen by the people and its blood was not sprinkled where they could look upon it—it was for the Lord only.

God, the infinitely loving One, because of the very infinity of His love, cannot look upon sin without displeasure, seeing it is man's worst enemy. He must punish the sinner when he dares to break the perfect Law. The sacrifice is, therefore, needed to show the Lord's hatred of evil and His re-

solve to be just. Jesus did not die to make God merciful, as some falsely say that we teach. But because God *was* merciful Jesus died—that there might be a clear passage for Divine mercy, without the violation of Divine justice. Jesus did not die to make God love sinners for He always did love them. But that His love might be exercised in consistency with holiness it was necessary that the Law should be vindicated and the threat against sin should not become a dead letter.

You see, then, the entrance offering which our Lord presented outside the veil. Come and partake in its cleansing effects.

II. Let us now notice THE MANNER OF HIS ENTRANCE. We are told in the text, “He entered the Most Holy Place once.” Much emphasis is to be laid upon that word “once.”

It has been done, then, *once*. Once has He offered up Himself without spot unto God. Once has He lifted the veil and passed into the Holy Place of fullest fellowship with God on our behalf. It has been done! Oh clap your hands for very mirth! Let your harps ring out loudly and sweetly with excessive joy. Jesus has entered in. Our Head and Representative is with God. It is not a thing to be worked out in the future but it has been accomplished. His sacrifice had an immediate efficacy. On the spot it availed to open the kingdom of Heaven. From the Cross the Forsaken One entered into His kingdom as the Beloved of God.

To prove how complete was the effect of His sacrifice, He went into the Heaven of God at once. “It is finished.” The proof is that Jesus entered in *once* within the veil. It means, however, that it was only once. Once only has Jesus made entrance officially into the heavenly places. For, by that one entrance He has made the way open and manifest. His offering has been made once, and no more. And so it is written, “Not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another. He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”

No, there is not a repeated offering of Christ to God, nor a repeated taking possession of Heaven on our behalf. “Once and for all” the work is done. Jude tells us that “once and for all” the faith was delivered to the saints—it is a final act which is so complete that it needs no repeating. The entrance of our Lord once and for all into the Holy Place has secured the entrance of His people. It was once and it cannot be twice, because it was so effectual. And this is set forth by the Evangelists—for when our Lord entered the Holy Place, the veil was rent. The Holy of Holies was laid open—its enclosure was thrown down. What if I say that the inner shrine has expanded itself and taken in the Holy Place and now all places are holy where true hearts seek their God?

Had our High Priest merely lifted the veil and passed in, we might have supposed that the veil fell back again—but since the veil of the temple was rent in two, from the top to the bottom, there can be no need for a new en-

trance. For that which hinders is taken away. No veil now hangs between God and His chosen people—we may come boldly to the Throne of Grace. Blessed be the name of our Lord who has entered in “once”!

And now, Beloved, He has entered into the Holy Place once in the sense that He has entered in the fullest and most complete manner. When the High Priest went up to the Mercy Seat, he drew near to the symbol of God but not necessarily near to God Himself. But our Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator, came so near to God that no nearness could be greater. He always was in His Godhead one with the Father—but as God and Man in one Person, He is now forever with God. He says, “I and My Father are One.” The nearness of the God-man Christ Jesus to His Father is something to think upon with reverent pleasure. For, remember—

**“In the Person of His Son
We are as near as He.”**

Christ has gone into the glory of the Father and He has made a way for us to enter into like nearness. The road is open, the access is free—God meets us and invites us to meet Him. He waits to speak with us, as a man speaks with his friend. I wish I knew how to put this before you. But I fail. I pray you to think it over. Let these feeble words suffice to suggest to you the manner of His entrance as set forth by the word “once.”

III. But now, thirdly, let us consider THE OBJECTS OF HIS ENTRANCE. What did our Lord Jesus Christ do by His entrance within the veil? What comes of it?

It means, first, that He made atonement within the veil. He cleansed the heavenly places. Read the twenty-third verse of the chapter before us—“Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these.” How it startles us to read such words! Was the heavenly place, itself, defiled? No, that cannot be. But if you and I had gone there without atonement by blood, Heaven would have been defiled. Look at the crowds of once sinful men and women who are daily entering there to dwell with God. How could they go there if the heavenly places had not been prepared for them?

Look at the multitude of our prayers and praises that are daily going up there! Are they not all, in a measure, impure, and would it not have defiled Heaven to accept them? But the Lord has gone there and has sprinkled His blood upon the Mercy Seat so that our prayers and praises, yes, and ourselves also, may enter without any hindrance. Even if the guilty are taken up to dwell with God and our poor prayers are accepted of God, neither we nor our prayers carry any defilement into the Holy Place because the atoning blood is there beforehand. After Heaven has sucked up into itself so much of the sinnerhood of earth, it remains as pure as it was when only God and His holy angels dwelt therein. While men that were once steeped in sin are permitted to come and sit at the right hand of God, God remains as rigorously righteous as if no guilty one had been forgiven—the great Sacrifice has secured this.

Then He enters there to appear for us. Read the twenty-fourth verse—“For Christ has not entered the Holy Places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the Presence of God for us.” He has gone there to put in an appearance on our behalf. As in a court of law, when a man appears by his attorney, or legal representative, he is in the court, even though he may be miles away—so are we, today, in possession of our eternal inheritance through Him who has put in an appearance for us. God sees His saints in Heaven in the Person of their glorious Representative. In Him we are raised up together and made to sit together in the heavenly places. Is not this a subject for quiet enjoyment? The Forerunner has for us entered upon the purchased possession.

He is there, next, to perfect us. Look at the tenth chapter and fourteenth verse—“For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.” His one sacrifice has made the comers thereunto perfect. And to show their perfectness, they enter into the Holy Place. His work is done or else He would not be within the veil—His being there is proof that everything is complete and that His people are complete in Him. The set-apart ones are accepted, for He in whom they stand, is accepted. As when Adam was driven out of the garden we were all driven out of the garden—so now that the second Adam is in the Paradise of God, we are there, too, in Him.

He has entered in once, also, that He may abide there. Look at the twelfth and thirteenth verses of the tenth chapter—“But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.” Jesus is with God in Heaven and always must be there till the purposes of Divine Grace are accomplished. He holds a permanent session at the right hand of the Father in everlasting triumph. Till our Representative is expelled from Heaven, we cannot lose it. And that can never be! Look up, O Believer, and see where you are and where you always must be—accepted in the Beloved, made near by the blood of Christ!

Once more—He is there to admit us to the same nearness. Read the twenty-first and twenty-second verses of the tenth chapter—“Having a High Priest over the House of God, let us draw near with a true heart.” Behold, the Lord Jesus meets us when we pray and praise and He presents our worship. When we fall asleep and wake up in another state, He will come and meet us—at Heaven's wide entrance—and through the rent veil admit us into Heaven. What must it be to be with Him on His Throne! To behold His Glory and that forever! It will not be long before we reach that felicity. Some of us are within hearing of the eternal song. Therefore, let us cheer up—and if the way is rough, let us remember that it cannot be long. Since He has entered, by whom we are everywhere represented, this guarantees our entrance into the Glory of God. Therefore has He gone before that He may welcome us Home.

Turn these thoughts over and surely you have heavenly manna to feed upon—food for faith and material for songs. You are gone in before us, Lord. And because we love You, we rejoice.

IV. But now, lastly, let us review THE GLORIES OF THIS ENTRANCE. We have seen the sacrifice of our Lord's entrance, the manner of His entrance and the objects of His entrance. And now let us muse upon the glory of His entrance, which is this—"having obtained eternal redemption." The words, "for us," are supplied by the translators and therefore we leave them out. Our Lord entered the Most Holy Place "having obtained eternal redemption."

When Aaron went in with the blood of bulls and goats, he had not obtained "eternal redemption." He had only obtained a symbolic and temporary purification for the people and that was all. Our Lord enters in because, first, His work is all done. We do not read, "He entered in that He might obtain it," but "having obtained." Some read, "having found eternal redemption." He found it in Himself, for He could have found it nowhere else. Neither in Heaven, nor earth, nor Hell could there be found a redemption for the souls of men. But our Lord found the ransom in His own great sacrifice and He entered into Glory with this amazing "Eureka" on His tongue—"Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom."

O glorious Finder, You could well find it, for it was hidden in Yourself! You have obtained eternal redemption. That which He had obtained was redemption. There is no getting "redemption" out of the Bible. I bless God for this. Many cannot endure the word, but it is there. And it is redemption by *price*, too—"a mercantile transaction," as they profanely speak. "You are bought with a price." Redemption is deliverance through payment—in this case, ransom through One standing in another's place and discharging that other's obligations.

Brethren, when the Lord Jesus Christ died, He paid our redemption price. And when He entered within the veil, He entered as One who not only desired to give us redemption but as One who had "obtained eternal redemption." He has won for us redemption both by price and by power. We do not fully know what the word "redemption" means, for we were born free. But if we could go back a few years and mix with the Negro slaves of America, they could have told us what redemption meant, if ever, by any good fortune one of them was able to buy his freedom. You that have groaned under the tyranny of sin, you know what redemption means in its spiritual sense, and you prize the ransom by which you have been made free.

Brothers and Sisters, we are today redeemed from our far off condition in reference to the Lord God—we do not now stand outside the veil. This is a great redemption. We are also delivered from guilt, for "He has washed us from our sins in His own blood." This is a great redemption. We are rescued from the power of sin that we should not live any longer a slave to

it. We overcome sin through the blood of the Lamb. This also is a great redemption. We are now saved from the curse of sin. For He was “made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” This is, indeed, a great redemption. We are redeemed from all the bondage that ensued from sin. We are no longer the serfs of Satan, nor the slaves of the world—neither are we subject to bondage through fear of death. That last enemy shall be destroyed and we know it. The Son has set us free and we are free, indeed. He entered into the heavenly places with this for His everlasting renown, that He has obtained redemption for His people.

And now think of the nature of that redemption. For here is a grand point. He has obtained “eternal” redemption. If you carefully study the verses around the text, you will find the word “eternal” three times—there is “eternal redemption,” the “eternal Spirit” and an “eternal inheritance.” Why is redemption said to be *eternal*? It is a long word, that word “eternal”—notwithstanding all the squeezing and cutting that men give to it nowadays—they cannot make it into a limited period, do what they may. He has obtained *eternal* redemption—a redemption which entered into *eternal* consideration.

I speak of the Lord God with great reverence, when I say that redemption was from eternity in His thoughts. What if this world was first created myriads of ages ago, as it probably was. Yet in the succeeding epochs neither plant nor animal was created without respect to the Divine ultimatum which is redemption! Not a fossil lies in the rock which has not been molded with a relation to the Lord Christ and His eternal redemption. Christ is the image of God and all things bear traces of that image. From every act of Deity a finger points to Jesus, the atoning sacrifice.

Redemption is the drift of creation and the hinge of Providence. The undertone of all the voices God has created is God in Christ Jesus. In Him the transcendent splendor of the Godhead was best beheld. Veiled in manhood He bore human guilt that He might abolish it and bring to God a blood-washed Church. Things created serve as a platform for things redeemed—the temporal creation gives way before eternal redemption. In the Everlasting Covenant the Lord had always an eye to its seal, which is the blood of its Surety. In the Divine decrees everything is shaped and fashioned according to the work of that wondrous Person in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

The eternal councils of God have ever had an eye to the everlasting righteousness and to the everlasting redemption of the everlasting Son of the Father. Redemption is no new thought with God—no expedient to snatch the world from an unexpected accident—no patching up of a broken-down purpose. Redemption is the center of the Divine plan. The focus of the manifestation of God, the summit of the mountain of Revelation. Herein is love! Herein is God!

When our Lord entered in, He had by His sacrifice also dealt with eternal things and not with matters of merely passing importance. He offered Himself by the Eternal Spirit and by that offering He took off the mortgage from the eternal inheritance and bade us freely enter upon the predestinated possession. Sin, death, Hell—these are not temporary things—the atonement deals with these and therefore it is an eternal redemption. Let me cheer the heart of anyone here who is burdened with sin, with this reflection, that the redemption of Christ deals with the whole of past sin. How far back can we trace evil? We may follow it back to the first apostate angel.

But as far as *we* are concerned, we trace it to father Adam, and thus our sin runs back in muddy streams to that primeval fault which has brought a taint into our nature. Eternal redemption has removed from us whatever of consequences might come on us because of our portion in the Fall. The stain of heredity is washed out by our being created anew in Christ Jesus. From every soul that has, by faith, part and parcel in this redemption, all the olden curse of the race is gone. You have no cause to fear the ancient past. Nothing lies buried there which can ever rise to accuse you. Who shall lay anything to the charge of him for whom Christ has obtained eternal redemption?

Now, look forward into eternity. Behold the vista which has no end! Eternal redemption covers all the peril of this mortal life and every danger beyond, if there are such. You know not how much you are to be tempted and tried before the end comes. Perhaps you will live to extreme old age and you dread the decay of intellect and the increase of infirmity. And well you may. Nevertheless, be glad that He has obtained eternal redemption for you. You cannot possibly outlive the redemption of Christ, neither can any temptation for which He has not provided by any possibility assail you.

Leap to the end. Think of the future of prophecy. Anticipate the blast of the seven trumpets, the pouring out of the dread vials! You need not fear any of these, seeing your Lord has obtained eternal redemption. We are being informed that great events will happen on such a day and hour. I believe these predictions as much as I believe in the prophecies of the Norwood Gypsy and no more. But if they were all true, what occasion is there for fear to a Believer? Our Lord has obtained eternal redemption for His people and we shall rest contented even though the star Wormwood should fall and the waters should be turned into blood and all these things should be dissolved.

When prophecy is all fulfilled and we pass into the dread future, we fear not death since our Lord has obtained eternal redemption. "Eternal punishment" is a word of unspeakable terror. But it is met and fully covered by "eternal redemption." Be not afraid, O you that put your trust in the Lord Jesus as your Sacrifice and Priest! There is nothing in the mystery of eternity that need frighten you. Fearlessly you may launch into the

deep and quit the shores of this present being since you bear with you eternal redemption. How shall you be lost for whom an eternal ransom has been paid?

Oh, leap for joy, you Believers in Jesus! For He has obtained eternal redemption for you! He would not go within the veil unto His Father till He had fully wrought out your redemption. He stayed here till He could cry exultingly, "It is finished." And then, but not till then, He gave up the ghost and entered into His Father's Presence. Rejoice that you have no trifle here, but an eternal redemption. This is no thing of today, or tomorrow but of the eternal past and future.

I have done, but let me ask my beloved Hearers, one by one, Have you this eternal redemption? Do you believe in the Lord Jesus? He that believes in Him has everlasting life and that is the outcome of eternal redemption. Do you believe in the Son of God? Faith in Him is the greatest of all works, even as our Lord said, "This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent." All other works are like the chaff on the threshing floor, if we refuse to believe in God's grandest deed of love and wisdom.

God's noblest deed rejected, we reject God Himself. He has manifested Himself in the sacrifice of Christ as nowhere else. And if we turn our backs upon the Cross, if we refuse to believe in the Incarnate God dying for human sin—we show a rebellion of heart against God which must destroy us. No sin can equal the sin of refusing God's way of mercy. If you come confessing sin and if you accept the great Sin Offering as presented for you, you shall be brought near to God. If you, too, by faith can dip your finger in this blood and sprinkle it upon the Mercy Seat, even as Christ, your High Priest, has sprinkled it, then you, too, shall stand within the veil with Jesus.

Into the holiest of all you may enter! No, you have entered there already in Jesus and you are there permanently, because He abides there forever. Your Substitute, your Covenant Head, your Representative, is in Glory and there you shall be before long. Therefore, if you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, with all your heart, comfort yourself with these words. Since the veil is rent, hide not yourself from God who unveils Himself to you. By-and-by you shall be with Him where He is. Rejoice that even now He is with you where you are.

The Lord bless this congregation and may we all meet within the veil around the great Forerunner, whom we love and adore! Amen.

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THE RED HEIFER

NO. 1481

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 29, 1879,
 BY C. H. SPURGEON,
 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”
Hebrews 9:13, 14.

BELOVED Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you dwell in great nearness to God. He calls you “a people near unto Him.” His Grace has made you His sons and daughters and He is a Father unto you. In you is His Word fulfilled, “I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Remember that your favored position as children of God has placed you under a peculiar discipline, for now God deals with you as with sons—and sons are under household law. The Lord will be sanctified in them that come near to Him. Special favor involves special rules. There were no strict laws made as to the behavior of the Amalekites, Amorites and Egyptians because they were far off from God and the times of their ignorance He winked at.

But the Lord set Israel apart to be His people and He came and dwelt in the midst of the congregation. The sacred tent wherein He displayed His Presence was pitched in the *center* of the camp and there the great King uplifted His banner of fire and cloud! Therefore, as the Lord brought the people so near to Himself, He put them under special laws, such as belong to His palace rather than to the outskirts of His dominion. They were bound to keep themselves very pure, for they bore the vessels of the Lord and were a nation of priests before Him. They ought to have been *spiritually* holy, and being in their childhood, they were taught this by laws referring to external cleanliness.

Read the laws laid down in Leviticus and see what care was required of the favored nation and how jealously they were to keep themselves from defilement. Just as the children of Israel in the wilderness were put under stringent regulations, so do those who live near to God come under a holy discipline in the house of the Lord. “Even our God is a consuming fire.” We are not, now, speaking of our *salvation*, or of our justification as sinners, but of the Lord’s dealings towards us as *saints*. In that respect we must walk carefully with Him and watch our steps that we offend not. Our earnest desire is to behave ourselves in His house that He may always permit us to have access with boldness to His Presence and may never be compelled to reject our prayers because we have been falling into sin.

Our heart’s desire and inward longing is that we may never lose our Father’s smile. If we have lost fellowship with Him, even for an hour, our cry is, “Oh that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat,” for when we are in fellowship with God we are happy; we are strong;

we are full of heavenly aspirations and emotions. Beneath the sky there is no joy like that of communion with God—it is incomparable and inexpressible and, therefore, when we lose the Presence of God, even for a little while, we are like a dove bereaved of its mate which ceases not to grieve. Our heart and our flesh cry out for God, for the living God! When shall we come and appear before God?

Now, Beloved, in order that we may learn how to renew our fellowship with God whenever we lose it by a sense of sin, I have selected the subject of this morning. If the Holy Spirit will graciously enlighten us, we shall see how the conscience can be kept clean so that the heart may be able to dwell with God. We shall see our danger of defilement and the way by which our uncleanness can be put away—may we have Grace given to avoid the pollutions which would hinder fellowship—and Grace to seek the purification by which uncleanness is removed and fellowship restored.

I shall first endeavor to *describe the type* which is alluded to by the Apostle in the words, “The ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean.” And then, secondly, we shall *magnify the Antitype*, dwelling upon the words, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

I. LET US DESCRIBE THE TYPE. In the 19th chapter of Numbers you will find the type. Be so good as to open your Bibles and refresh your memories. First, the type mentions ceremonial defilements which were the symbols of the uncleanness caused by *sin*. The Israelites could very readily render themselves unclean so as to be unfit to go up to the tabernacle of God. There were uncleannesses connected both with birth and with death; with meats and with drinks; with garments and with houses. The rules were very minute and all-pervading so that a man could scarcely move abroad or even remain within his own tent without incurring uncleanness in one way or another—and becoming unfit to enter the courts of the Lord or to be an accepted member of the congregation.

In the passage in Numbers which is now before us, (19:16), the one source of defilement dealt with is death. “Whoever touches one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.” Now, death is peculiarly the *symbol* of sin as well as the *fruit* of sin. Sin, like death, defaces the image of God in man. As soon as death grasps the body of a man, it destroys the bloom of beauty, the dignity of strength and drives forth from the human form that mysterious something which is the token of life within. However comely a corpse may appear for a time, yet it is defaced—the excellence of life has departed and, alas, in a few hours, or at longest in a few days, the image of God begins utterly to pass away—corruption and the worm commence their desolating work and horror follows in their train. Abraham, however much he may love his Sarah, soon becomes anxious to bury his beloved dead out of his sight.

Now, what death does for the “human face,” sin does for the spiritual image of God upon us. It utterly defaces it. Human nature in perfection is a coin of the realm of God, minted by the great King. But by sin it is battered and defaced—to the great dishonor of the King whose image and su-

perscription it bears. Hence sin is most obnoxious to God and death is obnoxious as the type of sin. The defilements which came to the Israelite by death must have been very frequent. As a whole generation died in the wilderness, most of the inhabitants must again and again have come under the Law of uncleanness on account of the death of parents or friends. In the field a man was at once unclean if he dug up human remains, or plowed over a grave, or found a body slain by accident. How frequent, therefore, were the occasions of defilement!

But ah, my Brothers and Sisters, not so frequent as the occasions of pollution to our consciences in such a world as this, for in a thousand ways we err and transgress—

***“Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,”***

where never sin might reach my soul again! But it is in vain to sigh in this fashion. Even if we could escape from the throng of men, we should not, thereby, escape from *sin*. The Israelite might meet with defilement even in his tent. I have already reminded you that these statutes about the dead present to us only a *part* of the occasions of defilement which surrounded the people of Israel—they were much more numerous than this. A man might become unclean even in his sleep, so closely did the Law track him into his most secret places and surround his most unguarded hours.

Even thus does sin beset us. Like a dog at one's heels, it is always with us! Like our shadow, it follows us, go where we may. Yes, and when the sun shines not and shadows are gone, sin is still there. Where shall we flee from its presence and where shall we hide from its power? When we would do good, evil is present with us. How humbled we ought to be at the recollection of this! The Israelite became unclean even in the act of doing *good*, for assuredly it was a good deed to bury the dead! A man would be defiled, if, out of charity, he helped to inter the poor, or the slain, or the poor relics of mortality which might be exposed upon the plain—and yet this was a praiseworthy action.

Alas, there is sin even in our holy things. A morality so pure that no human eye can detect a flaw may yet be faulty to the eye of God. Brothers and Sisters, sin stains our piety and pollutes our devotion! We do not even pray without needing to ask God to forgive the prayer. Our acts of faith have a measure of unbelief in them, for the faith is never so strong as it ought to be. Our penitential tears have some grit of impenitence in them and our heavenly aspirations have a measure of carnality to degrade them. The evil of our nature clings to all that we do. Who shall bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one!

One way or another defilement will come upon us. We have been once washed in the blood of Jesus and we are clean before the bar of God. And yet in the Divine family we need that our feet be washed after walking awhile in this dusty world and there is not one disciple who is above the need of this washing. To one and all our Lord says, “If I wash you not, you have no part in Me.” The touching of the dead not only made the man unclean, but he became a fountain of defilement. “And whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and the soul that touches it shall be unclean until evening.” While a man was unclean he might not go up to the worship of God and he was in danger of being cut off from among the con-

gregation, "Because," says the Law, "he has defiled the sanctuary of the Lord."

Pollution went forth from the polluted. Do you and I sufficiently remember how much evil we are spreading when we are out of communion with God? Every ungenerous temper creates the same in others. We never cast a proud look without exciting resentment and bad feelings in others. Somebody or other will follow our example if we are slothful—and thus we may be doing great mischief even when we are doing nothing! You cannot even bury your talent in a napkin without setting an example to others to do the same and were that example followed by all, how dreadful would be the consequences! Observe that I am not now speaking of *sinner*s, but of the *saints* of God!

As the ordinances in the chapter in Numbers before us were for Israel, so these things are spoken to those in whom the Spirit of the Lord is. My soul's longing is that we may walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing and may not become unfit for communion with Him. This uncleanness prevented the man from going up to the worship of God and it separated him from that great, permanent congregation which was called to dwell in God's house by residing all around the Holy Place. He was, so to speak, excommunicated, suspended—at any rate, in his communion he could bring no offering—he could not stand among the multitude and view the solemn worship. He was unclean and must regard himself so.

Do children of God ever get there? Ah, dear Friends, so far as our consciences are concerned, we, too, often come among the unclean! We are not polluted as the heathen, nor condemned with the world, but as children of God we feel that we have erred and our conscience smites us. Sin is already put away from us, as we are criminals tried before a judge, but it comes upon the conscience even as a child's faults cause him to grieve. It is from the *conscience* that this uncleanness is to be purged and our whole sermon is upon that matter. I speak not of the actual taking away of sin before God, but the removal of its defilement from the *conscience* so that communion with God may be possible. Remember the word of the Lord, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you that He will not hear."

When sin is on your conscience it needs no law to prevent your communion with God, for you cannot approach Him—you are afraid to do so and you have a distaste for it. Until the pardoning blood speaks peace within your spirit, you cannot draw near to God! The Apostle says, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil *conscience* and our bodies washed with pure water." It is the *washing* which enables us to draw near. We shrink. We tremble. We find communion impossible until we are made clean. So much about the defilements described in the chapter. Now concerning the cleansing which it mentions.

The defilement was frequent, but the cleansing was always ready. At a certain time all the people of Israel brought a red heifer to be used in the expiation. It was not at the expense of one person, or tribe, but the whole congregation brought the red cow to be slain. It was to be *their* sacrifice and it was brought for them *all*. It was not led, however, up to the Holy

Place for sacrifice, but it was brought forth *outside* the camp and there it was slaughtered in the presence of the priest. It was wholly burnt with fire, not as a sacrifice upon the altar, but as a polluted thing which was to be made an end of outside the camp. It was not a regular sacrifice or we should have found it described in Leviticus. It was an ordinance entirely by itself, as setting forth quite another side of truth.

To return to the chapter. The red heifer was killed *before* the uncleanness was committed, just as our Lord Jesus Christ was made a curse for sin long, long ago. Before you and I had lived to commit the uncleanness, there was a Sacrifice provided for us. For the easing of our conscience we shall be wise to view this sacrifice as that of a substitute for sin and consider the results of that expiation. Sin on the conscience needs, for its remedy, the result of the Redeemer's *Substitution*. The red heifer was slain—the victim fell beneath the butcher's axe. It was then all taken up—skin, flesh, blood, dung, everything. No trace of it must be left and it was all burnt with fire, together with cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet wool which, I suppose, had been used in the previous sprinkling of the heifer's blood and so must be consumed with it. The whole was destroyed outside the camp!

Even as our Lord, though in Himself without spot, was made sin for us and suffered outside the camp, feeling the withdrawing of God while He cried, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Ah, what it cost our Lord to come into our place and to bear the iniquities of men! Then the ashes were collected and laid in a clean place accessible to the camp. Everybody knew where the ashes were and whenever there was any uncleanness they went to this ash heap and took away a small portion. Whenever the ashes were gone, they brought another red heifer and did the same as they had done before—so that there always might be this purification for the unclean. But while this red cow was slaughtered for all and the blood was sprinkled towards the Holy Place for all, no one derived any personal benefit from it in reference to his own uncleanness unless he made a personal use of it.

When a man became unclean he procured a clean person to go on his behalf to take a little of the ashes and to put them in a cup with running water. Then he had the clean person sprinkle this water of purification upon him, upon his tent and all the vessels in it. By that sprinkling, at the end of *seven* days, the unclean person was purified. There was no other method of purification from his uncleanness but this. It is so with us. Today the Living Water of the Divine Spirit's sacred influences must take up the result of our Lord's Substitution and this must be applied to our consciences. That which remains of Christ after the fire has passed upon Him, even the eternal merits—the enduring virtue of our great Sacrifice—must be sprinkled upon us through the Spirit of our God. Then are we clean in conscience, but not till then.

We have two degrees of purification by this means, as in the type. Our Lord rose again on the third day—and blessed are they who receive the third day justification by the Resurrection of the Lord. Thus is sin removed from the conscience. But as long as we are here in this body there will be some trembling, some measure of unrest because of sin within.

Blessed be God there is a seventh-day purification coming which will complete the cleansing! When the eternal Sabbath breaks, then shall be the last sprinkling with the hyssop and we shall be clean and we shall enter into the rest which remains for the people of God and clean every whit! We shall come before God, at last, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, and be as able to commune with Him as if we had never transgressed, being presented faultless before His Presence with exceedingly great joy!

Thus much concerning the type with which we have already mingled some degree of exposition.

I. LET US MAGNIFY THE GREAT ANTI-TYPE. “For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purification of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ?” How much more? He does not give us the measure but leaves it with a note of interrogation. We shall never be able to tell how much more, for the difference between the blood of bulls and of goats and the blood of Christ—the difference between the ashes of a red cow and the eternal merits of the Lord Jesus must be infinite! Let us help your judgments while we set forth the exceeding greatness of our mighty Expiator by whom we are reconciled to God.

First, then, *our defilement is much greater*, for the defilement spoken of in the text is on the *conscience*. Now, I believe that the Israelite, when he was rendered unclean by touching a corpse by necessity, or a piece of a bone by accident, felt nothing on his conscience, for there was no sin in the matter—he was only *ceremonially* unclean and that was all. His ceremonial disability troubled him, for he would be glad to go up to the tabernacle of the Lord and hold fellowship with the hosts of Israel. But there was nothing on his conscience. If there had been, the blood of bulls and goats could not have helped him.

Beloved, you and I know what it is, at times, to have defilement upon the conscience and to go mourning because we have erred from the Lord’s commands. The *ungodly* do not thus sorrow—their conscience, by fits and starts, accuses them, but they never listen to its accusations so as to feel their inability to draw near to God. No, they will even go with a guilty conscience to their knees and pretend to offer to God the sacrifice of prayer and praise while they are unforgiven, alienated and rebellious! You and I, if we are, indeed, the Lord’s people, cannot do this! Guilt on our conscience is to us a horrible thing. There are no pains of body—there are no tortures inflicted by the Inquisition which are at all comparable to the whips of burning wire which lash the guilty conscience!

You hear persons speak about the horrible figures of medieval ages with regard to Hell and the strong metaphors sometimes used by the orthodox to this day. Let them remember that they are only *figures* and then let any man who has felt the agonies of a guilty conscience judge whether the figures can possibly be overdrawn! It is an awful thing to feel yourself guilty. And the better a man you are, the more will it grieve you to be consciously in a wrong state. I ask any truly regenerate man here who at bottom has an assurance that his sin is already forgiven before God, whether he can do wrong without smarting? Whenever you have transgressed and

you are conscious of it, though you do not doubt the love of God to you, are you not like one who has all his bones broken? I know you are and the better a man you are, the more intense will have been the terror of your spirit while guilt has been upon your conscience in any degree.

Well, now, that which can take guilt off the conscience must be infinitely greater than that which can merely put away a ceremonial defilement! Brothers and Sisters, guilt on the conscience is a most effectual bar to drawing near to God. The Lord bids His people come near to Him and there is a way of access always open. But as long as you are conscious of sin, you cannot use that way of access. We can come to God as sinners to seek pardon but we cannot come before the Lord as dear children while there is any quarrel between us and our great Father. No, we must be clean or we cannot approach our God! See how the priests washed their feet at the laver before they offered incense unto the Lord. We cannot have fellowship with God while there is a sense of unconfessed and unforgiven sin upon us.

“Be you reconciled to God” is a text for saints as well as for sinners! Children may quarrel with a father as well as rebels with a king. There must be oneness of heart with God, or there is an end to communion and, therefore, must the conscience be purged. The man who was unclean *could* have come up to the tabernacle if there had been no Law to prevent it and it is possible that he could have worshipped God in spirit, notwithstanding his ceremonial disqualification. The defilement was no barrier in itself except so far as it was *typical*—but sin on the conscience is a natural wall between God and the soul. You cannot get into loving communion until the conscience is at ease! Therefore I charge you, fly at once to Jesus for peace!

Beloved, if our consciences were more fully developed than they are, we should have as great a sense of the frequency of our uncleanness as ever the thoughtful Israelite had of his danger of ceremonial uncleanness. I tell you solemnly that the talk which we have heard lately about perfection in the flesh comes of ignorance of the Law and of self. When I have read expressions which seem to claim that the utterers were free from sin in thought, word and deed, I have been sorry for the deluded victims of self-conceit and shuddered at their spirit. The sooner this boasting is purged out of the Church of God the better. God’s true people have the Spirit of Truth within them, convincing them of sin and not the proud and lying spirit which leads men to say they have no sin!

True saints abide in the place of penitence and constant faith in the atoning blood and dare not exalt themselves as the Pharisee who cried, “God, I thank You that I am not as other men are.” “There is not a just man upon earth that does good and sins not” (Ecc. 7:20). Why, Beloved, according to my own experience, we are constantly being defiled by being in this polluted world and going up and down in it. As a man could not take a walk without stumbling over a grave, nor could he shut himself up in his house without the danger of death entering there, so are we, everywhere, liable to sin. It seems all but inevitable so long as we are in this body and in this sinful world that we should come into contact with sin in some form or other—and any contact with sin is defiling.

Our Lord could live among sinners and remain undefiled because there was no evil in His heart—but in our case sin outside awakes the echoes from within and so causes a measure of consent and defilement. The will, more or less, yields the temptation and when the will does *not* yield, the imagination plays the traitor and the affections parley—and so betray the soul. Although it may be accompanied with a resolve not to fall into evil, the very *thought* of evil is sin. Sin does not cross over the sensitive plate of our soul as it is exposed in its daily camera without leaving, even if we do not see it ourselves, some trace and stain which *God* sees.

Our fellow men are a terrible source of defilement to us. Did you not notice in the chapter which we read (Numbers 19) that he who touched the dead body of a man was unclean seven days? Now, if you look in Leviticus 11:22, you will see that whoever touched the carcass of an unclean *beast* was only unclean until the evening! Thus a dead man was seven times more defiling than a dead beast! Such is God's estimate of fallen, unregenerate man—and it is a just one—for wicked men do many things which brute beasts never do. All ungodly men defile us and I am not sure that I may end there. The truth is still wider. I do not care how you pick your company—and you ought to pick it with great care—but even if you associate with none but saints, they will be an occasion of sin to you at some time or other!

There will be something about them, yes, even about their *holiness* which may cause you to idolize them, or envy them and, in some way or other, cause you to sin. You cannot, as you are a man of unclean lips and dwell among a people of unclean lips, be altogether without uncleanness and, therefore, you will always have need to use the way of cleansing which the Lord has prepared and revealed. Remember that in the type the least *touch* defiled—if they only picked up a bone, the Israelites were unclean! If they only walked over a grave they were unclean! My Brethren, the best of you can hardly read in the newspaper an account of a crime without some taint clinging to you! You cannot see sin in another without standing in fearful jeopardy of being, in some degree, infected.

Sin is of so subtle and penetrating a nature that long before we are aware, it tarnishes our brightness and eats into our spirit. The pure and holy God, alone, is undefiled. But as for the best of His saints, they need to veil their faces in His Presence and cry, "Unclean, unclean!" Under the old Law men who did not know it might be unclean. A man might have touched a bone and not be aware of it, yet the Law was just as much in effect. He might walk across a grave and not know it, but he was still unclean. I fear that our proud sense of what we think to be our inward cleanness is simply the stupidity of our conscience! If our conscience were more sensitive and tender, it would perceive sin where now we congratulate ourselves that everything is pure. My Brothers and Sisters, this teaching of mine puts us into a very lowly place, but the lower our position, the better and the safer for us, and the more we shall be able to prize the expiation by which we draw near to God. Since the stain is upon the *conscience*, its removal is a far greater work than is the removal of a mere ritual uncleanness.

Secondly upon this head, *our sacrifice is greater in itself*. I will not dwell upon each point of its greatness lest I weary you, but notice that in the slaughter of the heifer, blood was presented and sprinkled towards the Holy Place seven times, though it came not actually into it. So in the Atonement through which we find peace of conscience there is blood, for “without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.” That is a settled decree of the Eternal Government and the conscience will never get peace till it understands the mystery of the blood. We need not only the sufferings of Christ, but the death of Christ, which is set forth by His blood. The Substitute must *die*. Death was our doom and death for death did Christ render unto the eternal God. It is by a sense of our Lord’s substitutionary death that the conscience becomes purged from dead works.

Furthermore, the heifer itself was offered. After the blood was sprinkled towards the tabernacle by the priestly hand, the victim itself was utterly consumed. Read now our text—“Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered up Himself without spot unto God.” Our Lord Jesus Christ gave not merely His death, but His whole Person, with all that appertained to it, to be our substitutionary Sacrifice. He offered Himself, His Person, His Glory, His holiness, His life, His very *Self* in our place. But, Brothers and Sisters, if a poor heifer, when it was offered and consumed, made the unclean man clean, how much more shall we be cleansed by Jesus, since He gave Himself, His glorious Self, in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily? Oh what a Sacrifice is this!

It is added that our Lord did this “through the Eternal Spirit.” The heifer was not a spiritual, but a carnal offering. The creature knew nothing of what was being done, it was the involuntary victim. But Christ was under the impulses of the Holy Spirit, which were poured upon Him and He was moved by Him to render up Himself a Sacrifice for sin. Hence somewhat of the greater efficacy of His death, for the willingness of the Sacrifice greatly enhanced its value. To give you another and probably a better interpretation of the words, there was the Eternal Spirit linked with the Manhood of Christ, our Lord, and by Him, He gave Himself unto God. He was God as well as Man, and that Eternal Godhead of His lent an infinite value to the sufferings of His human frame, so that He offered Himself as a *whole* Christ, in the energy of His eternal power and Godhead.

Oh, what a Sacrifice is that on Calvary! It is by the blood of the Man Christ that you are saved, and yet it is written, “The Church of God which He”—that is God—“has redeemed with His own blood.” One who is both God and Man has given Himself as a Sacrifice for us! Is not the Sacrifice inconceivably greater in the *fact* than it is in the type? Ought it not most effectually to purge our conscience? After they had burnt the heifer, they swept up the ashes. All that could be burnt had been consumed. Our Lord was made a Sacrifice for sin. What remains of Him? Not a few ashes, but the *whole* Christ, which still remains, to die no more, but to abide unchanged forever! He came uninjured through the fires and now He always lives to make intercession for us! It is the application of His eternal merit which makes us clean and is not that eternal merit inconceivably greater than the ashes of an heifer can ever be?

Now, my Brethren, I want you, for a moment, to remember that our Lord Himself was spotless, pure and perfect. And yet—speak it with bated breath—God “has made Him to be *sin* for us,” even Him who knew no sin. Whisper it with still greater awe, “He was made a curse for us”—yes, a *curse*, as it is written, “Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” That red heifer, though without spot and never having borne a yoke, was regarded as a *polluted* thing. Take it out of the camp. It must not live. Kill it. It is a polluted thing; burn it right up, for God cannot endure it! Behold and wonder that God’s own Ever-Blessed, adorable Son in inconceivable condescension of unutterable love, took the place of sin, the place of the sinner—and was numbered with the transgressors!

He must die! Hang Him up on a cross! He must be forsaken of men and even deserted of God! “It pleased the Father to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief; He shall make His soul an offering for sin.” “All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”—not merely the *punishment*, but the iniquity, the very *sin itself* was laid upon the Ever-Blessed! The wise men of our age say it is impossible that sin should be lawfully imputed to the innocent. That is what the philosophers say, but God declares that it was done! “He has made Him to be sin who knew no sin.” Therefore, it *was* possible! Yes, it *is* done! It is finished! The Sacrifice, then, is much greater. “How much more,” we may cry exultingly as we think of it, “shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

Now we will go a step further. As the defilement and the Sacrifice were greater, so *the purging is much greater*. The purifying power of the blood of Christ must be much greater than the purging power of the water mixed with the ashes of the heifer, for, first, that could not purge conscience from sin, but the application of the Atonement can and does do it. I am not going to speak, this morning, about doctrine at all, but about *fact*. Did you ever feel the Atonement of Christ applied by the Holy Spirit to your conscience? Then I am certain of it that the change upon your mind has been as sudden and glorious as if the darkness of midnight had glowed into the brightness of noonday!

I remember well its effects upon my soul at the first—how it broke my bonds and made my heart dance with delight! But I have found it equally powerful since then, for when I am examining myself before God, it sometimes comes to pass that I fix my eyes upon some *one* evil which I have done and I turn it over until the memory of it eats into my very soul like caustic acid, or like a gnawing worm, or like coals of fire! I have tried to argue that the fault was excusable in me, or that there were certain circumstances which rendered it almost impossible that I could do otherwise. But I have *never* succeeded in quieting my conscience in that fashion!

Yet I am soon at rest when I come before the Lord and cry, “Lord, though I am Your own dear child, I am unclean by reason of this sin! Apply, again, the merit of my Lord’s atoning Sacrifice, for have You not said—“If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ

the Righteous?” Lord, hear His advocacy and pardon my offenses!” My Brothers and Sisters, the peace which thus comes is very sweet. You cannot pray acceptably before that peace and you may thank God that you cannot, for it is a dreadful thing to be able to go on with your devotions under a sense of guilt as when the conscience is at rest! It is an ill child that can be happy while its father is displeased! A true child can do nothing till he is forgiven.

Now, the sprinkling of the ashes of the heifer upon the unclean was not comprehensible as to its effect by anybody who received it. I mean that there was no obvious connection between the cause and the effect. Supposing an Israelite had been unclean and had been sprinkled with this water? He might now go up to the house of the Lord—but would he see any reason for the change? He would say, “I have received the water of separation and I am clean, but I do not know why the sprinkling of those ashes should make me clean except that God has so appointed.” Brethren, you and I *know* how it is that God has made us clean, for we know that Christ has *suffered in our place*! Substitution explains the mystery and, therefore, it has much more effect upon the conscience than an outward, ritualistic form which could not be explained. Conscience is the understanding exercised upon moral subjects and that which convinces the understanding that all is right soon gives peace to the conscience.

Time presses and therefore I will only say that as the ashes of the heifer were for all the camp, so are Christ’s merits for all His people. As they were put where they were accessible, so may you always come and partake of the cleansing power of Christ’s precious Atonement. As a mere sprinkling made the unclean clean, even so may you come and be cleansed even though your faith is but little and you seem to get but little of Christ. O Brothers and Sisters, the Lord God in His infinite mercy gives you to know the power of the great Sacrifice to work peace in you—not after three or seven days, but at once! And peace not merely for a time, but forever!

One riddle I must explain to you. Solomon, according to the Jewish tradition, declared that he did not understand why the ashes of the heifer made everybody unclean except those who were unclean already. You saw in the reading that the priest, the man who killed the red cow, the person who swept up the ashes and he who mixed the ashes with water and sprinkled them were all rendered unclean by those acts—and yet the ashes purified the unclean! Is not this analogous to the riddle of the bronze serpent? It was by a *serpent* that the people were bitten—and it was by a serpent of brass that they were healed! Christ’s being regarded as unclean that we become clean and the operation of His Sacrifice is just like that of the ashes, for it both *reveals* uncleanness and *removes* it.

If you are clean and you think of Christ’s death, what a sense of sin it brings upon you! You judge of the sin by the Atonement. If you are unclean, drawing near to Christ takes that sin away!—

***“Thus while His death my sin displays
In all its blackest hue,
Such is the mystery of Grace,
It seals my pardon, too.”***

If we think we are unclean, a sight of the atoning blood makes us see how unclean we are. And if we judge ourselves unclean, then the application of the atoning Sacrifice gives our conscience rest.

Now, what is all this business about? This slain heifer—I understand that, for it admitted the unclean Israelites to the courts of the Lord. But this Christ of God offering Himself without spot by the Eternal Spirit—what is that for? The object of it is *a service far higher*—it is that we may be purged from dead works to serve the living God! The dead works are gone; God absolves you; you are clean and you feel it. What then? Will you not abhor dead works for the future? Sin is death. Labor to keep from it! Inasmuch as you are delivered from the yoke of sin, go forth and serve God! Since He is the living God and evidently hates death and makes it to be an uncleanness to Him, get to living things! Offer to God living prayers and living tears!

Love Him with living love! Trust Him with living faith! Serve Him with living obedience! Be all alive with His life—not only have life—but have it more abundantly! He has purged you from the defilement of death, now live in the beauty and glory and excellency of the Divine Life and pray the Holy Spirit to quicken you that you may abide in full fellowship with God! If an unclean person had been made clean and had then said, “I will not worship the Lord, neither will I serve Him,” we should account him a wretched being! And if any person here were to say, “My sin is forgiven and I know it, but I will do nothing for God,” we might well cry, “Ah, wretched man!” What a hypocrite and a deceiver such a person must be!

Where pardon is received at the hands of the Lord, the soul is sure to feel a love to God rising within itself. He who has had much forgiven is certain to love much and to do much for Him by whom that forgiveness has been obtained. The Lord bless you for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Numbers 19.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—395, 561, 303.**

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THE PURGING OF THE CONSCIENCE

NO. 1846

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 21, 1885,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”
Hebrews 9:13, 14.

SOME of you may remember that six years ago I preached from this text, principally dwelling upon the type of the red heifer. **“The Red Heifer,” No. 1481, Vol. 25.** We then tried to show how, in these ashes of the heifer, laid by in store and applied to the unclean with water, God gave to His people in the wilderness a purification of the flesh whenever they had defiled themselves by touching any dead thing. This was the great instrument by which they were delivered from a ceremonial quarantine under which they were kept apart till they had been purified. I am not going to enlarge upon that type today. I felt, when preaching upon it, that I had not reserved due space for the latter and more important part of the text—it is my purpose to make amends this morning. May we be helped by the Spirit of God to yield our earnest attention to the deeply important subject now before us. The red cow may roam out of notice and the Christ of God shall, alone, be seen!

“To serve the living God” is necessary to the happiness of a living man—for this end were we made—and we miss the design of our making if we do not honor our Maker. “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” If we miss that end, we are terrible losers. The service of God is the element in which, alone, we can fully live. If you had a fish here upon dry land, supposing it possible that it could exist, yet it would lead a very unhappy life—it would scarcely be a fish at all! You could not tell of what it was capable. It would be deprived of the opportunity of developing its true self. It is not until you put it into the stream that the fish becomes really a fish and enjoys its existence.

It is just so with man—he does exist without God, but we may not venture to call that existence, “life,” for—“He shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.” If he lives in pleasure, yet he is dead while he lives. He is so constituted that to develop his manhood, perfectly, as God would have it to be, he must addict himself to fellowship with God and to the service of God! Many ways have been tried by men to make themselves

perfectly content, but they cannot find satisfaction out of God. When a man gets to serve God and, in proportion as he thoroughly does so, he is peaceful, restful and happy. Man is a fallen star till he is right with Heaven! He is out of order with himself and all around him till he occupies his true place in relation to God. When he serves God, he has reached that point where he serves himself best and enjoys himself most. It is man's honor, it is man's joy, it is man's Heaven to live unto God!

God's idea of what a nation should be was set forth in the camp in the wilderness. If God's command had been fully carried out, the desert would have exhibited a scene of highest blessedness. We would have seen a holy people surrounding the central abode of the Holy God—a people, everyone of whom was a servant of God and a priest for His worship—a people whose ordinary everyday life was sanctified by the Presence of God. We would have seen a people whose shadow by day was God in the cloud and whose light by night was God in the pillar of fire—a people to whom God was Leader, for whom God was the vanguard and for whom God brought up the rear. There would have been a people who lived upon the Bread of Heaven—a people who drank of water which leaped by Divine power from the Rock—a people having God to be their glory and their defense. Happy had they been if they could have carried out the Divine ideal! It would have been well with them in the highest degree.

Alas, they were always seeking to be as the evil nations around them! They could not rest till they had descended to the level of the common mass of mankind! If only they could have risen to God's intent, so that the Divine purpose of love had been fully carried out in them, they would have been the happiest of all the sons of men! We, ourselves, as a Church, if we can fulfill the type—if we live with God in the midst of us, if He is our dwelling place throughout all generations, if we fetch our supplies from Him, if we move only at His bidding, if we intensely love Him—we shall be a people to be envied by all who know us!

But, alas, a great difficulty comes in the way—and of that I am going to speak this morning—in order to the removal of it. Our text very plainly points out the *sad hindrance* in the way of our service—we need that our conscience be purged from dead works or else we cannot serve the living God. Secondly, our text leads us to consider the *true purgation* from this evil—if the blood of bulls and of goats purged the flesh of men so that they could draw near to the visible Tabernacle of God, much more shall the blood of *Christ* purge our conscience from all that spiritual defilement which prevents our heart-worship of God! When these two things are spoken of, I shall ask you, in the last place, if time does not fail us, to consider *the kind of service* which we ought to render if we have been cleansed by such a costly purification and purged from all conscience of dead works. Oh, living Spirit, help us, now, to think *living* thoughts and so to carry on the worship of the living God while we are hearing Your Word!

I. First, then, let us briefly consider THE SAD HINDRANCE WHICH LIES IN THE WAY OF THE SERVICE OF GOD. In the camp in the wilder-

ness, the Law was that if a man touched a dead body, he was made unclean by that touch. No, if he only *stepped* upon a dead bone in his daily walks, he was polluted by his accidental contact with death. If any person died in his tent, all the family and the tent, itself, became at once defiled—and they must undergo purgation before the inhabitants could mingle with the rest of the congregation, much less could go up to the holy place of assembly. My Brothers and Sisters, we are all under the ban by coming into contact with *spiritual* death. The Apostle does not say, purge your *conscience* from *evil* works, because he wanted to turn our minds to the type of defilement by *death* and, therefore, he said, “*dead* works.” I think he had a further motive, for he was not altogether indicating willful transgressions of the Law, but those acts which are faulty because they are *not performed* as the result of spiritual life. I see a difference between sinful works and dead works which we may, perhaps, be able to bring into light as we go on. Suffice it to say, for the moment, that sin is the corruption which follows necessarily upon spiritual death. First, the work is dead, and soon it rots into actual sin.

Upon our consciences there rests, first of all, *a sense of past sin*. Even if a man wishes to serve God, until his conscience is purged, he feels a dread and terror of God which prevent his doing so. He has sinned and God is just and, therefore, he is ill at ease. The Law is not to be trifled with—it is sent into the world armed with terrible sanctions—and the conscience, when awakened, makes us know that we cannot sin with impunity. “God is angry with the wicked every day, if he turns not, He will whet His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready.” The sinner, knowing this, asks, “How can I serve this terrible God?” He is alarmed when he thinks of the Judge of all the earth, for it is before that Judge that he will soon have to take his trial. He is as a man in chains, reserved unto the hour of terrible execution—how can we serve this dreadful God?

We tremble in the Presence of an angry God, for that anger threatens us with destruction! Sin, like a dark cloud, darkens our spirit and shuts us out from joy. It is impossible for any man to rightly serve God with a living, loving worship while he is conscious of guilt. Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, we need the atoning Sacrifice of Christ to purge the conscience, for the Lord will not be served by convicted criminals, neither can condemned rebels wish to serve Him. He cannot look upon the rebellious with any pleasure till their iniquity is put away and their sin is covered. You see, then, that the first hindrance to holy service is our sense of guilt and from this we must be wholly delivered—we must receive a new consciousness—a consciousness of perfect pardon and complete reconciliation, or else we cannot serve the living God.

On the back of this comes the consciousness that *we, ourselves, are sinful* and inclined to evil. We say, and say rightly, “Who shall bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.” How can we, whose will is obstinate, whose judgment is darkened, whose affections are depraved, whose desires are selfish, whose thoughts are evil—how can we stand in the Presence of Him before whom angels veil their faces as they cry, “Holy,

Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty”? Men who know that they are forgiven, are yet, nevertheless, seized with trembling in the Presence of the Divine purity. They cry, “Woe is me! For I am a man of unclean lips!” How shall we bear the vessels of the Lord if we are not clean? And we are *not* clean by nature. “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His Holy Place?”

We feel that we have not that perfect purity of heart and cleanness of hands which would fit us for the Holy Place. Nor can we ever be saved from this fear so as to take up our heavenly priesthood and serve God till the precious blood of Christ shall be applied to the conscience—nor until we feel that in Christ we are accounted righteous. Happy are we if we are Believers in Jesus, for He has washed us and we are clean every whit! Even our feet, though travel-stained, are now made clean because He has taken the ewer and the basin and has washed our feet and has said to us, “you are clean.” We may now enter into the Most Holy Place without the slightest fear, since the Great High Priest of our profession has, Himself, purified us! We are accepted in the Beloved—“Christ is made of God unto us righteousness.”

But, besides this consciousness of sin and sinfulness, we are conscious of *a measure of deficient life*. About us there is a body of death. Dead works are the things we most require to be purged from. Dead works need not be, in themselves, works of willful sin. As the renowned Dr. John Owen has said, there were many things that the Jews would have to do about the dead which could not be censured, but, on the contrary, were to be praised—and yet, even these acts brought ceremonial defilement. A person is dead. Someone must lay out the corpse. Someone must array it for the funeral. Someone must lift it into the coffin. Someone must dig the grave and cover up the poor clay with its fellow clay. These last offices must be attended to, yet they defiled all who performed them! Although they were works of humanity and of necessity, yet, according to the Law, all who performed them were, thereby, rendered unclean.

Without going into what the world calls actual sin, you and I may come into contact with spiritual death, no, we *carry* death about us, from which we daily cry to be delivered! For instance, in prayer. Our prayer, in its form and fashion, may be right enough, but if it lacks earnestness and importunity, it will be a dead work. A sermon may be orthodox and correct, but if it is devoid of that holy passion, that Divine inspiration without which sermons are but mere pomp—it is a dead work! An alms given to the poor is good as a work of humanity, but it will be only a dead work if a desire to be seen of men is found at the bottom of it. Like the almsgiving of the Pharisee, it will be a mockery of God! Without a *spiritual motive*, the best work is dead! I confess that I never appear before you without a fear that my preaching may be a dead work among you. It must be so, as it comes from myself—its *life* must depend upon the spiritual power with which the Lord clothes it.

Do you not think that very much of common Christian conversation is dead, or very near to it? You stand and sing, but your *hearts* do not sing!

You bow your heads in prayer, but you are not praying! You read the Scripture, but it is not inspired to you, so as to breathe its own life into you! Even our meditations and thoughts about God's work may be mere intellectual exercises and so may be devoid of that power which, alone, can make them living works, fit for the service of the living God. Beloved Friends, we need the precious blood of Christ to purge our consciences from this death and its working—and to lift us into holy and heavenly life! God is not the God of the dead, but of the living! God accepts not the dead sacrifice, but the living sacrifice. Even of old there were no fish presented on His altar because they could not come there, alive—the victim must be brought alive to the horns of the altar, or God could not receive it. We must not bring our dead faith or our dead words as an offering to God! Our prayers without emotion; our praises without gratitude; our testimonies without sincerity; our gifts without love—all these will be dead and, consequently, unacceptable. We must present a *living* sacrifice to the living God, or we cannot hope to be accepted—and for this reason we greatly need the blood of Christ to purge our conscience from dead works.

Do you not, sometimes, fear concerning your services that they have been altogether dead? When we are lukewarm, we hold the golden cup to our God, but He receives it not when our service is dead and chill. Indeed, He says of us when we are lukewarm, "I will spue you out of My mouth." The Lord cannot endure a worship which is half dead! All worship must be presented at blood heat—the warmth of life must be there. Do you not fear that even when, as a whole, it is alive, large parts of our service may be dead? Even in the living body of our prayers, may there not be a dead bone? Even in the living body of our praise, may there not be mortification in parts? God help us! What poor creatures we are! Is there one good thing about us? Are we not imperfect in our best works? Are not the sins of our holy things glaring before our consciences this day? Unless we are purged of this, by the blood of Christ, who offered up Himself without spot to God, how can we serve this living God and be as priests and kings unto Him?

Once more—I told you that the Israelites were defiled by even touching a dead bone—and this teaches us the easiness of being polluted. We have to come into *contact with evil* in our daily dealings with ungodly men. Can we think of them, can we speak to them, can we trade with them without incurring defilement? Even if we grow indignant with evil practices, may there not be sin in our indignation? And when we reprove the custom of the trade, may we not become Pharisees in that very act? We are seldom exactly right. In avoiding one sin we drop into another—we flee from the lion and a bear meets us! To keep the middle path of perfect holiness is difficult!

No, I go farther—do we, as Christian men and women washed by Christ, ever associate with one another without a measure of defilement? Can we meet together at our homes and feel, when we separate, that everything we have said was seasoned with salt and ministered to edification? Is there not some taint about our purest friends and does not the

touch of that corruption which still remains, even in the regenerate, tend to defile us? Can we walk through such a morgue as this world without being defiled, even unconsciously? Remember, under the Jewish Law, the man who was defiled and knew it not was still under penalty! And when he did discover it, he was made to bring his sacrifice. He needed the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer even for his sin of *ignorance*. If we have heard an evil thing, or read an evil thing, it has probably left some stain upon us though we perceive it not. All the more surely it may be so because we do not *see* it, for that may but prove that the judgment has been depraved and the heart infected. The water of purification and the blood of Atonement are needed day by day. Without these, we cannot hope to minister before the Lord our God with acceptance.

II. Now, I want to show, in the second place, WHAT IS THE TRUE PURGATION FROM THIS EVIL. Under the Law there were several methods of purification, but the Apostle was not of a mind, on this occasion, to speak particularly of any one of them and, therefore, he summed them all up in these words—"The blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh." These things did purify the flesh, so that the man who had formerly contracted impurity might mix with his fellow men in the congregation of the Lord. Now, if these matters were so effectual for the purifying of the *flesh*, well does the Apostle ask, "How much more shall the blood of Christ purge our *conscience* from dead works?" Why does he say, "How much more?"

First, because it is *more truly purifying*. There was not really and truly anything of purification about the blood of bulls and of goats. Speaking very literally, the blood of bulls and of goats might defile a person! Falling upon any man, it splattered his garments. Who cared to have a smear of blood upon his brow, or on his hands? It was not, in itself, a thing that could actually purify. All the prescribed purifications were *types and shadows* of the true Propitiation for sin. Now, when the Lord Jesus Christ took upon Himself our human nature and lived a life of perfection—and then made an offering of Himself in death, as the Just for the unjust—then there was a *real* Sacrifice made unto the Most High God. When the Lord Jesus gave His body, soul and spirit. When, in His entire Nature, He made Himself a Sacrifice for sin, "being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree"—then in that deed there was a real Atonement made—a true and effectual Expiation was offered. Therefore James says, "How much more?" If the shadow cleansed the flesh, how much more shall the *Substance* cleanse the spirit?

Moreover, our Lord Christ offered a *much greater Sacrifice*. Why does the text, here, show the term, "*Christ*"? The Apostle Paul uses the name of our Lord with considerable variety. It is sometimes, "Christ," sometimes, "Jesus," sometimes, "our Lord Jesus," sometimes, "our Lord Jesus Christ," sometimes, "Christ Jesus." But there is a reason for the use of each name wherever it occurs. It would be an instructive study for you to try to find out why, in such a place, our Lord is called, "Christ," and not,

“Jesus,” or, “Jesus,” and not, “Christ.” In this passage the name used is, “Christ.” One reason why the precious blood has such power to put away sin is because it is the blood of Christ, that is, of God’s Anointed—God’s Messiah—the Sent One of the Most High. Our Lord came not as an amateur, but He came with a commission. He came with an appointment and unction from the Holy One! If, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ is offered as a Sacrifice for us, He is appointed to that end by God Himself and, therefore, He must be accepted of God. There is no will worship about Christ. He says, “Lo, I come to do Your will.” He did not come to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him and, therefore, there is a peculiar purifying power about all that He did because He did it as Christ, the Anointed of God.

Notice, it is not put concerning Christ that His *life* is purifying, though it had a wonderful relation thereto—nor is it said that His *prayers* are purifying, albeit everything is ascribable unto the intercession of our risen Lord—nor is it said that His *Resurrection* is purifying. The whole stress is laid upon “*the blood of Christ*,” signifying thereby *death*—death with pain, death as a victim, death with reference to sin. “The blood is the life thereof” and, “without shedding of blood there is no remission.” It is by the blood of Christ that you and I have our consciences purged from dead works! Rejoice in Christ in Glory, but put your trust in Christ Crucified! Look with longing hope to His Second Coming, but for your *purification*, rest upon His first coming! See in His agony and His death your joy and life! It is the *blood* of Christ that, alone, can make you fit to serve the living and true God!

Note what it was that Christ offered and be sure that you lay great stress upon it. “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered *Himself*?” What a splendid word that is! Did He offer His blood? Yes, but He offered “*Himself*.” Did He offer His life? Yes, but He specially offered “*Himself*.” Now, what is “Christ”? The “Anointed of God.” In His wondrous complex Nature, He is God and Man. He is Prophet, Priest and King. He is—but time would fail me to tell you what He is—whatever He is, He offered *Himself*. The entire Christ was offered by Christ! “He offered *Himself*.” You cannot put it so strongly by the use of any other word. “He, His own Self, bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” “Christ loved the Church and gave *Himself* for it.” Not His life on earth; not His life in Heaven; nor His abilities and His thoughts and His works—but He gave *Himself*. This is the alabaster box which was broken, the precious ointment of which perfumes both Heaven and earth and makes the saints sweet unto the Lord their God—who smells upon them a sweet savor of rest in the offering up of Christ. He offered “*Himself*”! Dwell much upon that word.

It is said in our text that this offering of Himself was “*without spot*.” The sacrificial act by which He presented Himself was a faultless one, without spot. There was nothing in what Christ was, Himself, and nothing in the way in which He offered Himself that could be objectionable to of God—it was “*without spot*.” Now you see, Brothers and Sisters, why it is that it

has such purifying power for us. God sent the Christ—this Christ offered up Himself—and He offered Himself without spot. And so we, for whom this wondrous Christ was sent, for whom He made this matchless offering, for whom He made that offering without spot, *we*, I say, are accepted in the Beloved made perfect in His perfection!

Further, it is added that He did this, “*by the Eternal Spirit.*” This does not refer to the Holy Spirit, otherwise the Apostle would have said, “by the Holy Spirit.” It says, “By the Eternal Spirit”—and the meaning is this—that His eternal Godhead gave to His offering of Himself an extreme value which otherwise could not have been attached to it. He, by the power of His Godhead, offered up Himself without spot!

Observe, then, the Sacrifice was a *spiritual* one. You must never look at Christ’s Sacrifice in a carnal way, as though the mere drops of literal blood, as a material substance, could have virtue in them for the purging of sin. Do not know Christ after the flesh. Be no longer children, but understand *spiritual* things. It is true that our Lord had a material body and poured forth material blood, but the *essence* of His Sacrifice lay in His will, intent, motive and spirit. I once heard a dissertation upon what became of those drops of blood which fell to the ground on Calvary. I felt that it was foolish talk! By the *blood* of Christ, we mean His *suffering unto death*, the *obedience* which made Him yield His life—and especially the *will* of His soul to suffer—and the object of His mind in suffering. When the bullock was brought up, its blood was poured out. But the bullock could not be a sacrifice in *spirit*—the bullock had no intention to die and no understanding of the reason of its death. The bullock was not willing to die and, therefore, it presented no sacrifice by the spirit. But Christ *knew* what He was and why He was there—and why He must die. And He gave His willing assent. He entered with His whole heart into the Substitution which involved obedience unto death. “For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross.” It was by His spirit that He offered up a true and real sacrifice, for He says, “I delight to do Your will, O My God; yes, Your Law is within My heart.”

But then you must not forget that this spirit was Divine—“by the Eternal Spirit.” The spirit of Christ was an Eternal Spirit, for it was the Godhead. There was, conjoined with His Deity, the natural life of a perfect Man, but the Eternal Spirit was His highest Self. His Godhead willed that He should die and concurred in the death of the Manhood, so that, by the Eternal Spirit, He offered Himself. The blood which He shed was the blood of God, for thus we read—“Feed the Church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood.” Of course, “blood,” as a physical, material thing cannot be the blood of *God*. But viewing it as what it *means*—His suffering, His grief, His woe—these were consented to by the Divine Spirit of Christ and so, by the Eternal Spirit, He offered Himself to God.

Because He is the Second Person of the adorable Trinity in Unity, the suffering and death of His humanity had in them a potency of purgation by which He cleanses our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Brothers and Sisters, I never feel it hard to trust my sinful soul with

the great Sacrifice of Christ. I feel, on the contrary, that if I had all *your* souls within my body and all your sins heaped upon me—and all the sins of all the redeemed blackening my conscience—I could now readily trust to that Divine Sacrifice for the taking away of all that guilt! What limit can you set to the merit of One who, by the Eternal Spirit, offered up Himself? What limits can there be to a Divine Sacrifice? You can no more set a limit to our Lord's Sacrifice than to the Godhead, itself!

Once more, I must call to your notice the use of that word, “eternal”—“who by the Eternal Spirit”—for it gives to the offering of Christ an endless value. It can never cease to operate, for He offered up Himself by the “Eternal Spirit.” There is as much purging power in the death of our Lord, today, as in that hour when, for the first time, He appeared in the Presence of God for us. The blood of the bullock was a temporary thing. The “ashes of an heifer” could not last forever. But the merits of Christ are the merits of One who always lives! His merits always abide, for they are the merits of an Eternal Person who, by His own Spirit, offered Himself up as a Sacrifice for sin.

Now, all this tends to make us feel how clean they are who are purged by this Sacrifice which our Lord offered once and for all to God. Need I call your attention to the fact that He offered Himself, “*to God*”? Yes, I must, for of late some have blasphemously said that the Sacrifice was made to the devil! To mention such profanity is to condemn it!

Once more upon this point—as I have shown you that the Sacrifice of Christ was more real and greater, so I want you to notice that *it was better applied*, for the ashes of an heifer mixed with water were sprinkled on the bodies of the unclean and the blood of bulls and of goats was sprinkled upon the flesh—but neither of them could reach the *heart*. It is not possible for a material thing to touch that which is immaterial! But the sufferings of Christ, as I have explained them, offered up through His Eternal Spirit, were not only of a corporeal but of a spiritual kind—and they reach, therefore, to the cleansing of our spirit!

That precious blood comes home to us in this way. First, we understand somewhat of it. The Israelite, when he was purged by the ashes of the red cow, could only say to himself, “I am made clean by these ashes because God has appointed that I shall be, but I do not know why.” But you and I can say that we are made clean through the blood of Christ because there is, in that blood, an inherent efficacy—there is in the vicarious suffering of Christ on our behalf, an inherent power to honor the Law of God and to put away sin. Because we can somewhat understand the cleansing given us in Christ, it has a greater power upon our conscience—and that better prepares us to serve God.

Then again, we appreciate and approve of this way of cleansing. The Israelite could not tell why the ashes of a red heifer purified him. He did not object to it, but he could not express any great appreciation of the method. We, as we see our Lord suffering in our place, fall at His feet in reverent wonder. We love the method of salvation by Substitution! We approve of expiation by the Mediator. No Truth of God charms my own spirit

like the Truth of Atonement by vicarious suffering, that suffering presented together with His death by our Lord Jesus Christ. I feel my conscience is quieted by every drop of that blood! The method of Federal Headship commends itself to me! I see righteousness and Grace commingled in it and thus I am helped to serve the living God.

Further, Brothers and Sisters, it comes home to us this way—we read in the Word of God that, “He that believes in Him has everlasting life,” and we say to ourselves, “Then we have everlasting life, for we have believed in Him!” We read, “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin,” and our conscience whispers, “We are cleansed from all sin!” Conscience finds rest and peace and our whole consciousness becomes that of a forgiven and accepted person with whom God is well pleased! Our conscience, instead of condemning us, perceives the justice of the way by which we are absolved and leads up our peace of heart into full assurance of faith. So you see, Brothers and Sisters, that what the blood of bulls and of goats could *not* do, the blood of Christ has done! It has passed beyond the flesh, which, indeed, it has never touched in our case—and it has sanctified the *heart* and calmed the spirit—thus preparing us to serve the Lord. The blood of Christ has purified us to the center! It has purged the core of the heart! It has cleansed our spirit, our mind, our memory, our thought, our intellect, our affections—and we are clean! And, therefore, we are meet to exercise a holy priesthood before the living God!

III. This brings me to my last head, which is this—consider THE KIND OF SERVICE WHICH WE NOW RENDER. After so much preparing, how shall we behave ourselves in the House of God?

I am not speaking to you who have never been purged from dead works by the application of the precious blood of Christ, for you *cannot* serve God—you are forbidden to come into His Presence or to stand among His saints. You are in quarantine, even as lepers put forth from the camp. Go home and set a red cross upon your door and write over it, “Lord have mercy upon us.” That would best befit your unclean condition! As Joshua said to Israel, even so say I unto you, “You cannot serve the Lord: for He is an holy God; He is a jealous God.” You must be born again before you can be acceptable unto Him, for as you are, an infection is upon all your works and you may not *hope* that He will accept anything at your hands.

But to you who have had that blood applied to your conscience by the Spirit of God, to you I speak. You should present unto the Lord the constant worship of living men. You see it is written, “Purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” You are not, at this day, likely to die in order to prove your love to God. But if you are ever called to it, you must be prepared to lose your lives for Christ’s sake! But what you have to do is to “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” Now, a living sacrifice is much more difficult of presentation than a slain one. I believe there are thousands of men who could go to the stake and die, or lay their necks on the block to perish with a stroke, for Christ, who, nevertheless, find it hard work to live a holy, consecrated life. The act of one moment, however painful, must be much easier than that ser-

vice which is to run through a series of years until life, itself, shall close. But if the Lord Jesus gave Himself for you, will you not give yourselves for Him? If He died for you by His Eternal Spirit, will you not live for Him by that new Spirit with which He has quickened you? Are you not under bonds to serve Him? From this time, forth, you should not have a pulse that does not beat to His praise, nor a hair on your head that is unconsecrated to His name, nor a single moment of your time which is not used for His Glory! Yes, Brothers, Sisters, it must be a *lifelong* sacrifice that we now present unto Him that lives forever!

Should not our service be rendered in the full strength of our new life? Let us have no more dead works, no more dead singing, no more dead praying, no more dead preaching, no more dead hearing! "Oh," said one, when he heard a sermon, "it was very good, if it had been alive." Dead-and-alive Christianity is poor stuff! No dish ever comes to table which is so nauseous as cold religion! Put it away! Neither God nor man can endure it! Let us have cakes hot from the oven, manna fresh from Heaven, Living Waters leaping from the Rock! Stale godliness is ungodliness. Let our religion be as warm, constant and natural as the flow of the blood in our veins. A living God must be served in a living way.

Are we, therefore, to be excited,? Yes, if need be. What can excite a man like the grand sublimities of eternity? But if you are not excited with any carnal excitement—if principle rules rather than passion—it will be so much the better. Yet let it be *living* principle—principle alive with love. There is such a thing as an excitement which is spiritually dead. The fury of the flesh is not the life of God. Energy of mind is a distinct thing from being strong in the Lord. We need a steady, healthy pulsation of spiritual life to keep us to such service of the Lord as becomes saints and is worthy of our high calling. This comes only from having our conscience purged from dead works.

And, dear Friends, keep in mind that you are, henceforth, to "serve the living God." You that are acquainted with the Greek will find that the kind of service here mentioned is not that which the slave or servant renders to his master, but a worshipful service such as priests render unto God. We that have been purged by Christ are to render to God the worship of a royal priesthood! It is ours to present prayers, thanksgivings and sacrifices. It is ours to offer the incense of intercession. It is ours to light the lamp of testimony and furnish the table of showbread. You that are the sons of God are all the sons of Levi this day—yes, you are the true seed of Aaron! The priesthood is with you, even with you who worship God in the spirit and have no confidence in the flesh. You that believe in Christ and are made pure by His blood, it is for you to live as if you wore the snow-white robes of the priests of the house of Aaron—your garments should be vestments and your conversation a perpetual priesthood unto God!

I close by noticing how this precious blood of Christ will work all this in us. It will operate upon us thus—when our conscience is perfectly pure from sin and we know that we are forgiven and accepted in the Beloved, then how happy we shall be! And there is no service so acceptable to God

as that which is joyfully rendered. When it is a joy to us to serve Him, then it is a joy to Him to be served! When it is a delight to us to honor God, then God delights in such honor. He seeks not slaves to grace His Throne! When we know that we are perfectly forgiven, then we are full of gratitude—we then feel that we must serve God, not because of anything we are to get for it, but because we long to do so. This unselfish service He gladly accepts! To give play to our emotions, we feel that we must glorify Him—then we truly serve God, for that which is born of love is living! Loving works are living works! When His glorious name is honey in the mouth and music in the ear—and Heaven in the *heart*—then we worship Him in the manner which He accepts, even in the same manner as the angels in Glory who see His face and do His commandments. It is the cleansing blood which brings us near enough to do this.

This precious blood of Christ has now given us perfect peace with God and, therefore, we can serve Him without fear. You cannot serve an enemy—while you hate him, you cannot please him. But our enmity to God is slain—He is our Friend, our Father and our God. His will is our will, His designs are our designs. As far as the little can keep pace with the great and the minute with the infinite, we run parallel with God! And if we ever quit the lines, for a moment, we are in misery till we get back again! What the Lord aims at we aim at. What He desires we desire. Is Christ's coming God's ultimatum? So it is ours and we cry, "Even so, come Lord Jesus!" Shall "the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ"? It is our last, best, highest prayer! Thus are we truly serving the Lord.

See you not, then, how the washing of the precious blood has made us partakers of the service of Heaven? How close it has brought us to God! In what amity and accord we walk with Him! With what sympathy we enter into all that He does! With what intense delight we joy in Him through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we also have received the Atonement! How I wish that every soul here believed in Jesus! O that you would do so at once. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—

Hebrews 9:1-28; 10:1-22.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—

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“THE BLOOD OF THE TESTAMENT”

NO. 3293

**A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 1912.**

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

“For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all his people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God has enjoined unto you.”
Hebrews 9:19, 20.

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon, upon verse 20 is #1567, Volume 26—
THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT—
read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

Blood is always a terrible thing. It makes a sensitive mind shudder even to pronounce the word. But to look upon the thing, itself, causes a thrill of horror. Although by familiarity men shake this off, for the seeing of the eyes and the hearing of the ears can harden the heart, the instinct of a little child may teach you what is natural to us in reference to blood. How it will worry if its finger bleeds ever so little—shocked at the sight, even if there is actually no pain! I envy not the man whose pity would not stir to see a sparrow bleed or a lamb wantonly put to pain. And as for the cruel man, I shudder at the thought of his depravity. What exquisite pain it must have caused our first parent—how keenly it must have touched the fine sensibilities of their nature—to have had to offer sacrifice! Probably they had never seen death until they brought their first victim to the altar of God. Blood! Ah, how they must have shuddered as they saw the warm life-fluid flowing forth from the innocent victim. It must have seemed to them to be a very horrible thing and, very properly so, for God intended them to feel their feelings outraged. He meant them to take to heart the anguish of the victim and learn, with many a shudder, what a destructive and killing thing sin was! He meant them to see before their eyes a commentary upon His threat—“In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.” He meant Adam and Eve to witness the harrowing appearance as the sentence upon sin was executed, stabbing at the very heart of life, convulsing all the frame, sealing up the senses and leaving behind but a wreck of the beautiful creature and not a relic of happiness for it in the world. How dreadful must have been the spectacle when the first pair gathered around the corpse of their second son, slain by his brother! There were the clots of blood on the murderous club, or the sharp stone, or whatever other instrument Cain may have used in smiting his brother to the grave. How they must have mourned and sighed as they saw the precious crimson of human life wantonly poured out upon the ground and crying to God against the murderer!

Yes, blood is always a ghastly and a terrible thing. It is so, I suppose, because we recognize in it the destruction of life. Is it not so, also—though we may not be able to define the emotion—because we are compelled in our consciences to admit the effect of sin and we are staggered as we see what our sin has done? All through the great school of the Jewish Law, blood was constantly used to instruct the Israelite in the guilt of sin, and in the greatness of the atonement necessary for putting it away. I suppose that the outer court of the Jewish Temple was something worse than ordinary shambles. If you will read the lists of the multitudes of beasts that were sometimes slain there in a single day, you will see that the priests must have stood in gore and have presented a crimson appearance—their snow-white garments all splashed over with blood as they stood there offering sacrifice from morning till night! Every man who went up to the tabernacle or to the Temple must have stood aside for a moment, and have said, “What a place this is for the worship of God! Everywhere I see signs of slaughter.” God intended this to be so. It was the great lesson which He meant to be taught to the Jewish people, that sin was a loathsome and a detestable thing—and that it could only be put away by the Sacrifice of a great life, such a life as had not then been lived—the life of the Coming One, the life of the Eternal Son of God who must, Himself, become Man that He might offer His own immaculate life upon the altar of God to expiate the guilt and put away the filth and the loathsomeness of human transgression!

Some of you will feel sickened at these reflections and object to what I have already said as unworthy of my lips and offensive to your ears. I know who these will be—the creatures of taste who have never felt the loathsomeness of sin! Oh, I would that your sins would sicken you! I would to God that you had some sense of what a horrible thing it is to rebel against the Most High, to pervert the laws of right, to overthrow the rules of virtue, and to run into the ways of transgression and iniquity, for if blood is sickening to you, sin is infinitely more detestable to God! And if you find that being washed in blood seems awful to you, the great bath which was filled from Christ’s veins in which men are washed and made clean is a thing of greater and deeper solemnity to God than any tongue shall be ever able to express!

I do not think anyone ever knows the preciousness of the blood of Christ till he has had a full sight and sense of his sin, his uncleanness and his ill desert. Is there any such thing as truly coming to the Cross of Christ until you first of all have seen what your sin really deserves? A little light into that dark cellar, Sir—a little light into that hole within the soul, a little light cast into that infernal den of your humanity and you will soon discern what sin is! And, seeing it, you would discover that there was no hope of being washed from it except by a Sacrifice far greater than you could ever render. Then the Atonement of Christ would become fair and lustrous in your eyes and you would rejoice with unspeakable joy in that boundless love which led the Savior to give Himself a ransom for us, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” May the Lord teach us—thundering at us, if necessary—what sin means!

May He teach it to us so that the lesson shall be burned into our souls and we shall never forget it! I could gladly wish that you were all burden-carriers till you grew weary. I could gladly wish that you all labored after Eternal Life until your strength failed, and that you might then rejoice in Him who has finished the work and who promises to be your All-in-All when you believe in Him and trust in Him with your whole heart!

Looking carefully at the text, I would have you notice *the name given to the blood of Christ, the ministry in which it was used and the effect that it produced.*

I. First, observe THE NAME GIVEN IN THE TEXT TO THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. It is said to be, “THE BLOOD OF THE TESTAMENT.”

You are aware, perhaps, you who read your Bibles thoroughly, that the word here rendered, “testament,” is more commonly rendered, “covenant,” and although it would be wrong to say that it does not mean, “testament,” yet it would be right to say that it signifies both, “covenant” and, “testament,” and that its first and general meaning is “covenant.”

Let us take it so. The blood of Jesus is the Blood of the Covenant. Long before this round world was made, or stars began to shine, God foresaw that He would make man. He also foresaw that man would fall into sin. Out of that fall of man, His distinguishing Grace and Infinite Sovereignty selected a multitude that no man can number to be His. But, seeing that they had offended against Him, it was necessary, in order that they might be saved, that a great scheme or plan should be devised by which the Justice of God would be fully satisfied, and yet the mercy of God should have full play. A covenant was therefore arranged between the Persons of the blessed Trinity. It was agreed and solemnly pledged by the oath of the Eternal Father that He would give unto the Son a multitude whom no man could number who should be His—His spouse, the members of His Mystical Body, His sheep, His precious jewels. These the Savior accepted as His own, and then on His part, He undertook for them that He would keep the Divine Law, that He would suffer all the penalties due on their behalf for offenses against the Law and that He would keep and preserve every one of them until the day of His appearing. Thus stood the Covenant and on that Covenant the salvation of every saved man and woman hangs. Do not think it rests with you, Soul, for what says the Scripture? “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs but of God that shows mercy.” He said to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” To show you that salvation is not by human merit, God was pleased to cast it entirely upon covenant arrangements. In that Covenant made between Himself and His Son, there was not a word said about our actions having any merit in them! We were regarded as though we were not, except that we stood in Christ and we were only so far parties to the Covenant as we were in the loins of Christ on that august day. We were considered to be the seed of the Lord Jesus Christ, the children of His care, the members of His own body. “According as He has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world.” Oh, what Grace it was that

put your name and mine in the eternal roll and provided for our salvation, provided for it by a Covenant—by a sacred pact between the Father and His Eternal Son, that we should belong to Him in the day when He should make up His jewels!

Now, Beloved, in a covenant there are pledges given—and on those pledges we delight to meditate. You know what they were. The Father pledged His honor and His word. He did more—He pledged His oath and, “because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself.” He pledged His own word and sacred honor of Godhead that He would be true to His Son, that He should see His seed and that by the knowledge of Him, Christ should “justify many.” But there was needed a seal to the Covenant—and what was that? Jesus Christ in the fullness of time set the seal to the Covenant, to make it valid and secure, by pouring out His life’s blood to make the Covenant effectual once and for all. Beloved, if there is an agreement made between two men, the one to sell such-and-such an estate, and the other to pay for it, the covenant does not hold good until the payment is made. Now, Jesus Christ’s blood was the payment of His part of the Covenant! And when He shed it, the Covenant stood as firm as the everlasting hills—and the Throne of God, Himself, is not more sure than is the Covenant of Grace! And, mark you, that Covenant is not sure merely in its great outlines, but also sure in all its details! Every soul whose name was in that Covenant must be saved! Unless God can undeify Himself, every soul that Christ died for, He will have! Every soul for which He stood Substitute and Surety, He demands to have—and each of the souls He must have, for the Covenant stands fast. Moreover, every blessing in that Covenant which was guaranteed to the chosen seed was, by the precious blood, made eternally secure to that seed! Oh, how I delight to speak about the sureness of that Covenant! How the dying David rolled that under his tongue as a sweet morsel! “Although my house,” he said, “be not so with God”—there was the bitter in his mouth—“yet,” he said—and there came in the honey, “yet He has made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.” And this sureness, mark you, lies in the blood! It is the blood of Christ that makes all things secure, for all the promises of God are yes and amen in Christ Jesus, to the Glory of God by us!

You will ask, it may be, “What is the purpose of this Doctrine?” Its purpose is this—To you who have believed in Jesus, Covenant mercies are sure, not because of your frames and feelings, but because of the precious blood of Jesus! Yesterday you were happy, perhaps, and today you are downcast. Well, but the Covenant has not changed! Tomorrow you may be in the very depths of despair, while today you are singing upon the top of the mountain—but the Covenant will not change. That august transaction was not made by you and cannot be unmade by you! It tarries not for man, and waits not for the sons of men. There it stands fast and settled, signed by the Eternal Signet, and your security is not in yourselves, but in Christ. If Christ bought you—if the Father gave you to Him, if Christ became a Surety for you, then—

“Nor death, nor Hell, shall ever remove

***His favorites from His breast;
In the dear bosom of His love
They must forever rest!***

The name of the blood, as we find it in our own translation, is “*the blood of the testament.*” This teaches a similar Truth of God, though it puts it under another figure. Salvation comes to us as a matter of will. Jesus Christ has left Eternal Life to His people as a legacy. Here are the words—“Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory.” Now, a will, as the Apostle rightly tells us, has no power whatever unless the man who made it is dead. Hence the blood of Jesus Christ, the token of His death, gives validity to all the promises which He has made. That spear-thrust by the Roman soldier was a precious proof to us that our Lord was really dead. And now, Beloved, whenever you read a precious promise in the Bible, you may say, “This is a clause in the Redeemer’s will.” When you come to a choice word, you may say, “This is another codicil to the will.” Recollect that these things are yours—not because you are this or that—but because His blood makes them yours! The next time Satan says to you, “You do not believe as you ought and, therefore, the promise is not sure,” tell him that the sureness of the promise lies in the blood, and not in what you are or in what you are not! There is a will proved in Heaven’s Court of Probate, whose validity depends upon its signatures, upon its witnesses and upon its being drawn up in proper style. The person to whom the property is left may be very poor, but that does not overthrow the will. He may be very ragged, but that does not upset the will. He may have disgraced himself in some way or other, but that does not make the will void. He who made the will and put His name to the will, makes the will valid, and not the legatee to whom the legacy was left. And so with you this Covenant stands secure, this will of Christ stands firm! In all your ups and downs, in all your successes and your failures, you, poor needy Sinner, have nothing to do but to come and take Christ to be your All-in-All and put your trust in Him—and the Blood of the Covenant shall make the promises sure to you!

This is a sweet topic. I have not time, however, to enlarge upon it, but I heartily commend it to your private meditations and trust you may find consolation in it.

II. The blood which Moses called “the blood of the covenant” or, “of the testament,” was of the utmost importance in the ministry of the tabernacle, for **IT WAS SPRINKLED BY HIM EVERYWHERE.**

First, we are told that *he sprinkled it upon the book.* Oh, how delightful this Bible looks to me when I see the blood of Christ sprinkled upon it! Every leaf would have flashed with Sinai’s lightning and every verse would have rolled with the thunders of Horeb if it had not been for Calvary’s Cross! But now, as you look, you see on every page your Savior’s precious blood! He loved you and gave Himself for you, and now you who are sprinkled with that blood and have by faith rested in Him, can take that precious Book and find it to be green pastures and still waters to your souls!

The blood was then sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat itself. Whenever you cannot pray as you would, remember that Jesus Christ’s blood has gone before you and is pleading for you before the Eternal Throne of God. Like the good Methodist who, when a Brother could not pray, cried out, “Plead the blood, Brother!” Yes, and when you feel so unworthy that you dare not look up. When the big tear stands in your eye because you have been such a backslider and have been so cold in heart, plead the blood, my Sister—you may always come where the blood is! There you see that this sin of yours has been already atoned for. Before you committed it, Jesus carried it! Long before it fell from your heart, the weight of it had pressed upon the Redeemer’s heart—and He put it away in that tremendous day when He took all the load of His people’s guilt and hurled it into the sepulcher—to be buried there forever!

Then *the blood was sprinkled upon every vessel of the sanctuary.* I like that thought. I like to come up to God’s House and say, “Well, I shall worship God today in the power and through the merit of the precious blood! My praises will be poor, feeble things, but then the sweet perfume will go up out of the golden censer and my praises will be accepted through Jesus Christ! My preaching, oh, how full of faults—how covered over with sins! But then the blood is on it and because of that, God will not see sin in my ministry, but will accept it because of the sweetness of His Son’s blood.”

You will come to the Communion Table tonight, most of you. But oh, do not come without the precious blood, for the best place of all upon which it was sprinkled was *upon all the people.* The drops fell upon them all! As Moses took the basin and scattered the blood over the whole crowd, it fell upon all who were assembled at the door of the Tabernacle. Have you had sprinkling with the precious blood, my Hearer? If you have, you shall live forever! But if you have not, the wrath of God abides on you! Do you ask how you can have the blood of Christ sprinkled upon you? It cannot be done literally, but *faith* does it. Faith is the bunch of hyssop which we dip into the basin and it sprinkles man’s conscience from bad works. You say you have been christened, confirmed, baptized—but all these things together would not save one soul, much less all the multitudes who trust in them! They are not sufficient for the taking away of a single sin! But you always say your prayers, you have family prayers and you are very honest and so on! I know all this—but all these things you ought to have done and they will not make amends for what you have *not* done! All the debt that you have paid will not discharge those that are still due! Know you not that saying of the Scriptures, “by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the Law is the knowledge of sin”? You may work your fingers to the bone, but you can never weave a righteousness that shall cover your nakedness before God! The only hope for the sinner is to come and cast himself upon what Jesus Christ has done for him—depending upon the groans, and agonies, and death of the martyred Savior who stood for us and suffered in our place, that we might escape the wrath of God!

I hope that there is never a Sunday but what I teach this one Doctrine and, until this tongue is silent in the grave, I shall know no other Gospel than just this—Trust Christ and you shall live! The bloody Sacrifice of Calvary is the only hope of sinners! Look there and you shall find the Star of Peace guiding you to everlasting day! But turn your backs upon Christ and you have turned your back upon Heaven—you have courted destruction, you have sealed your doom! It is by the sprinkling of the blood, then, that we are saved. We must have the blood of Christ upon us in one way or the other. If we do not have it upon us to save us, we shall have it upon us to destroy us. “His blood be on us and on our children,” said the Jews to Pilate in their madness—and the siege of Jerusalem was the answer to the cry! Worse than was the siege of Jerusalem to the Jews, shall be the death of those who do despite to the Spirit of Grace and despise the blood of Jesus! But happy shall they be who, giving up every other confidence, come to the Blood of the Covenant and put their trust there, for it shall not deceive them!

III. THE EFFECT OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST claims our earnest attention—yet the minutes are few in which I can enlarge upon it.

Whenever Jesus Christ’s blood comes upon a man, the instantaneous effect is something more than miraculous. Before the application of Christ’s blood, the man was distracted. His guilt and its consequent punishment weighed heavily upon him. “Alas!” he said, “I shall soon die, and then Hell will be my lot!” Oh, some of us will never forget when we were in that miserable, burdened state! I declare before you all that when I felt the weight of my sin, I wished that I had never been born! And I envied frogs, and toads, and the most loathsome creatures, and thought that they were so much better off than I, because they had never broken the Law of God, which I had so wickedly and so willfully done! If I went to my bed, I started with the fear that I should wake up in Hell. And by day the same dread thought distracted me—that I was cast off by God and must perish! But the moment that I looked to Christ—do not mistake me—the *very same moment* that I put my trust in Christ, I rose from the depths of despair to the utmost heights of joy! It was not a process of reasoning. It was not a matter which took hours and days—it was all done in an instant! I understood that God had punished Christ instead of me, and I saw that, therefore, I could not be punished anymore—that I never could be if Christ died for me—and I was assured that He did if I did but trust Him! So I did trust Him—with my whole weight I threw myself into His arms and thought, at the time, that He had never had such a load to carry before! But I found that He was able to save, even to the uttermost, them that came unto Him—and what joy and peace I had in that moment it is impossible for me to describe! And I thank God that I have never lost it. There have been time of depression. There have been seasons when the light of God’s Countenance has been withdrawn. But one thing I know—Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—I am a sinner, and my soul rests alone on Him! And how can He cast me away, since His own promise is, “He that believes and is baptized shall be

saved”? I have believed, by His Grace! I have been baptized as an avowal of my faith! And He is not true if He does not save me! But He must be true, He cannot break His word! O dear Friends, there are hundreds here who have passed through the same blessed experience and they can tell you that the blood of Jesus in an instant speaks peace to the soul!

And this precious blood has this property about it that if the peace which it first causes should become a little dim, you have only to go to the precious blood to have that peace once more restored to you!

I would recommend any of my doubting Brothers and Sisters to come to Christ over again as they came to Him at first. Never mind about your experience! Never care about your marks and evidences. Never get piling up your experiences. If you go to the top of some mountains such as Snowdon or the Righi, you will find it all solid and firm enough, but there are some people who want to get a little higher than the mountain, so the people there built a rickety old stage and charge you four pence—or six-pence to go to the top of it! And when you get up there, you find it is all shaky and ready to tumble down and you are frightened! Well, but what need is there to go up there at all? If you would stand on the mountain, that would not shake! So, sometimes, we are not content with resting upon Christ as poor sinners, and depending on Him. We get to building a rickety stage of our own experience, or sanctification, or emotions, and I know not what besides—and then it begins to shake under our feet. Far better if we were like the Negro who said he “fell flat down on de promise, and when he had done that, he couldn’t fall no lower.” Oh, to keep close to a promise! Job says that the naked embrace the rock for need of a shelter, and there is no shelter like the Rock of Ages—

**“None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good!”**

But I have not told you all the power of this blood, nor could I tell you tonight. That blood gives the pardoned sinner access with boldness to God, Himself. That blood, having taken away the guilt of sin, operates in a sanctifying manner and takes away the *power* of sin—and the pardoned man does not live as he lived before he was pardoned. He loves God, who has forgiven him so much—and that love makes him enquire, “What shall I do for God, who has done so much for me?” Then he begins to purge himself of his old habits. He finds that the pleasures that once were sweet to him are sweet no more. “Away you go,” he says to his old companions, “I cannot go with you to Hell.” Having a new heart, a new love, a new desire, he begins to mix with God’s people. He searches God’s Word. He makes haste to keep God’s commandments. His desires are holy and heavenly and he pants for the time when he shall get rid of all sin, shall be quite like Christ and shall be taken away to dwell forever where Jesus is! Oh, the blood of Christ is a blessed sin-killer! They say that St. Patrick drove all the snakes out of Ireland. Ah, but Christ drives all the serpents out of the human heart when He once gets in. If He does but sprinkle His blood upon our hearts, we become new men—such new men as all the rules of morality could not have made us! Such new men as

they are who, robed in white, day without night sing Jehovah’s praise before His Throne!

Sinner, would you be saved tonight? Trust Jesus and you shall be! Sinner, would you be saved upon a dying bed? Trust Jesus now and you shall be! Sinner, would you be saved when the heavens are in a blaze and the stars fall like withered fig leaves from the firmament? Look to Jesus, now, and you shall be saved then! Oh, I would to God that some of you would look to Him! Not for the eyes of your body to do it, but for the eyes of your mind to do it! Think of what Christ is—God, and yet Man. Think of such a Being suffering instead of you! What must be the merit of such suffering, and what an honor to God’s Justice that such an One should suffer instead of you! Then depend upon Christ and if you do so, your sins are forgiven you! Believe that they are. Then will you feel springing up within your heart great love to Him who has forgiven you—and that will become the mainspring of your new life! You will start afresh like one that is born tonight. You will, indeed, be born-again, for this is regeneration! Not sprinkling your face with drops of water, but making a new man of you—generating you over again, not by natural generation, but by the Eternal Father begetting you again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead—the true and only spiritual generation! And then, as new creatures in Christ Jesus, you shall go your way through this life up to the eternal life, God’s blessing shielding you and crowning you forever.

The Lord grant you His blessing, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
HEBREWS 9; EXODUS 24:1-10.**

Hebrews 9:1. *Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.* That is, a sanctuary belonging to this world, a *visible* sanctuary. That first covenant was to a large degree a thing of outward rites and ceremonies, which the new covenant is not—it is a covenant of spiritual and unseen realities.

2-5. *For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the sanctuary. And behind the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid roundabout with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of Glory shadowing the Mercy Seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.* Because it was not his main purpose at that time—he was writing an important Epistle upon the most vital Truths and it would not do to encumber it with too many explanations.

6-9. *Now when these things were thus ordained, the priest went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest, alone, once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the error of the people: the Holy Spirit*

thus signifying that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience. All these sacrifices and ceremonies, although full of instruction, were not, in themselves, able to give peace to the conscience of men. The new and better Covenant does give rest to the heart by the real and actual taking away of guilt, but this, the first Covenant, could not do. It is astonishing that there should be any who want to go back to the “beggarly elements” of the old Jewish Law, and again to have priests and an elaborate ritual, and I know not what besides! These things were faulty and fell short of what was needed even when God instituted them, for they were never intended to produce perfection, or to give rest to the troubled conscience! So of what use can those ceremonies be which are of man’s own invention, and which are not according to the New Covenant at all?

10-12. *Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.* [See Sermon #2075, Volume 35—OUR LORD’S ENTRANCE WITHIN THE VEIL—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Christ has entered into the true Holy Place—not into that which was curtained with a veil, which was but a type, and which was put away when the veil was torn from the top to the bottom as Jesus died. He has entered into the immediate Presence of God and He has entered there once and for all, “having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

13, 14. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* [See Sermons #1481, Volume 25—THE RED HEIFER and #1846, Volume 31—THE PURGING OF THE CONSCIENCE—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Do you all feel the power of that blood now? Oh, what blessing it is to know that the conscience is quite at rest because of the purging worked by Jesus’ blood! It is Heaven begun below! We cannot serve God aright until we have been thus cleansed. No, we dare not stand in that awful Presence while the consciousness of sin is upon us! But when Jesus Christ says to us, “You are clean,” then, “being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Then have we “access with confidence” unto the Father through Him.

15-17. *And for this cause He is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgression that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead:*

otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator lives. Whether it is a covenant or a testament, death is necessary to make it valid. God’s Covenants have always been sanctioned and ratified with blood and the Covenant or the Testament of eternal Grace is ratified with the blood of the Surety and Testator!

18-26. *Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God has enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the Law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the Holy Places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the Presence of God for us: nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters into the Holy Place every year with blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.* [See Sermons #759, Volume 13—JESUS PUTTING AWAY SIN; #911, Volume 16—THE PUTTING AWAY OF SIN and #2283, Volume 38—CHRIST’S ONE SACRIFICE FOR SIN—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] What Aaron could not do by entering into the Holy Place year after year, Christ has done by entering into Heaven once! And there is no more need of a sacrifice for sin, and they are grossly guilty who pretend to offer Christ over again. The great work of redemption is finished! Sin is put away and there is no more remembrance of it. In the sight of God, Christ’s one Sacrifice has completed the Expiation of sin, Glory be to His holy name!

27, 28. *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.* He shall come to complete the salvation of those for whom His precious Sacrifice was offered all those hundreds of years ago.

Now let us read the passage to which Paul refers in verses 19 to 21.

Exodus 24:1, 2. *And He said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, you, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship you afar off. And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come near; neither shall the people go up with him.* Nearer to God than the people were allowed to come, but still at a distance from Him. It was a covenant of distance—bounds were set about the mountain lest the people should come too near. Yet they were near unto God as compared with the heathen, but far off as compared with those who now, by the teaching of the Spirit of God, have been brought near to God through the precious blood of Jesus! Moses alone could come near to Jehovah on Mount Sinai—the people could not go up with him—nor even with the man who was their mediator with God, for such Moses was. But

you and I, Beloved, can go up with Him who is far greater than Moses—with Him who is the one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, for God “has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

3-8. *And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD has said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and built an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD has said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you concerning all these words.* There is a double power about the blood—towards God an Atonement—that is the blood sprinkled on the altar. And towards ourselves a sense of reconciliation—thus must the blood be sprinkled upon us that we may prove its cleansing power.

9-10. *Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and they saw the God of Israel: and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of Heaven in His clearness.*

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

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

THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT NO. 1567

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 14, 1880,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

[The original title of this sermon was *The Blood of the Testament.*]

*“This is the blood of the Testament which
God has enjoined unto you.”
Hebrews 9:20.*

THE Apostle declares that whenever God has entered into covenant with man it has not been without the shedding of blood. To a covenant a sacrifice and to a testament a death was evidently necessary. It was so when the arrangements of Israelite worship were first published and established in the wilderness. Paul says, “Neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.” He probably had in his mind’s eye the 24th chapter of the book of Exodus where we read that after the tribes had entered into covenant with God and promised to keep His Law, Moses, “sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And He took the Book of the Covenant and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord has said will we do and be obedient. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, Behold the blood of the Covenant which the Lord has made with you concerning all these words.”

As it was in the old dispensation so is it in the new—there could be no Divine Covenant, even though it was of Grace, without the shedding of blood. Inasmuch as the new Covenant was not the type, but the substance, a more precious sacrifice was needed and nobler blood than any which is found in the veins of bulls or of goats. Jesus, the Son of God must die, or the Covenant would be unsealed, the testament without force. No Covenant blessing comes to us apart from the death of our great Sacrifice, for “without shedding of blood is no remission,” and remission is one of the earliest of the gifts of Divine Grace. If we cannot even *begin* the heavenly life by receiving forgiveness of sins without coming into connection with the blood, we may be sure that no further blessing can come to us apart from it.

It seems to be absolutely necessary that when God comes into communication with guilty man it must be through an atonement and that atonement must be made by blood, or by the sacrifice of a life. I shall not dwell upon the blood-shedding of the old Covenant, for they are only intended to be types of the one great blood-shedding in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. The death of a chosen victim was the *emblem* of the death of Christ. The sprinkling of the people with blood was the *type* of the application of the blood of Christ to the *conscience* of Believers and every single item of the ceremony, if looked into, would furnish points for edification. But of

these we cannot, now, speak particularly, as the Apostle said on a like occasion.

It suffices us to meditate, at this time, upon the blood of our Lord Jesus, once and for all shed on Calvary, trying to understand its relationship to us according to the tenor of the text—"This is the blood of the Testament which God has enjoined unto you." The words which Moses used in the wilderness concerning the typical sacrifice are far more emphatic as we point you to the bleeding Savior on the Cross and say, "Behold, the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you." The wisdom of God had many ends to serve in connecting His covenants with blood-shedding and this will be very evident if we think of its effect upon our own hearts. We all feel somewhat of awe in connection with the thought of blood. It is no light thing to see an animal slaughtered—at least it is not so to me—I cannot endure the sight! As to our fellow men, we can scarcely see the tiniest crimson stream issuing from a wound in their flesh without being distressed.

Tender and sensitive natures, such as all should possess, regard the life of men with great care and the blood, as its token, with great reverence. We view a corpse with awe and if we were called to look upon one who had been slain, we would view the body with horror. If any one of us should pass a spot stained with a man's blood, we should tread lightly and hurriedly, feeling, "how dreadful is this place." The Lord God intended that there should be much of awe about every covenant that He made with man, for it is a matter of great solemnity. The Covenant of Works might well be surrounded with dread, for by reason of our sin it was soon turned into a curse. The quaking mountain, the thick darkness and the trumpet voice were fit accompaniments of the Law which brings condemnation and so, also, were the basins filled with blood.

As for the Covenant of Grace, it is also rightly surrounded with awe, even with such awe as that which bows down at Calvary amid the mid-day midnight, the rending of rocks, the opening graves and the groans of the expiring Son of God. The God of Love is, nevertheless, a God of Holiness and the God who passes by transgression, iniquity and sin, is also a God who first vindicates the honor of His broken Law. The Lord intended that pardon and all other Covenant blessings should come to us in such a way that we should never think sin a trifle, nor conclude, from the freeness of Grace that men were free to transgress. The death of Jesus manifests the solemnity of God's dealings with sin and is fitted to bow the soul in the lowest humility before God.

The flowing of the blood and water from the wounded side, the wrapping of the dead body in the grave clothes, the burial in the sepulcher—these are those sad attendants of the Covenant of Grace which make us tender of heart while we rejoice in the Divine favor. With holy trembling we think of every promise, for the shadow of the Cross is over all. Something of aversion and shrinking crosses most minds at the thought of blood. One feels sickened and saddened. The sight of murdered Abel must have been terrible, indeed, to Adam and Eve, unused as they were to gaze on blood. If it would be so to them after the Fall, what would the sight have been to them had they remained pure and perfect beings? In proportion to purity will be the shock to the mind in the presence of death and blood.

Cruel men might gloat over a battlefield, but to the most of us, the sight of a single violent death would be horrible to the last degree. Manhood, till it is brutalized, has the greatest possible aversion to the sight of blood and it is as though God had selected as the token of Atonement that which would show us His hatred of sin. He would move us to flee from evil after a sight of its painful and deadly consequences! He as good as tells us that while a thing is stained with evil, He would sooner destroy it than have it in His sight! Man, the masterpiece of the Divine creation, shall sooner be slain and his life flow out upon the ground than be allowed to wallow in iniquity! It was intended that even while we are being pardoned we should feel horror at having been defiled with sin.

But this aversion must not be used sinfully, as so we have used it. I have heard of persons saying, when we preach of the blood of Christ, "I could not bear to hear so much about blood! It quite disgusted me." I *want* you to feel shocked because your sin requires such an awful cleansing—but you must not be shocked at the great Sacrifice, itself! That would be grievous, indeed, to me and fatal to you! Can you bear, then, to reject that which, alone, can save you? Are you so delicate that you turn away from the only cleansing that can purge you from soul-destroying stains? Dare you count the blood of the Covenant to be a common, or even a disgusting, thing? I pray you be not so profane! Let a holy tremor seize you as you see the Crucified and watch the pouring forth of His heart's life-stream! Smite on your breast as you look on Him whom you have pierced!

Grieve that your sin should require such a dread Atonement. Lament that you should be guilty of such a horrible thing that even God's own brightest One must bleed before transgression, with all its scarlet dye, could be washed out. Always love and reverence the blood of Jesus Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot. The types of the old Law were meant to excite horror of sin and awe in the presence of its atonement. It must have been almost a shocking thing to enter into the tabernacle at the time of the great sacrifices and, indeed, at any time, for year after year there never passed a day without blood being sprinkled on the holy curtains. All around, wherever the worshipper came, he saw tokens of the slaughter of bullocks and goats and calves and rams. Everywhere he saw that God could not be approached without atonement—atonement by sacrificial death.

The priests threw the blood of victims in bowls at the foot of the altar and "almost all things were, by the Law, purged with blood"—and all to make man see that God saw something horrible in sin which only death could hide—and that sin was so intolerable to Him that, unless a propitiation had been made, it had not been possible for His pure and holy mind to speak with man at all, or hold amicable conversation with Him. If the aversion which seems natural to us at the sight of blood should lead us to shudder at the cause of its shedding, it will be well.

I beg you, now, to come with me to Calvary and see that great sight, even Jesus Christ, Himself, offered up as a Sacrifice for guilty men! Herein is a marvelous thing! We have heard so often of it that we do not note the miracle of it as we ought to do. But it is the most marvelous thing that ever happened, that ever *can* happen, or that ever can be *imagined* to happen—

that He who always lives, even God, Himself, should deign to take into union with Himself a body like our own and that, being found in fashion as a man, He should become obedient to death, even the death of the Cross! All former ages are struck dumb with astonishment at this novelty of love—the bleeding Son of God! And all the ages that are yet to come shall look back to Calvary as the center of all the wonders that even the wonder-working God, Himself, has ever worked!

The blood of Christ is the ruby gem of the ring of love. Infinite goodness finds its crown in the gift of Jesus for sinners. All God's mercies shine like stars, but the coming of His own Son to bleed and die for rebel men is as the sun in the heavens of Divine Grace outshining and illuminating all! It surpasses thought—how, then, shall I hope worthily to set it forth in words?

I. Of that death and of that blood we shall speak in a fourfold way and first, we shall take the verse as it would most accurately be translated—the blood of Jesus Christ is **THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT**. There cannot be much doubt that the word rendered, “testament,” should be translated, “covenant.” It is the word used for covenant in other passages and though our translators have used the word, “testament,” many critics go the length of questioning whether the word can bear that meaning at all. I think they are too rigid in their criticism and that it *does* bear that meaning in this very chapter but, still, all must admit that the first and most usual meaning of the word is, “covenant.”

Therefore, we will begin with that reading and consider the blood of Jesus as the blood of the Covenant. First, looking from the Cross to the Covenant, the blood proves the intense earnestness of God in entering into covenant with man in a way of Grace. The Covenant of Grace is on this wise—the well-beloved Son of God stood as our Representative, as the second Adam, heading up in Himself all those whom the Father gave Him. He covenanted with God on our behalf that He would vindicate the broken Law and that He would also keep it in every jot and tittle on our behalf. As for the Father, He covenanted that because of the Sacrifice which the Son would offer and the obedience which He would render, He would put away the sin of His people and they should be accepted in love.

This is the Covenant of Grace and faithfulness and to show that the august Covenanters were not playing at covenant-making they sealed the compact with blood. How dreadfully in earnest was God the Father when He gave His Son! How deeply in earnest was the Son when He gave His life! You may play with these things if you dare, but God never will. You may sprinkle this blood upon the threshold where it should never fall and trample on it with careless feet, but God only sees it in the place of *honor*—on the lintel and the side posts—and looks upon it as something precious beyond all price! Sinner, you, perhaps, think that God will not really forgive you and that His promises may only charm your ears to cheat your heart—but it cannot be so!

God is in real earnest! If He did not mean mercy, He would not have given up His beloved Son. The best possession of all His unsearchable riches was His Only-Begotten and He took Him from His bosom, where He had dwelt serenely always and bade Him come below that He might live and

die that we might be saved! God is in death-earnest for the salvation of sinners! Let us speak of the great Atonement which He has provided with earnest hearts, for it is no light thing. I wish that we never thought about these things without the deepest possible solemnity. I wish that never did a preacher speak of them without heart-breaking emotions and that never did we sing a hymn upon the great Sacrifice without prostrating our spirits in the dust before the Most High. Whenever we think of the Atonement, the place whereon we stand is holy ground. The blood of the Everlasting Covenant proved the earnestness of the great Covenant-Maker—let us be in earnest, too.

Next, it displayed the supreme love of God to man. Seeing that He entered into a compact of Grace with man, He would let man see how His very heart went forth with every word of promise and, therefore, He gave up that which was the center of His heart, namely, Jesus Christ. When Jesus wept over the grave of Lazarus, they said, “Behold how He loved him!” But when God gave His Only-Begotten to bleed over the grave of our race, we may more heartily say, “Behold how He loved *us*!” Brothers and Sisters, we have but a faint idea of how much the Lord our God loves us! “God commends His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

There was nothing lovable in us—we were enemies to God, polluted and polluting! There was everything in us that was obnoxious to the holy mind of God and yet, because of the riches of His Grace and the supremacy of His mercy, He would love us and He *did* love us without limit! Passing by fallen angels, the Sovereign Lord looked on the humbler creature, man, and so loved him that He gave up Jesus, Himself, to die on his behalf! Oh that we were touched with some kind of tenderness towards God when we think of this! Man, has God shown such love to man and do you show such coldness to your God? Jesus dies in unutterable agonies that the guilty may be pardoned and do the guilty turn aside as if it were nothing to them that Jesus should die? Can men treat the Cross as if it were either a fiction or a trifle? God has manifested His love in the death of Christ in a way which must have astonished every inhabitant of Heaven—and it ought to ravish every native of this lower globe! May the Holy Spirit enable us, as we think of this blood of the Covenant, to behold the earnestness of God and to admire the intensity of His love.

The blood of the Covenant, next, speaks to us and confirms the Divine faithfulness. The main object of thus sealing the Covenant with blood is to cause it to be “ordered in all things and sure.” Men, in old times, when they made compacts that were intended to be solemnly observed, slaughtered certain beasts as a sacrifice and, when blood was thus spilt, there was no drawing back from the engagements. It was a covenant made by cutting or dividing—they split the animals in two and then those who made the covenant passed in between the divided pieces. No revocation was permitted where agreements were thus ratified. It was a sort of registered contract that never could be changed when once there had been a sacrifice to confirm it.

Now it is also so with the Covenant of Grace. It is impossible for God to ever draw back from the Covenant of Grace, or to change it in any of its particulars. He needed not to be held in this manner, for He cannot lie—but

that we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to Christ Jesus, He has been pleased to give His Covenant this seal. Well do we sing—

***“The Gospel bears my spirit up!
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation for my hope,
In oath and covenant and blood.”***

It would be blasphemy to suppose that God would be false to a treaty sealed with the blood of His own Son! A doubt about the love of God and about the faithfulness of God is treason against Him, for it impugns His faithfulness and treats Him as a liar, or a covenant-breaker, which He can never be. We may think lightly of the dark mistrusts and suspicions of our hearts, but they are no light things, after all, for they virtually impugn the sealing power of the blood and question the faithfulness of God to the Covenant which has most solemnly been confirmed.

Oh you that seek after peace through Jesus Christ, it is not possible that God should refuse to accept you if you come to Him through the blood of Jesus, for that were to break His Covenant! Oh you who are resting in Jesus, it is not possible that your Father should ever forsake you, or suffer you to perish, for that were to make the blood-shedding of Christ to be void and His Sacrifice to be of no effect! Oh, blessed Covenant, how sure you are, now that the blood of Jesus is shed! But the blood of the Everlasting Covenant is more than this—it is a guarantee to us of its infinite provision. There can be nothing lacking for a soul redeemed by Christ between here and Heaven, for He that spared not His own Son, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things? All that the Christian needs on the road to Glory will be quite inconsiderable compared with what He has already received in the gift of Jesus Christ!

Do you believe that God will deny you any necessary thing, O Heart, when He has already made His Son bleed for you? If He had held back anything, it would have been that costly alabaster box of His Son's body which contained the most precious ointment that ever perfumed earth or Heaven! But since He broke that precious casket and poured out the priceless contents, He will deny you nothing! No good thing will He withhold from you! He would break up Heaven, itself, if you should require it and pour out the whole creation at your feet if there were need. Already He has given you His angels to be your servitors and His courts to be your dwelling place! Yes, and His Throne to be your shelter—what else do you need? But, if you ask for more, there is more provided, for He gives you Himself to be your portion. Is not this enough? Is not this all? When He gave you His Son, He gave you all, for His Son is One with Him! Oh, the breadth and length, the height and depth of Covenant provisions! That roll of love which has for its seal this precious thing, the blood of Jesus, must contain treasures beyond all estimate. God will supply all our needs according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus and the blood of Jesus secures this fact!

I will not dwell longer upon this blood of the Covenant except to say that this blood manifests the depth of the need which the Covenant was meant to meet. Many preachers, nowadays, seem determined to bring everything in God's Word down to their own little scale. They carry a ruler in their pockets with which to measure up eternal things. They have found out that everlasting does not mean unending—they will one day find out, I dare

say—that infinite does not mean unlimited! Sin with them is an inconsiderable offense which it is not worth while to make a fuss about. Man, according to their account, is a poor creature who is struggling to be right and his offenses are the excusable blunders of a well-meaning child—the errors of a poor creature who cannot help making mistakes. Of course the punishment of sin, with them, is frittered away and they claim to do this in the name of benevolence, as if it were benevolence to flatter and a good deed to make sin appear less hazardous and to take away the moral sanctions which God has set as barriers against evil.

It follows, in the nature of things, that the Atonement becomes, with them, a very shadowy affair—something or other which in some way or other reconciles us to God, or has some bearing upon our standing with the Divine Being. Nobody knows quite what it is—a misty, hazy, smoky nothing, which they cannot quite deny—but which they forget as much as possible. Brothers and Sisters, I believe in a great Revelation and, to my mind, it is clear that if God, Himself, must become Incarnate and if when He is Incarnate nothing else will do but that He must be nailed to a Cross and die like a felon—there must have been some awful mischief to remove! The race of man must have fallen, indeed, to need such an expedient as this in order to restore it to holiness and God! If I measure the disease by the Remedy, I conclude that the disease must have been deadly! And if, when Christ stood in man's place, being perfectly innocent—if nothing else would do as the substitutionary pain but that He should cry, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"—then the desert of sin must have been dire, indeed!

In the presence of Calvary and its Christ I am persuaded that sin must be an evil so great that it is not possible to exaggerate its horrors! Oh sons of men, your transgressions are black, indeed, since they can only be expiated by such a sacrifice! Oh sinful creatures, you required a dying God to save you! You cannot be safe for eternity, you cannot be happy with God in this life unless the precious blood of Jesus Christ washes you! Deceive not yourselves with the notion that perhaps your moralities and your outward religiousness may suffice, or that your good intentions may be liberally interpreted! You must, if you would be acceptable with God, feel the sprinkling of the blood of the Son of God, for without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins! This much comes to us as the teaching of the blood of the Everlasting Covenant—if we are in covenant with God we shall know the power of the Atonement of Christ.

II. But now, secondly, you will bear with me while I take our translator's own words—"This is THE BLOOD OF THE TESTAMENT." Upon the whole, our translation is as nearly perfect as we can look for a human work to be. I do not know what the new translation will turn out to be, but the good men will have to have risen up very early and sat up very late if they have produced a version which will surpass that which has so long been used among us. I do not know. I cannot tell because I have not seen it. But this translation very well satisfies me at present and I notice that whenever the translators use a word which is disputed by scholars, they have excellent reasons for it and the more the matter is looked into, the more is their judgment valued.

They thought a good deal before they settled on their expressions and as a rule they came to a sound conclusion. In this case there are reasons and very good reasons, why the word, “testament,” should be used. Our translators were not inspired, but they were marvelously guided and directed when they made this version and we may be content to take the text as it stands before us. Jesus Christ has made a will and He has left to His people large legacies by that will. Now, wills do not need to be sprinkled with blood, but wills *do* need that the testator should be dead, otherwise they are not of force. As it was not possible that Christ should die other than a violent death, seeing He must die as a Sacrifice, the expression, “blood,” becomes, in His case, tantamount to, “death.”

And so, first of all, the blood of Jesus Christ on Calvary is the blood of the *Testament*, because it is a proof that He is dead and, therefore, the testament is in force. If there is a question about whether a man is alive or not, you cannot administer to his estate, but when you have certain evidence that the testator has died, then the will stands. So is it with the blessed Gospel—if Jesus did not *die*, then the Gospel is null and void! Not without the sprinkled blood does the promise of salvation become yes and amen! Inasmuch as the soldier with a spear pierced His side and forthwith came blood and water, *there* was the clearest evidence in that blood that Jesus was really dead and that His testament is valid and operative. Therein do we rejoice, for though we sorrow that He died, yet we are glad that His legacy of love is all our own! He has died and lives again, no more to die!

Out of the thick cloud of blackest grief which veils our dying Lord, there falls a silver shower of peace more refreshing than all the brooks of earth can yield—the certainty of our eternal life is proven by the certainty of Jesus’ death! His blood is the blood of the Testament because it proves the testator’s death. It is the blood of the Testament, again, because it is the seal of His being seized and possessed of those goods which He has bequeathed to us, for, apart from His Sacrifice, our Lord had no spiritual blessings to present to us—His death has filled the treasury of His Grace. He has pardon to bestow and justifying righteousness to give because He died! If He had not shed His blood, He would not have completed His part of the Covenant, nor have fulfilled the will of God. But when He died, with, “It is finished!” upon His lips, then His blood became the seal that Covenant mercies were His own and that they were His to leave to us. Oh treasure up the death of Jesus in your hearts, Believers, for, inasmuch as He has enriched you and given you all things necessary for this life of godliness, He has done this out of His own proper stores which were given Him as the reward of His passion!

The blood of the Testament, again, is a direction as to His legatees. We see who are benefited under His will. To whom did Jesus Christ leave, by will, the blessings of Grace? He must have left them to the *guilty* because He has left a will that is signed and sealed in blood and blood is for the remission of *sin*. Jesus has made His testament in the character of a sin-atoning Sacrifice and we can only share in it by regarding Him under that character. If I am not a sinner, I have no interest in the legacy of a bleeding Redeemer! The blood-mark proves that the testament was made for those

who need atonement by blood and that its legacies are bequeathed to *sinners*. This is one of the most humbling and yet most blessed of all the Truths of God. It casts down and yet lifts up!

If I have any Grace or any Covenant blessing, it did not come to me because I was heir to it by *nature*, or because I had purchased it, or because of any intrinsic right in myself—but because Jesus, when He *died*, had a right to make His will as He pleased and He did so make it that He would give Himself and all that He had to such a poor, needy, empty, lost and guilty sinner as I am! Not because of any good in us do these blessings come to us, but all of our Lord's good will, who made the Testament of Love and sealed it with His heart's blood! Brethren, the legatees in Christ's will are those who come and accept His Atonement. There is nothing in Christ's will for any person who will not trust His blood. I know of no mercy under Heaven for any man who, knowing of the atoning Sacrifice, willfully refuses it!

Certain teachers talk about a "larger hope." I read nothing of this fancy in the Scriptures and I dare not go beyond the Word of the Lord and I am content to say with Moses, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are *revealed* belong unto us and to our children forever." "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Other hopes, large or small, I know not of from Revelation, except this one—"He that believes in Him is not condemned." "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin." "He that believes in Him has everlasting life, but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the Only-Begotten Son of God."

Thus, the blood of the Testament is a direction as to the legatees. And, as I said before, what an index it is of the value of the legacies, since even the seal upon the will is no less in value than the heart's blood of the heir of all things! What treasures must be ours under such a Covenant! What riches are yours and mine, my Brothers and Sisters, if we are really trusting in Jesus!

III. But now, in the third place, I must speak for a minute or two upon that blood from another point of view. IT WAS THE BLOOD OF CLEANSING. "This is the blood of the Testament which God has enjoined unto you." Moses sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry—the object of the sprinkled blood was to purify so that the Book and the people and all things upon whom the blood fell might be allowed to stand in the Presence of the thrice holy God, being regarded by Him as cleansed. Think of this for a short time. This blood of the Covenant or of the Testament is a blood of purification to us. Wherever it is accepted by faith, it takes away all past guilt. Wonder of wonders! Years of sin vanish in a *moment*—encrustations of guilt disappear in a single instant and man, up to now guilty and condemned—is rendered perfectly clean in God's sight and accepted in the Beloved because he believes in Christ Jesus!

So priceless a Sacrifice as that of the Son of God is of boundless efficacy for the eternal removal of all evil once and for all. And this is but the beginning of our purification, for that same blood applied by faith takes away from the pardoned sinner the impurity which had been generated in his na-

ture by habit. He ceases to love the sin which once he delighted in— he begins to loathe that which was formerly his choice joy. A love of purity is born within his nature—he sighs to be perfect and he groans to think there should be about him tendencies towards evil. Temptations which once were welcomed are now resisted. Habits which were once most fascinating are an annoyance to his spirit. The precious blood, when it touches the conscience, removes all sense of guilt and when it touches the heart it kills the ruling power of sin!

The more fully the power of the blood is felt, the more does it kill the power of sin within the soul. I hope you are feeling it to be so. We ought to be ashamed, Brothers and Sisters, if we allow those sins to conquer us, now, which overcame us years ago! We ought to possess a growing strength against iniquity, a growing abhorrence of everything that is evil and a growing likeness to Christ—and it will be so if this precious blood is really operating upon our nature and imparting to it a fullness of life—

***“The Cross once seen is death to every vice
Else He that died there suffered all His pain,
Bled, groaned, agonized and died in vain.”***

If you are in any measure failing as to holiness, fly to the blood for help! Perhaps you have not thought enough, of late, of the dying love of your Lord. His death has a living power about it to breed and nourish holiness within you. Remember there is no slaying sin but by nailing it to the Cross. Only the lance which pierced the heart of Jesus can kill the love of sin. You must overcome through the blood of the Lamb—there is no other way for victory!

You will never avoid sin merely by believing it to be your duty to do so—the Law points the way, but cannot bear us along it. A sense of the great love of Christ to you in bearing your sin in His body on the Cross and so removing it from you will give you power to rise superior to temptation. It is charged against some of us, as preachers, that we do not urge men enough to their duties. We deny the charge and yet we claim that we do better, for we touch secret springs that nerve to duty and we point to the strength by which virtuous deeds are done! The acceptance of the Atonement is the great source of virtue. The Grace of God is seen in the Atonement of Jesus, by which sin is put away and thus the heart is won to God and led by gratitude to *obey* Him. The blood of Jesus is the strongest restraint from transgression.

We say to the pardoned—Will you so dishonor the blood which cleanses you as to go and live in sin? Will you go back to that from which you have been redeemed by the death of your Savior? Will you roll, again, in that foul mire out of which Christ has lifted you and so do despite to the blood which cleanses you and make it to be to you as an unholy thing? It must not be! Let but the heart feel the power of the blood of Jesus and it will growingly aspire after holiness and increasingly seek it! The precious blood is our great security from backsliding, for by it we obtain daily access to God! It keeps the Christian from grievous relapses and preserves him unto the coming of his Lord. Wherever the blood of Jesus Christ is really applied, perfection must be its ultimate result. There will be battling and striving, but there must be victory before long! The holier a man becomes, the more he mourns over his unholiness.

The operations of Grace in his soul make him detect the more readily the motions of sin in his members. There is not the sin within him that there *was*, but he sees that which *is* there more clearly and, therefore, he is more than ever grieved about it. No one calls himself so much a wretched man because sin is within him as he does who is also a thankful man, because God gives him the victory. You must not judge that you are not growing in sanctification because you are not increasing in your sense of it. *Your* sense of your own holiness is a poor test, a very doubtful index of your state. Brothers and Sisters, if you have really fixed your trust in the atoning blood and known its power, you are destined to perfection and all the devils in Hell cannot keep you from it! As sure as you believe, you shall one day stand white-robed among the host that know no discord in their song, no wandering in their walk!

From this spot where I have preached the Word I must, as a Believer, rise to a higher spot where I shall prove the power of Jesus' blood in an immortality of perfection! And from that pew where you sit, believing in the precious blood, you, also, must pass onward through your pilgrimage until you, also, reach the fullness of eternal life, for your Lord has pledged Himself to keep all those whom the Father has given Him and you are among them if, indeed, you believe in Him! Those who are justified shall also be glorified! All Believers shall yet dwell at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens where there is pleasure forevermore because there is perfection without alloy! May we all, through the Spirit, by the blood of purging be made whiter than snow!

IV. And then, to close, it is THE BLOOD OF DEDICATION. On the day when Moses sprinkled the blood of the Covenant on the people and on the Book, it was meant to signify that they were a chosen people set apart unto God's service. The blood made them holiness unto the Lord. Moses stood upon an elevated place and took the scarlet wool and hyssop and sprinkled the blood on all sides. Try and realize a part of the scene, A man just beneath him is wearing a white robe and a spot of blood has fallen upon it. He sees it. There it is! Will he not prize the crimson sign? I would have preserved that robe as long as I lived and the blood spot, too!

But what would it mean? To the Israelite it meant consecration to God. He would say, "The blood of the Covenant has fallen upon me and I am, therefore, a consecrated man dedicated to God." Now, unless the blood is upon *you*, my Brother or Sister, you are not saved! But if you are saved, you are, by that very fact, set apart to be God's servant. "You are not your own, you are bought with a price." "You were not redeemed with corruptible things as with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." A saved man is a bought man—the property of Jesus! Believer, not a hair on your head belongs to you—you belong to Jesus Christ as His servant as surely as you are redeemed by His blood! Now you are set apart! God's own mark is put upon you!

You have believed—that believing has applied the blood to you and you are Christ's. Cannot you see the private token which the Lord has set on you? Do you not feel it? Oh, then, acknowledge its claims in your daily life! Being so set apart, you are, therefore, ordained with due solemnity to be a servant of God, even as Aaron and his sons were consecrated to their

priesthood. I have been sometimes asked, "Were you ever ordained?" Yes, I was. Not by the laying on of the hands of any mortal man, but by that precious blood whose purchase-power I feel. When that blood fell upon me and I rejoiced in its cleansing power, I longed, at once, to tell of its efficacy to others. I hope I can say most honestly to my Lord—

***"Ever since by faith I saw the stream
Your flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die!"***

That same blood has fallen on you, Brother, Sister, and it has ordained *you* that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain. Is it not written, "You were slain and have been made unto our God kings and priests"? The slaying of Christ is the ground of our priesthood and the claim for our perpetual service. Let us praise, forever, the Lord who has worked everlasting redemption for us! If we have not Milton's power of song, at least let us come to the same resolve at which he arrived—

***"O unexampled love! Love nowhere to be found less than Divine!
Hail, Son of God, Savior of men, Your name
Shall be the copious matter of my song
Henceforth and never shall my harp Your praise
Forget, nor from Your Father's praise disjoin."***

Because of all this we are to lead a separated life. It is not for us to live as others live who walk in the vanity of their minds. We are not to seek the world's pleasures. We are not to besmear ourselves with its folly and its selfishness. God's people, if they act as they should, are a *separated* people. It is written, "The people shall dwell alone, they shall not be numbered among the nations." The Lord has set apart him that is godly for Himself and as the shepherd marks his sheep, so, with the precious blood of Christ applied by faith, has God marked His own elect, that they should abide in Christ and go no more out, no more mingling with the sons of men, nor joying in their joys, nor serving their lusts.

The Lord's portion is His people and His cry to them is, "Come you out from among them and be you separate." God give you to feel this blood of the Covenant, this blood of the Testament, this blood of cleansing, this blood of the setting apart, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

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

THE BLOOD-SHEDDING

NO. 118

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 22, 1857,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“Without shedding of blood is no remission.”
Hebrews 9:22.***

I WILL show you three fools. One is yonder soldier, who has been wounded on the field of battle, grievously wounded, well near unto death. The surgeon is by his side and the soldier asks him a question. Listen and judge of his folly. What question does he ask? Does he raise his eyes with eager anxiety and inquire if the wound is mortal, if the practitioner's skill can suggest the means of healing, or if the remedies are within reach and the medicine at hand? No, nothing of the sort. Strange to tell, he asks, “Can you inform me with what sword I was wounded and by what Russian I have been thus grievously mauled? I want,” he adds, “to learn every minute particular respecting the origin of my wound.” The man is delirious or his head is affected! Surely such questions at such a time are proof enough that he is bereft of his senses!

There is another fool. The storm is raging, the ship is flying impetuously before the gale, the dark scud moves swiftly overhead, the masts are creaking, the sails are torn to rags and still the gathering tempest grows more fierce. Where is the captain? Is he busily engaged on the deck? Is he manfully facing the danger and skillfully suggesting means to avert it? No, Sir, he has retired to his cabin and there, with studious thoughts and crazy fancies, he is speculating on the place where this storm took its rise. “It is mysterious, this wind,” he says, “no one yet has been able to discover it.” And so the lives of the passengers and his own in grievous danger, he is careful only to solve his curious questions. The man is mad, Sir! Take the rudder from his hand. He is clean gone mad! If he should ever run on shore, shut him up as a hopeless lunatic!

The third fool I shall doubtless find among yourselves. You are sick and wounded with sin, you are in the storm and hurricane of Almighty Vengeance and yet the question which you would ask of me this morning would be, “Sir, what is the origin of evil?” You are mad, Sir, spiritually mad! That is not the question you would ask if you were in a sane and healthy state of mind. Your question would be—“How can I get rid of the evil?” Not, “How did it come into the world?” but, “How am I to escape from it?” Not, “How is it that hail descended from Heaven upon Sodom?” but, “How may I, like Lot, escape out of the city to Zoar?” Not, “How is it

that I am sick?” but, “Are there medicines that will heal me? Is there a physician to be found who can restore my soul to health?”

Ah, you trifle with subtleties while you neglect certainties! More questions have been asked concerning the origin of evil than upon anything else. Men have puzzled their heads and twisted their brains into knots in order to understand what men can never know—how evil came into this world and how its entrance is consistent with Divine goodness. The broad fact is this—there is evil. And your question should be, “How can I escape from the wrath to come, which is engendered of this evil?” In answering that question this verse stands right in the middle of the way (like the angel with the sword, who once stopped Balaam on the road to Barak)—“Without shedding of blood is no remission.” Your real need is to know how you can be saved! If you are aware that your sin must be pardoned or punished, your question will be, “How can it be pardoned?” And then, point blank in the very teeth of your enquiry, there stands out this fact—“Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” Mark you, this is not merely a Jewish maxim. It is a world-wide and eternal Truth of God! It pertains not to the Hebrews, only, but to the Gentiles likewise. Never in any time, never in any place, never in any person can there be remission apart from shedding of blood! This great fact, I say, is stamped on Nature. It is an essential law of God’s moral government. It is one of the fundamental principles which can neither be shaken nor denied. Never can there be any exception to it! It stands the same in every place throughout all ages—“Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” It was so with the Jews. They had no remission without the shedding of blood. Some things under the Jewish law might be cleansed by water or by fire, but in no case where absolute sin was concerned was there ever purification *without blood*—teaching this Doctrine, that blood and blood, alone, must be applied for the remission of sin! Indeed the very heathen seems to have an inkling of this fact. Do not I see their knives gory with the blood of victims? Have I not heard horrid tales of human immolations, of holocausts, of sacrifices? And what mean these but that there lies deep in the human breast, deep as the very existence of man, this Truth of God—“that without shedding of blood there is no remission.” And I assert once more, that even in the hearts and consciences of my hearers there is something which will never let them believe in remission apart from a shedding of blood! This is the grand Truth of Christianity and it is a Truth which I will now endeavor to fix upon your memory. And may God, by His Grace, bless it to your souls. “Without shedding of blood is no remission.”

First, let me show you the blood-shedding, before I begin to dwell upon the text. Is there not a special blood-shedding meant? Yes, there was a shedding of most precious blood to which I must refer you. I shall not now tell you of massacres and murders, nor of rivers of blood of goats

and rams. There was a blood-shedding, once, which did outrival all other shedding of blood by far. It was a Man—a God—that shed His blood at that memorable season! Come and see it. Here is a dark and gloomy garden. The ground is crisp with the cold frost of midnight. Between those gloomy olive trees I see a Man, I hear Him groan out His life in prayer! Listen, angels! Listen, men, and wonder! It is the Savior groaning out His soul! Come and see Him. Behold His brow! O Heavens! Drops of blood are streaming down His face and from His body. Every pore is open and it sweats. But not the sweat of men that toil for bread. It is the sweat of One that toils for Heaven—He “sweats great drops of blood”! That is the blood-shedding, without which there is no remission! Follow that Man further. They have dragged Him with sacrilegious hands from the place of His prayer and His agony and they have taken Him to the Hall of Pilate. They seat Him in a chair and mock Him. A robe of purple is put on His shoulders in mockery. And mark His brow—they have put about it a crown of thorns and the crimson drops of gore are rushing down His cheeks! Angels! The drops of blood are running down His cheeks! But turn aside that purple robe for a moment. His back is bleeding. Tell me demons did this! They lift up the whips, still dripping clots of gore. They scourge and tear His flesh and make a river of blood to run down His shoulders! That is the shedding of blood without which there is no remission! Not yet have I done—they hurry Him through the streets. They fling Him on the ground. They nail His hands and feet to the transverse wood! They hoist it in the air. They dash it into its socket. It is fixed and there He hangs—the Christ of God! Blood from His head. Blood from His hands. Blood from His feet! In agony unknown He bleeds away His life! In terrible throes He exhausts His soul. “Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani.” And then look! They pierce His side and forthwith runs out blood and water! This is the shedding of blood, Sinners and Saints. This is the awful shedding of blood, the terrible pouring out of blood without which for you and for the whole human race, there is no remission!

I have then, I hope, brought my text fairly out—without this shedding of blood there is no remission. Now I shall come to dwell upon it more particularly.

Why is it that this story does not make men weep? I told it weakly, you say. Yes, so I did. I will take all the blame. But, Sirs, if it were told as weakly as men could speak, were our hearts what they should be, we should bleed away our lives in sorrow! Oh, it was a horrid murder! It was not an act of regicide. It was not the deed of a fratricide, or of a parricide. It was—what shall I say? I must make a word—a Deicide! The killing of a God—the slaying of Him who became Incarnate for our sins! Oh, if our hearts were but soft as iron, we must weep! If they were but tender as the marble of the mountains, we would shed great drops of grief! But they are harder than the nether millstone. We forget the griefs of Him

that died this ignominious death. We pity not His sorrows, nor do we account the interest we have in Him as though He suffered and accomplished all for us. Nevertheless, here stands the principle—"Without shedding of blood is no remission." Now, I take it, there are two things here. First, there is *a negative expressed*—"No remission without shedding of blood." And then there is *a positive implied*, indeed, with shedding of blood there IS remission!

I. First, I say, here is A NEGATIVE EXPRESSION—there is no remission without blood—without the blood of Jesus Christ! This is of Divine authority. When I utter this sentence, I have Divinity to plead. It is not a thing which you may doubt, or which you may believe. It *must be believed and received*, otherwise you have denied the Scriptures and turned aside from God. Some truths I utter, perhaps, have little better basis than my own reasoning and inference, which are of little enough value. But this I utter, not with quotations from God's Word to back up my assertion but from the lips of God Himself—here it stands in great letters, "There is no remission." So Divine is its authority, perhaps you will kick at it—but remember, your rebellion is not against me, but against God! If any of you reject this Truth, I shall not argue with you. God forbid I should turn aside from proclaiming His Gospel to dispute with men! I have God's irrevocable statute to plead—here it stands—"Without shedding of blood there is no remission." You may believe or disbelieve many things the preacher utters. But this you disbelieve at the peril of your souls! It is God's utterance—will you tell God to His face you do not believe it? That were impious. The negative is Divine in its authority—bow yourselves to it and accept its solemn warning!

But some men will say that God's way of saving men, by shedding of blood, is a cruel way, an unjust way, an unkind way. Sirs, I have nothing to do with your opinion of the matter. It is so. If you have any faults to find with your Maker, fight your battles out with Him! But take heed before you throw the gauntlet down! It will go ill with a worm when he fights with his Maker and it will go ill with you when you contend with Him! The Doctrine of Atonement, when rightly understood and faithfully received, is delightful, for it exhibits boundless love, immeasurable goodness and infinite Truth. But to unbelievers it will always be a hated Doctrine. So it must be, Sirs. You hate your own mercies. You despise your own salvation! I tarry not to dispute with you—I affirm it in God's name—"Without shedding of blood there is no remission."

And note how *decisive this is in its character*—"Without shedding of blood there is no remission." "But, Sir, can't I get my sins forgiven by my repentance? If I weep and plead and pray, will not God forgive me for the sake of my tears?" "No remission," says the text, "without shedding of blood." "But, Sir, if I never sin again and if I serve God more zealously than other men, will He not forgive me for the sake of my obedience?" "No

remission,” says the text, “without shedding of blood.” “But, Sir, may I not trust that God is merciful and will forgive me without the shedding of blood?” “No,” says the text, “without shedding of blood there is no remission.” None whatever! It cuts off every other hope. Bring your hopes here and if they are not based in blood and stamped with blood, they are as useless as castles in the air and dreams of the night! “There is no remission,” says the text, in positive and plain words. And yet men will be trying to get remission in 50 other ways, until their special pleading becomes as irksome to us as it is useless for them! Sirs, do what you like, say what you please, but you are as far off remission when you have done your best as you were when you began! Unless you put confidence in the shedding of our Savior’s blood and in the blood-shedding alone, there is no remission!

And note again how *universal it is in its character*. “What? I may not get remission without blood-shedding?” says the king and he comes with a crown on his head. “May not I in all my robes, with this rich ransom, get pardon without the blood-shedding?” “None,” is the reply. “None.” Then comes the wise man with a number of letters after his name—“Can I not get remission by these grand titles of my learning?” “None, none.” Then comes the benevolent man—“I have dispersed my money to the poor and given my bounty to feed them—shall not I get remission?” “None,” says the text, “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” How this puts everyone level! My Lord, you are no bigger than your coachman. Sir, Squire, you are no better off than John who plows the ground. Minister, your office does not serve you with any exemption—your poorest hearer stands on the very same footing! “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” No hope for the best, any more than for the worst, without this shedding of blood! Oh, I love the Gospel, for this reason among others, because it is such a leveling Gospel! Some persons do not like a leveling Gospel. Nor would I, in some senses of the word. Let men have their rank and their titles and their riches if they will, but I like and I am sure all good men like to see rich and poor meet together and feel that they are on a level! The Gospel makes them so. It says, “Put away your moneybags, they will not procure you remission. Roll up your diploma, that will not get you remission. Forget your farm and your park, they will not get you remission. Cover up that escutcheon, that coat of arms will not get you remission! Come, you ragged beggars, filthy off-scouring of the world, penniless! Come here, here is remission as much for you, ill-bred and ill-mannered though you are, as for the noble, the honorable, the titled and the wealthy! All stand on the same level here! The text is universal—“Without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

Mark too, *how perpetual my text is*. Paul said, “there is no remission!” I must repeat this testimony, too. When thousands of years have rolled away, some minister may stand on this spot and say the same. This will

never alter at all. It will always be so—in the next world as well as this—no remission without shedding of blood! “Oh yes there is,” says one, “the priest takes the shilling and he gets the soul out of purgatory!” That is a mere pretence. It never was in “purgatory!” But without shedding of blood there is no real remission. There may be tales and fancies, but there is no true remission without the blood of Propitiation. Never, though you strained yourselves in prayer. Never, though you wept yourselves away in tears. Never, though you groaned and cried till your heart-strings break! Never in this world, nor in that which is to come, can the forgiveness of sins be procured on any other ground than Redemption by the blood of Christ! And never can the conscience be cleansed but by faith in that Sacrifice. The fact is, Beloved, there is no use for you to satisfy your hearts with anything less than what satisfied God the Father—without the shedding of blood nothing would appease His justice—and without the application of that same blood, nothing can purge your consciences!

II. But as there is no remission without blood-shedding, IT IS IMPLIED THAT THERE IS REMISSION WITH IT! Mark it well, this remission is a present fact! The blood having already been shed, the remission is already obtained! I took you to the Garden of Gethsemane and the Mount of Calvary to see the blood-shedding. I might now conduct you to another garden and another mount to show you the grand proof of the remission. Another garden, did I say? Yes, it is a garden filled with many pleasing and even triumphant reminiscences! Aside from the haunts of this busy world, in it was a new sepulcher, hewn out of a rock where Joseph of Arimathea thought his own poor body would presently be laid. But there they laid Jesus after His Crucifixion.

He had stood Surety for His people and the Law had demanded His blood—death had held Him with a strong grasp. And that tomb was, as it were, the dungeon of His captivity, when, as the Good Shepherd, He laid down His life for the sheep! Why, then, do I see in that garden an open, untenanted grave? I will tell you. The debts are paid, the sins are cancelled, the remission is obtained! That great Shepherd of the sheep has been brought, again, from the dead by the blood of the Everlasting Covenant and in Him, also, we have obtained Redemption through His blood! There, Beloved, is the first proof!

Do you ask for further evidence? I will take you to Mount Olivet. You shall behold Jesus there with His hands raised like the High Priest of old to bless His people—and while He is blessing them, He ascends—the clouds receiving Him out of their sight. But why, you ask, oh why has He thus ascended and where is He gone? Behold He enters, not into the holy place made with hands but He enters into Heaven, itself, with His own blood, there to appear in the Presence of God for us. Now, therefore, we have boldness to draw near by the blood of Christ! The remission is ob-

tained! Here is the second proof. Oh Believer, what springs of comfort are there here for you!

And now let me commend this remission by the shedding of blood to those who have not yet believed. Mr. Innis, a great Scotch minister, once visited an infidel who was dying. When he came to him the first time, he said, "Mr. Innis, I am relying on the mercy of God. God is merciful and He will never damn a man forever." When he got worse and was nearer death, Mr. Innis went to him again and he said, "Oh, Mr. Innis, my hope is gone, for I have been thinking if God is merciful, God is Just, too. And what if, instead of being merciful to me, He should be just to me? What would then become of me? I must give up my hope in the mere mercy of God. Tell me how to be saved!" Mr. Innis told him that Christ had died in the place of all Believers—that God could be Just and yet the Justifier through the death of Christ. "Ah," he said, "Mr. Innis, there is something solid in that! I can rest on that. I cannot rest on anything else." And it is a remarkable fact that none of us ever met with a man who thought he had his sins forgiven unless it was through the blood of Christ. Meet a Muslim. He never had his sins forgiven. He does not say so. Meet an Infidel. He never knows that his sins are forgiven. Meet a Legalist. He says, "I hope they will be forgiven." But he does not pretend they are. No one ever gets even a fancied hope apart from this—that Christ and Christ, alone, must save by the shedding of His blood.

Let me tell a story to show how Christ saves souls. Mr. Whitefield had a brother who had been like he, an earnest Christian, but he had backslidden. He went far from the ways of godliness. And one afternoon, after he had been recovered from his backsliding, he was sitting in a room in a chapel house. He had heard his brother preaching the day before and his poor conscience had been cut to the very quick. Said Whitefield's brother, when he was at tea, "I am a lost man" and he groaned and cried and could neither eat nor drink. Said Lady Huntingdon, who sat opposite, "What did you say, Mr. Whitefield?" "Madam," he said, "I said, 'I am a lost man.'" "I'm glad of it," she said, "I'm glad of it." "Your Ladyship, how can you say so? It is cruel to say you are glad that I am a lost man." "I repeat it, Sir," she said, "I am heartily glad of it." He looked at her, more and more astonished at her barbarity. "I am glad of it," said she, "because it is written, 'The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.'" With the tears rolling down his cheeks, he said, "What a precious Scripture! And how is it that it comes with such force to me? Oh, Madam," he said, "Madam, I bless God for that! Then He will save *me*. I trust my soul in His hands. He has forgiven me." Shortly thereafter he went outside the house, felt ill, fell upon the ground and died. I may have a lost man here this morning. As I cannot say much, I will leave you good people. You do not need anything.

Have I got a lost man here? Lost Man! Lost Woman! Where are you? Do you feel yourself to be lost? I am so glad of it, for there is remission by the blood-shedding! O Sinner, are there tears in your eyes? Look through them. Do you see that Man in the garden? That Man sweats drops of blood for you! Do you see that Man on the Cross? That Man was nailed there for you! Oh, if I could be nailed on a cross this morning for you all, I know what you would do—you would fall down and kiss my feet and weep that I should have to die for you! But Sinner, lost Sinner, *Jesus* died for you—for YOU! And if He died for you, you cannot be lost—Christ died in vain for no one! Are you, then, a sinner? Are you convicted of sin because you believe not in Christ? I have authority to preach to you. Believe in His name and you cannot be lost! Do you say you are not a sinner? Then I do not know that Christ died for you. Do you say that you have no sins to repent of? Then I have no Christ to preach to you! He did not come to save the righteous—He came to save the wicked! Are you wicked? Do you feel it? Are you lost? Do you know? Are you sinful? Will you confess it? Sinner, if Jesus were here this morning, He would put out His bleeding hands and say, “Sinner, I died for you, will you believe Me?” He is not here in Person—He has sent His servant to tell you. Won’t you believe him? “Oh,” but you say, “I am such a sinner!” “Ah,” He says, “that is just why I died for you, because you are a sinner.” “But,” you say, “I do not deserve it.” “Ah,” He says, “that is just why I did it!” You say, “I have hated You.” “But,” He says, “I have always loved you.” “But, Lord, I have spit on Your minister and scorned Your Word.” “It is all forgiven,” He says, “all washed away by the blood which did run from My side. Only believe Me. That is all I ask. And *that I will give you*. I will help you to believe.” “Ah,” says one, “but I do not need a Savior.” Sir, I have nothing to say to you except this—“The wrath to come! The wrath to come!” But there is one who says, “Sir, you do not mean what you say! Do you mean to preach to the most wicked men or women in the place?” I mean what I say! There she is! She is a harlot, she has led many into sin and many into Hell. There she is. Her own friends have turned her out of doors. Her father called her a good-for-nothing whore and said she could never come to the house again! Woman! Do you repent? Do you feel yourself to be guilty? Christ died to save you and you shall be saved! There he is. I can see him. He was drunk. He has been drunk very often. Not many nights ago I heard his voice in the street, as he went home at a late hour on Saturday night, disturbing everybody. And he beat his wife, too. He has broken the Sabbath. And as to swearing, if oaths are like soot, his throat must need sweeping bad enough, for he has cursed God often! Do you feel yourself to be guilty, my Hearer? Do you hate your sins and are you willing to forsake them? Then I bless God for you! Christ died for you. Believe!

I had a letter a few days ago from a young man who heard that during this week I was going to a certain town. He said, "Sir, when you come, preach a sermon that will fit me, for do you know, Sir, I have heard it said that we must all think ourselves to be the most wicked people in the world, or else we cannot be saved. I try to think so but I cannot, because I have not been the most wicked. I want to think so, but I cannot. I want to be saved, but I do not know how to repent enough." Now, if I have the pleasure of seeing him, I shall tell him, God does not require a man to *think* himself the most wicked in the world, because that would sometimes be to think a lie. There are some men who are not so wicked as others are. What God requires is this—that a man should say, "I know more of myself than I do of other people. I know little about them and from what I see of myself, not of my actions, but of my heart, I do think there can be few worse than I am. They may be more guilty, openly, but then I have had more light, more privileges, more opportunities, more warnings and, therefore, I am still guiltier." I do not want you to bring your brother with you and say, "I am more wicked than he is." I want you to come and say, "Father, I have sinned." You have nothing to do with your brother William—whether he has sinned more or less. Your cry should be, "Father, I have sinned!" You have nothing to do with your cousin Jane, whether or not she has rebelled more than you. Your business is to cry, "Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner!" That is all. Do you feel yourselves lost? Again, I say, —

"Come and welcome, Sinner, come!"

To conclude. There is not a sinner in this place, who knows himself to be lost and ruined, who may not have all his sins forgiven and "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." You may, though black as Hell, be white as Heaven this very instant! I know 'tis only by a desperate struggle that faith takes hold of the promise, but the very moment a sinner believes, that conflict is past! It is his first victory and a blessed one. Let this verse be the language of your heart—adopt it and make it your own—

***"A guilty, weak and helpless worm
In Christ's kind arms I fall!
He is my strength and righteousness—
My Jesus and my All."***

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.**

WITH OR WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD NO. 2951

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 1905.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MAY 30, 1875.

*“Without shedding of blood is no remission.”
Hebrews 9:22.*

WEEK after week, standing before this congregation to preach the things concerning the Kingdom of Christ, I sometimes say to myself, “I wonder how much longer I shall have to point out to some of these people the way of salvation before they will walk in it—I wonder how many times I shall have to preach to them the Doctrine of Justification by Faith in the Crucified Christ of Calvary and how often I shall have to urge them to an immediate decision for Christ, the renunciation of their self-confidence and the forsaking of their sins?” It seems to me that after I have done this, the right thing for me to do is to keep on asking you, “Have you given due attention to these Truth of God? Do you know them in your soul?” For, “if you know these things, happy are you if you do them,” but the very opposite of happy are you if you leave them undone!

I am going to try to enlist the attention of any earnest, thoughtful persons who are here, any of those who are still unconverted, but who have begun to consider their ways and to turn unto the Lord. To you, dear Friends, I mean to preach nothing but the simple Gospel of Jesus Christ—and not to preach it as though I were addressing the settlers in Australia or the pundits of Hindustan—but to preach it distinctly to *you* and to urge you to accept it here and now. If you have not accepted it by the time the sermon is done, it shall be through no fault of mine—the blame must lie at your own door, that you have been directed to the way of salvation, but have not walked in it—or that, having heard the Gospel and taken some interest in it, you have willfully rejected it.

The subject of my discourse is to be the remission—the putting away and getting rid of sin—and that concerns every one of us, from the youngest child to the oldest man or woman, for we are all sinners. It is very common for people to say, “Oh, yes, we are all sinners!” But I do not use that expression as they do. I mean that you have done wrong and that I have done wrong and that we have, all of us, done wrong! “We have done the things which we ought not to have done and we have left undone the things which we ought to have done, and there is no health in us.” We have chosen the wrong instead of the right. We have chosen to please ourselves rather than to please God. We have even lived as if there were no God! If there had really been no God, our conduct might not have been materially affected. We have all sinned in some way or other—

***“Each wandering in a different way,
But all the downward road.”***

And, dear Friends, we all of us need to be cleansed from this sin. There is not one among us who can afford to live in sin, or who can afford to die in sin. We may find a temporary pleasure in it, but it must end in eternal loss to us unless there comes a time when God’s Grace saves us from it—we cannot be truly happy while we are out of gear with God. And since we are immortal beings and our soul will not die, but will live on forever, there will come a time in which the sin which is unforgiven will be a sore plague to us. So it is vitally important that we should enquire whether, being sinners, we have been forgiven or not!

I hope I shall be able to reach the conscience of each person here while I try to talk to you about two contrasts. First we have, in our text, *sin unremitted and sin remitted*. And then, secondly, we have *without shedding of blood and with shedding of blood*.

I. So, first, we will consider these two things which are so opposite to each other—SIN UNREMITTED AND SIN REMITTED.

The Apostle says, “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” I do not like the sound of those words, “*no remission*.” They seem to me like a funeral knell—“no remission.” That might have been the sound in the ears of every sinner from the time of Adam until now—“no remission.” It would have made this world a dreadful prison if everywhere, when we sat down to think of our sin, there stared us in the face the words, “no remission.” This is, indeed, one of the inscriptions across the vault of Hell—“no remission,” “no remission.” I say that I cannot bear the sound of those words, yet they must be sounded aloud, for there are still some persons to whom they apply. I trust that the sounding of those words in their ears may be the means of their awakening!

What does it mean when we say that a man has sinned and that there is no remission for him? It means, first, that *he is the object of the daily anger of God*. God has a benevolent regard for him as one of His creatures and is not willing that he should perish. God would infinitely prefer that the sinner should turn to Him and live, but, viewing him as an impenitent sinner, we read that “God is angry with the wicked every day.” I have learned not to take much notice of other people’s opinions, yet I do not like to make anybody angry if I can help it. If I have ever done so—and sometimes it has happened unintentionally—I have had no pleasure in reflecting that someone was angry with me. And if it was somebody who would not be angry without a cause, it has been a very painful thing to live under a consciousness of his displeasure. *I want you whose sins are unforgiven, to reflect that God is angry with you every day*. When He looks upon you, He cannot regard you as a father regards a dear child who has done everything he can to please him, but He must look upon you as a rebel—as one who has revolted against Him and defied Him to His face. When He looks upon your sin, His anger must flame forth. A man who is not angry with sin must be a guilty man and, in proportion to the holiness of God must be his abhorrence of evil.

Reflect, then, upon what a sad condition you are in. If God should never smite you in His righteous wrath—if He should continue to give you the mercies of this life every day just as He has done, I think, dear Friend, that it ought to trouble you all the more that you are still provoking Him by your continued sin. If you really are of the noble spirit that I hope you are, you will not be so ungenerous as merely to regret your faults because of the suffering it will bring to yourself, but you will lament it because it offends so loving, so good, so tender, so gracious a Being as the God of the whole earth! Were He vindictive—had He no heart of compassion—if He had made no proclamation of mercy and no terms of Grace—I could understand how you could brazen your forehead and defy Him. But how can you live in enmity against the God who has been so gracious to you? Let the thought of the mercy of God make your unremitted sin such a burden upon your conscience that you will not rest until you have repented of it and been forgiven!

Remember, dear Friends, that, in addition to being the object of the daily anger of God, you are *in constant peril of suffering that anger to the fullest*. A single step may cause you to fall—and that fall may lead to the grave. Who among us can tell all the perils of this mortal life? I remember reading a work in which there were collected together numerous instances of the simple means by which men have died, such as the swallowing of a fruit stone, or the sticking of a small bone in the throat, the breathing of some invisible noxious gas, or the failure of some almost imperceptible organ in the body to perform its usual functions. How suddenly death often comes! A friend said to me, this morning, “Do you know that So-and-So is dead?” He was a dear fellow servant of Christ, an eminent preacher of the Gospel. I had no idea, when I saw him a little while ago in robust health, that he and I should never speak to each other again in this world! You, also, must often have heard of the death of friends—and someday people will tell the survivors that you, too, are gone. With unremitted sin upon you, you know where you will go, do you not? I need not tell you where they are driven whose sin has never been forgiven—and *whose sin never will be forgiven*—as they have passed out of this world unwashed in the precious blood of Jesus!

May I very earnestly put to all of you who are still unsaved, this question—“How will you be able to die with unremitted sin upon you?” There are some of us who believe that there is a spot on this earth where our mortal remains are to lie—and it is possible that the tree of which the planks will form our coffin has already been cut down. We expect to die unless the Lord shall soon come and that will amount to much the same thing. And, expecting to die, we would like to be ready to die and to have our house in order. I like to meet a sensible man who insures his life so as not to leave his wife and family in poverty, or who, when he has means at his disposal, lays by for a rainy day that should he be out of work, he will not need to go and beg. Now, if such provision as this is commendable—and who will say that it is not—is it not much more commendable with regard to eternal things? Are we to be careful about

lesser matters and yet to make no preparation for that last moment in which we must pass out of this world to undergo the solemn testing in the scales of unerring Justice? If unremitted sin is upon you—and it is to be fearful that it is upon very many of you—I pray you to consider what you will do in that dread hour when the immortal tenant of your house of clay makes her fatal leap without a wing to buoy her up—and sinks into despair and into yet deeper despair in the bottomless abyss! God grant that none of our spirits may ever know what it is to be found disembodied with unforgiven sin and afterwards to hear the trumpet of the great Day of Judgment ring out—and to go back into our risen bodies with sin unforgiven—and to be cast, body and soul, into the lake that burns forever and ever!

This is, surely, enough for me to say upon that sorrowful theme, so let us now think upon the brighter theme of *remission*. Our text seems to me to be musical with hope—“Without shedding of blood is no remission.” Then it is clearly implied that, *with* shedding of blood, there *is* remission! In the Gospel we always have glad news to tell. Unconverted Sinner with your unremitted sin, we have glad news to tell you! And this is it—your sin may be remitted! There is no sin of which you can repent, which may not be forgiven you! There lives not a mortal man who, if he repents of his sin, shall not find mercy! There is a sin which is unto death, but those who commit it never ask for mercy, or desire it. They are dead even while they live, their conscience is seared as with a hot iron, and they rush to Hell willingly. But never has a man sincerely anxious for salvation committed that sin! Let no penitent man despair, for there *is* remission for every sin of which any man truly repents and for which he exercises faith in the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ!

The remission of sin which God gives to His people is complete. That is to say, it wipes out all his sins, whatever they may have been. Now look, Believer, there is the list of your sins, it is a huge roll! If I were to unroll it, how long would it be? Would it not belt the globe and reach from the earth to the sun and back again? Can you see all the sin that is recorded there? Yet the moment that the blood of Jesus is applied to that roll, the whole record is blotted out and there shall never be any more sin inscribed there, for Jesus Christ never yet divided a man’s sins, forgiving some, and leaving others unforgiven! He deals with sin in the mass, takes it all up and flings it into the sea, or buries it in His own sepulcher! And never shall it have a resurrection, for, says the Lord, “the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found.” In the Epistle from which our text is taken, the Lord says, “I will put My Laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” King Hezekiah said to the Lord, “You have cast all my sins behind Your back.” And King David wrote, “As far as the east is from the west”—and that is an infinite distance—“so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” So you see that God completely sweeps away our sins when He remits them!

Further, the man who gets remission of sin, gets *a clearance from all danger of any penalty resulting from sin*, so that he can sing—

***“If sin is pardoned, I’m secure,
Death has no sting beside!
The Law gave sin its damning power,
But Christ, my Ransom, died.”***

In dying, Christ bought my pardon so that I have no cause to fear the punishment of my sin! What a blessing it is that the sin is gone and the penalty is gone too! When a man’s sin is remitted, he comes to the position which would have been his if he had never sinned. We fell, federally, in Adam, and we fell, *actually*, by our own sin. But Christ has put us back where Adam was in his state of innocence. No, He has done more than that for us, for man was but man before he fell, but now man is linked to the Eternal in the Person of the God-Man, Christ Jesus, so we are nearer to God than Adam was before he fell! I said, Sinner, that God was angry with you, but if your sin is remitted, His anger is gone! What does a forgiven sinner say to God? “Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away and You comforted me.” “Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” Jeremiah wrote, “The Lord has appeared of old unto me, saying, Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn you.” It is sin that separates us from God—when that is put away, there is no longer any separation—but we are one in blessed amity, sacred relationship, holy concord and near and dear communion!

Do all of you, dear Friends, know what this remission of sin is? There are some of us who could boast of this—not that we could boast of anything that we *are*, but we could boast and glory in the great *goodness of the Lord* to us, the very chief of sinners! There are many here who could join with me in this declaration, “We were guilty and Hell-deserving, but, having believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, we know that our sins, which were many, are all forgiven. We are ‘clothed in the righteousness of Christ and are accepted in the Beloved!’ And we *know* it and there is, therefore, now no condemnation to us who are in Christ Jesus. And we are not afraid of any, for, ‘being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ The peace we have, through believing in Jesus, is so full, so rich, so deep, that it cannot be broken! Death itself will only deepen it. We are not afraid to die—why should we be? With the robe of His righteousness upon us, we shall stand boldly even in the great Day of Judgment—and with the name of Jesus upon us, He will welcome us and say to us, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’”

I wish with all my heart and soul that every one of you had received the remission of your sin! I bless God that there are many in this place who are humbly resting on the great atoning Sacrifice. My Brothers and Sisters in Christ, do not question the remission of your sins, for, to question that is to question the Word of God itself! God Himself declares that every believer in Christ is justified and saved. But many of you who

have heard the Gospel, have not believed it. “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” This is your greatest sin—that you have not believed on Jesus Christ, whom God has sent! Oh, that God the Holy Spirit would convince you of the sin of unbelief and enable you to repent of it and to lay hold on Jesus Christ by a act of childlike faith, that you might live through Him!

II. This brings me to the second point of my discourse, which divides itself into two parts—WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD—AND WITH SHEDDING OF BLOOD.

“Without shedding of blood,” says the Apostle—*wherever that is the case, there is no remission.* It is not possible that any sin should ever be forgiven to any man without shedding of blood. This has been known from the very first. As soon as man had sinned, God taught him that he needed a sacrifice. Adam and Eve, after they had sinned, tried to clothe themselves with fig leaves, but that was not a sufficient covering. God must kill some animals, shedding their blood and, in their skins our first parents must be clothed. When Cain and Abel had grown up, the only sacrifice that God would accept was the slain lamb. To Cain and his sacrifice of the fruits of the earth, God had no respect. Job is, perhaps, the earliest of the Patriarchs, but he offered sacrifices for his children lest they should have offended God while they were feasting. He did not think nor did any of those ancient men who feared God think of finding acceptance with Him and remission of sin—without shedding of blood.

This belief has been almost universally held. There is scarcely to be found a tribe of men who have not believed in this. Wherever explorers go, they find that wherever there is any conception of God, there is a sacrifice in some form or other. Many people have thought it necessary to make very great sacrifices and some have even imagined that they could only expiate their guilt by offering up their own children, so deeply-seated is the thought in our humanity that there must be a sacrifice for sin! I scarcely know of any religion, except Socinianism, without a sacrifice. Humanity craves for it and cannot do without it. If anyone should proclaim a religion without a sacrifice, you would soon see how quickly this building would be emptied, or any other place of worship! There are always more spiders than people where the Atonement is left out. Men must have a sacrifice—in their inmost hearts they know their absolute need of it when they seek to approach the Lord.

The old Mosaic Law revealed this need of a sacrifice for sin. The most prominent thing about it—that which must have stuck everybody—was *the blood*. I do not know whether you have ever realized that the Tabernacle, which was praised for its beauty, must have looked like a veritable shambles and the gorgeous Temple, itself, must have needed abundant arrangements for its cleansing because of the continual sacrifices offered there—because so much of the service consisted in the shedding and sprinkling of blood. The most prominent idea that a worshipper would get would be that there was something for which an atonement was needed and that this involved the presentation of life

before God. And that is just the thought that God would have us still retain in our minds, for, “without shedding of blood is no remission.”

Do not quarrel with this Truth of God, dear Friends, for you cannot alter it. It is not for me to stand here to justify the ways of God to men, or to propound any theories of atonement. I have no theory. I simply say what the Apostle says, “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” And there is no remission otherwise. You may stand and weep for sin till you become a very Niobe, or be transformed into a dripping well, or waste away in one continual shower of penitential lamentation, but no sin will ever be washed away so! To repent of sin is a part of your natural duty. And attention to one part of duty cannot atone for the neglect of another part.

“Oh, but!” you say, “in addition to this weeping and lamentation, I mean to amend.” Well, suppose you do? If, from this time forth, you never sin again—if a wrong thought, or word, or act should never again stain your character, you will have done no more than it was your duty to do! And the fulfillment of your duty will be no atonement for the faults of the *past*—all your tears and all your efforts cannot put away the guilt of the past, for “without shedding of blood is no remission.” And repentance and good works are not shedding of blood!

Suppose you add to these things what you call religiousness? Very well. Do so. Attend the House of Prayer, join in the petitions of the saints as far as you can, sing with them, but, all the while mind what you are doing, for you may be adding to your sin instead of decreasing it, by relying upon such things as those! I repeat the declaration that you have only done what you ought to have done and that cannot make amends for your previous misdeeds and neglects, so that there, too, you rest upon a broken reed.

Are you so foolish as to hope that sin can be put away by some sleight of hand that may be practiced by so-called “priests”? A plague upon them! They swarm on the face of this earth—these men who say that they are endued with some strange power by which they can remit human guilt by the muttering of certain words and by passing you through certain performances which are generally attended with the transference of some part of your substance to the pockets of the so-called “priests!” O Sirs, be not deceived by them! Open your eyes and see for yourselves what there can be in one of your fellow men just because there have been laid upon his head the hands of a man wearing lawn sleeves, that he should have the power to put away your sins! If this folly is to be believed, do not let us hear any more about “the enlightened 19th Century.” It would be a disgrace to the people of *any* century to believe in such a transparent lie as that! Go to the living God for pardon, for He alone can give it! Make your confessions at His feet—only there they will be valid! And when you have confessed your sin to God, do not in any degree rely on sacramental efficacy, or on priestly power, but trust wholly to the shedding of blood! There is your hope! But without shedding of

blood, priest or no priest, sacrament or no sacrament, you will be lost as surely as you are a human being and a sinner!

My last point is to be *with the shedding of blood there is remission*. That is a much more delightful topic. If God had not provided the Sacrifice for sin, my text would have sounded the death-knell of all our hopes. "Without shedding of blood—no remission," would have been like the flaming sword of the cherubim keeping us back from the Tree of Life. "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering," was the sweet assurance of Abraham to Isaac. But to us there is a still sweeter assurance—God *has* provided *the* Lamb for a burnt offering! Listen to this, you who would have remission! God Himself came into this world. He who was offended by man's sin, condescended to become the Sacrifice to put away that sin! And coming here, He took upon Himself a human body, spotless and without taint of original sin. And here He lived as Man, perfect Man, yet just as truly very God of very God. When He had reached the appointed time, He offered Himself upon the altar as the one Sacrifice for human sin and, by the shedding of His blood, there is remission for sin! Think of this great Truth of God! Here was an innocent Sufferer, the value of whose life was worth more than an innumerable number of ours. It did more for the honor of God's Law for Christ to die than if we had *all* died, for all created beings will see how just God is when He will not let His own Son escape even when guilt is only imputed to Him.

Jesus Christ has died. The Son of God has offered Himself as a Sacrifice for sin! So now, whoever believes on Him shall have immediate remission of sin. It hardly matters how I tell you this great Truth so long as I make it clear to you. If I spoke it ungrammatically, if I uttered it so that you had to lean forward and strain your ears to catch the message, it would not matter as long as you were able to understand it. You are bound to lay hold of this Truth of God, for it is your life! If you do not grasp it, whose fault will it be? If I stood in the midst of a company of criminals condemned to die and told them that a free pardon could be obtained in a certain way, there would not be one of them who would criticize my voice or my manner because, if they really wanted pardon, they would all be taken up with the thought of getting it! It does not matter to me what criticism you may happen to make about me. I shall sleep just as well, I daresay, for all that—and live as long!

But I beseech you not to let any remarks or thoughts about me, or the place, or anything else drive any of you from this conviction—that you must either be saved or lost! That you must have your sins forgiven or else you will be ruined forever! That the only way of getting them forgiven is through the shedding of blood and that the only way of availing yourselves of the efficacy of the shedding of blood of Christ is by simple confidence in Him! Does anybody misunderstand that expression? Then I put it thus—give yourself up deliberately into the hands of Christ to save you from the consequences of your sin. As one who is falling, drops because he must, but drops cheerfully because another stands with outstretched arms to catch him, so drop into the Savior's arms! We are

all prone to sin, but if we give ourselves up to Christ, He will change our natures and make us love holiness. He will renew our hearts so that we shall seek after that which is good, pure, lovely and excellent in the sight of God. Salvation from the propensity to sin, as well as from the guilt of sin, will be given at once to everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ!

“But I do not feel right,” one says. Feeling right is not the all-important matter. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.”

“I will go home and pray,” says another. That is not what I urge you to do first. First, believe, and *then* pray. To put prayer in the place of faith is to suggest to God that He should change the plan of salvation, which is, as I just reminded another Friend, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” “What am I to do, then? Am I to believe that Jesus Christ died for me in particular?” I did not say that. You are to trust Jesus Christ whether you have any particular interest in Him or not. You will find out your particular interest in Christ in due time. Just now, look at Christ upon the Cross. That is a spectacle that is well worthy of your careful observation! There He hangs, He who made all worlds! With hands and feet fastened to the accursed tree, He hangs there to die the death of a slave—the death that the Romans would scarcely inflict upon slaves unless they had committed some extraordinary crimes. He whom the angels worship, hangs there to die, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” Can you not trust your soul with Him? Will you not believe that God, for Christ’s sake, can forgive you? Will you not now rush into His arms and confess your sins, yet look up and say, “I know that You can forgive, for Christ has died, and I do rest my soul on His atoning Sacrifice”?

I remember—though it was many years ago—when first I really understood that I was simply to look to Jesus Christ and that, doing so, I would be saved. I felt in my heart that I wished I had known it long before, for I had been for years seeking rest and finding none—I only needed to be told that there was nothing for me to do but simply look to Christ! Oh, how I did leap at that message! It was the best sermon I ever heard, yet it was, in itself, a very poor one. But it had in it that which was the means of saving my soul. I trusted Christ then with my soul and now I have nothing else to rest on. I have preached some thousands of times since that day and God has given me many souls, but I have not found any improvement as to the way of salvation. I trusted wholly in Christ, then, and well I might, for I had nothing else to trust to! And I trust in nothing but Jesus Christ, now, and well I may, for I *still* have nothing else to trust to!

If there is a poor sinner here who sees the lifeboat of faith come close up to him and he is afraid to step in, if it is any comfort to you, Sinner, let me tell you that if you step into that lifeboat and are lost, I must be lost, too, for I do not know of any other way of escape! If there is anyone who trusts in Jesus Christ and is damned, I must be damned with him—I am perfectly willing to go with him to prison and to death. If my Lord

Jesus Christ is not able to save a sinner just as he is, then He is not able to save me. And if the blood of Jesus Christ cannot wash out sin, then mine will never be washed out, for I have nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ to trust to, and I say to Him—

**“Other refuge have I none—
Hangs my helpless soul on You.”**

O Sinner, you can hang where I can hang and where all God’s people are hanging! “Ah,” you say, “you do not know what a great sinner I am.” No, and you do not know what a great Savior He is! “Ah, but I have such a hard heart!” But His heart was broken and He can break yours! “Yes, but it will be an amazing thing if He ever saves me.” Ah, there you are right, and so it is when He saves *anybody*—and He delights to work wonders of Grace! I wonder which will be the biggest wonder in Heaven—you or I—or someone else here or elsewhere? Well, we shall see when we get there, but mind that you get there! God bless you, for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
HEBREWS 9:18-28; 10:1-25.**

Hebrews 9:18-22. *Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God has enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the Law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.* Under the Law of God, some things were purified by fire or by water, but, “almost all things” were “purged with blood” and there was, and still is, no remission of sin “without shedding of blood.”

23-26. *It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the Heavens should be purified with these, but the Heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the Holy Place made with hands which are the figures of the true, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the Presence of God for us: nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters into the Holy Place every year with blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.* In every respect, our great High Priest was superior to the high priests under the Law, though, in some points, they resembled Him and were types of Him.

27, 28. *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.* His one offering so fully met all the claims of Divine Justice on behalf of all His people that there was no need of another offering for sin,

and no room for it, so His Second Coming will be “without a sin offering unto salvation,” as the passage may be rendered.

Hebrews 10:1. *For the Law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.* This refers to the old Ceremonial Law, under which the Jews lived so long. They always had to go, year after year, offering the same kind of sacrifices because the work of atonement was never perfectly done—men were not cleansed or saved by it—so the process had to be continually repeated.

2. *For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.* There would have been no need to bring another lamb to be offered if the one which was presented had put away sin! There would have been no need of another Day of Atonement if the sacrifice on the one day had really made atonement for sin.

3, 4. *But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.* Their blood was only a picture, an emblem, a type of far more precious blood—the shadow of the real Atonement which was afterwards to be offered.

5. *Therefore, when He comes into the world.* That is, the true Messiah, the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, our Redeemer—“When He comes into the world”—

5. *He says.* According to Psalm 40:6-8—

5-9. *Sacrifice and offering You would not, but a body have You prepared Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me), to do Your will, O God. Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin You would not, neither had pleasure therein; which are offered by the Law; then said He, Lo, I come to do Your will, O God. He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.* He takes away the type because the great Antitype has come! He abolishes the offering of bull, goats and lambs because HE has come whom they all foreshadowed!

10. *By which we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all.* Or, “once.” It can never be offered again. The pretence of offering up the body and the blood of Christ in the “mass” is sheer profanity! It has been done once and there is no need of a repetition. To suppose that it could be repeated is to imply that it was incomplete on the first occasion! But it was not, for by it we are already sanctified!

11, 12. *And every priest stands daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this Man, after He had offered one Sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.* It was done, wholly done, and done forever! Nothing

was to be added to it and, therefore, Jesus “sat down” in the place of honor and power “at the right hand of God”—

13, 14. *From henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified. Or, “set apart.” He has fully saved all those for whom He died. His one Sacrifice was so effectual that, by it, He has forever put away the sin of the whole multitude of those that believe in Him.*

15. *Whereof the Holy Spirit also is a witness to us. And what more veritable Witness can we have? That to which the Holy Spirit bears testimony must never be questioned by us.*

15-17. *For after He had said before, This is the Covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the lord, I will put My Laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sin and iniquities will I remember no more. What a wonderful Covenant that is—not that He will bless you if you keep the Law, but that you shall be enabled to keep it and that He will lead you to do so by putting His Law, not on tablets of stone where your eyes can see it, but on the fleshy tablets of your heart where your soul shall feel its force and power so that you shall be obedient to it! Meditate on those glorious words—“Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”*

18. *Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. If the sins themselves have gone and God will remember them no more, no further sacrifice is required for them! What need have you of cleansing if you are so clean that God, Himself, sees no sin in you? O glorious purgation by the atoning Sacrifice of Christ! Rejoice in it and praise the Lord for it forever and ever!*

19-25. *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching. Notice the practical teaching of this great Truth of God! If you have been thus washed, do not defile yourselves again. If, by God’s rich mercy, you have been delivered from the transgressions of the past, let gratitude move you to holy living and endeavor not only to grow in Grace, yourselves, but to help others in the same direction, so that the abounding mercy of God may have abundant praise from us. God grant it for His name’s sake! Amen.*

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

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***“Without shedding of blood there is no remission.”
Hebrews 9:22.***

EVERYWHERE under the old figurative dispensation, blood was sure to greet your eyes. It was the one most prominent thing under the Jewish economy—scarcely a ceremony was observed without it. You could not enter into any part of the Tabernacle, but you saw traces of the blood-sprinkling. Sometimes there were bowls of blood cast at the foot of the altar. The place looked so like a shambles, that to visit it must have been far from attractive to the natural taste—and to delight in it, a man had need of a spiritual understanding and a lively faith! The slaughter of animals was the manner of worship. The effusion of blood was the appointed rite and the diffusion of that blood on the floor, on the curtains and on the vestments of the priests was the constant memorial. When Paul says that almost all things were, under the Law, purged with blood, he alludes to a few things that were exempted. Thus you will find in several passages the people were exhorted to wash their clothes, and certain persons who had been unclean from physical causes were bid to wash their clothes with water. Garments worn by men were usually cleansed with water. After the defeat of the Midianites, of which you read in the Book of Numbers, the spoil, which had been polluted, had to be purified before it was claimed by the victorious Israelites. According to the ordinance of the Law which the Lord commanded Moses, some of the goods, such as raiment and articles made of skins or goat's hair, were purified with water, while other things that were of metal that could abide the fire, were purified by fire. Still, the Apostle refers to a literal fact when he says that almost all things, garments being the only exception, were purged, under the Law of God, with blood. Then he refers to it as a general truth under the old legal dispensation, that there was never any pardoning of sin except by blood. In one case, only, was there an apparent exception, and even that goes to prove the universality of the rule because the reason for the exception is so fully given. The trespass-offering, referred to as an alternative in Leviticus 5:11, might, in extreme cases of excessive poverty, be a bloodless offering. If a man was too poor to bring an offering from the flock, he was to bring two turtle-doves or young pigeons. But if he was too poor even for that, he might offer the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin-offering, without oil or frankincense, and

it was cast upon the fire. That is the one solitary exception through all the types. In every place, at every time, in every instance where sin had to be removed, blood must flow, life must be given! The one exception we have noticed gives emphasis to the statute that, “without shedding of blood, there is no remission.” Under the Gospel there is no exception, not such an isolated one as there was under the Law—no, not even for the extremely poor! Such we all are spiritually. Since we have not, any of us, to bring an offering any more than an offering to bring—but we have, all of us, to take the offering which has already been presented and to accept the Sacrifice which Christ has, of Himself, made in our place—there is now no cause or ground for exemption to any man or woman born, nor ever shall there be, either in this world or in that which is to come—“Without shedding of blood, there is no remission.” With great simplicity, then, as it concerns our salvation, may I ask the attention of each one here present, to this great matter which intimately concerns our everlasting interests? I gather from the text, first of all, the encouraging fact that—

I. THERE IS SUCH A THING AS REMISSION—that is to say, the remission of sins. “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” Blood has been shed and there is, therefore, hope concerning such a thing. Remission, notwithstanding the stern requirements of the Law of God, is not to be abandoned in sheer despair. The word, remission, means the putting away of debts. Just as sin may be regarded as a debt incurred to God, so that debt may be blotted out, cancelled and obliterated. The sinner, God’s debtor may cease to be in debt by compensation, by full acquittance and may be set free by virtue of such remission. Such a thing is possible. Glory be to God, the remission of all sin, of which it is possible to repent, is possible to be obtained! Whatever the transgression of any man may be, pardon is possible to him if repentance is possible to him. Unrepented sin is unforgivable sin. If he confesses his sin and forsakes it, then shall he find mercy. God has so declared it, and He will not be unfaithful to His Word. “But is there not,” one asks, “a sin which is unto death?” Yes, verily, though I know not what it is, nor do we think that any who have enquired into the subject have been able to discover what that sin is. This much seems clear, that practically the sin is unforgivable because it is never repented of. The man who commits it becomes, to all intents and purposes, dead in sin in a more deep and lasting sense, even, than the human race is as a whole, and he is given up case-hardened—his conscience seared, as it were, with a hot iron and, henceforth, he will seek no mercy. But all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. For lust, for robbery, for adultery—yes, for *murder*, there is forgiveness with God, that He may be feared. He is the Lord God, merciful and gracious, passing by transgression, iniquity and sin!

And *this forgiveness which is possible is*, according to the Scriptures complete. That is to say, when God forgives a man his sin, he does it out-

right. He blots out the debt without any back reckoning. He does not put away a part of the man's sin and leave him accountable for the rest, but in the moment in which a sin is forgiven, his iniquity is as though it had never been committed—he is received in the Father's house and embraced with the Father's love as if he had never erred! He is made to stand before God as accepted, and in the same condition as though he had never transgressed. Blessed be God, Believer, there is no sin in God's Book against you! If you have believed, you are forgiven—forgiven not partially, but altogether! The handwriting that was against you is blotted out, nailed to the Cross of Christ and can never be pleaded against you anymore forever! The pardon is complete!

Moreover, *this is a present pardon*. It is an imagination of some (very derogatory to the Gospel) that you cannot get pardon till you come to die and, perhaps, then in some mysterious way, in the last few minutes, you may be absolved. But we preach to you in the name of Jesus, immediate and present pardon for all transgressions—a pardon given in an instant—the moment that a sinner believes in Jesus! Not as though a disease were healed gradually and required months and long years of progress. True, the corruption of our nature is such a disease and the sin that dwells in us must be daily and hourly mortified. But as for the guilt of our transgressions before God, and the debt incurred to His Justice, the remission thereof is not a thing of progress and degree. The pardon of a sinner is granted at once! It will be given to any of you tonight who accept it—yes, and given you in such a way that you shall never lose it! Once forgiven, you shall be forgiven forever, and none of the consequences of sin shall be visited upon you. You shall be absolved unreservedly and eternally, so that when the heavens are on a blaze, and the Great White Throne is set up, and the last great assize is held, you may stand boldly before the Judgment Seat and fear no accusation, for the forgiveness which God, Himself, vouchsafes, He will never revoke!

I will add to this one other remark. *The man who gets this pardon may know he has it*. Did he merely *hope* he had it, that hope might often struggle with fear. Did he merely *trust* he had it, many a qualm might startle him. But to *know* that he has it is a sure ground of peace to the heart! Glory be to God, the privileges of the Covenant of Grace are not only matters of hope and surmise, but they are matters of faith, conviction and assurance! Count it not presumption for a man to believe God's Word! God's own Word it is that says, "Whoever believes in Jesus Christ is not condemned." If I believe in Jesus Christ, then I am not condemned. What right have I to think I am? If God says I am not, it would be presumption on my part to think I am condemned! It cannot be presumption to take God's Word just as He gives it to me. "Oh," says one, "how happy would I be if this might be my case." You have well spoken, for blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity. "But,"

says another, "I should hardly think such a great thing could be possible to such an one as I am." You reason after the manner of the sons of men! Know, then, that as high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are God's ways above your ways, and His thoughts above your thoughts. It is yours to err—it is God's to forgive. You err like a man, but God does not pardon like a man—He pardons like a God, so that we burst forth with wonder and sing, "Who is a God like unto You, that passes by transgression, iniquity and sin?" When you make anything, it is some little work suitable to your abilities, but our God made the heavens! When you forgive, it is some forgiveness suitable to your nature and circumstances. But when He forgives, He displays the riches of His Grace on a grander scale than your finite mind can comprehend! Ten thousand sins of blackest dye, sins of a hellish hue, He does in a moment put away, for He delights in mercy! And judgment is His strange work. "As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but had rather that he turn unto Me and live." This is a joyful note with which my text furnishes me! There is no remission except with blood—but there is remission, for the blood has been shed!

Coming more closely to the text, we have now to insist on its great lesson, that—

II. THOUGH THERE IS PARDON OF SIN, IT IS NEVER WITHOUT BLOOD. That is a sweeping sentence, for there are some in this world that are trusting for the pardon of sin to their repentance. It, beyond question, is your duty to repent of your sin. If you have disobeyed God, you *should* be sorry for it. To cease from sin is but the duty of the creature, else sin is not the violation of God's holy Law. But be it known unto you that all the repentance in the world cannot blot out the smallest sin! If you had only one sinful thought cross your mind and you should grieve over that all the days of your life, yet the stain of that sin could not be removed even by the anguish it cost you! Where repentance is the work of the Spirit of God, it is a very precious gift and is sign of Grace—but there is no atoning power in repentance! In a sea full of penitential tears, there is not the power or the virtue to wash out one spot of this hideous uncleanness. Without the blood-shedding, there is no remission! But others suppose that, at any rate, active reformation growing out of repentance may achieve the task. What if drunkenness is given up and temperance becomes the rule? What if licentiousness is abandoned and chastity adorns the character? What if dishonest dealing is relinquished and integrity is scrupulously maintained in every action? I say, 'tis well! I would to God such reformations took place everywhere—yet for all that, debts already incurred are not paid by our not getting into further debt—and past delinquencies are not condoned by future good behavior. So sin is not remitted by reformation! Though you should suddenly become immaculate as angels (not that such a thing is possible to you, for the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots), your reformations could make no atonement to God for the sins that are past in

the days that you have transgressed against Him. "What, then," says the man, "shall I do?" There are those who think that now their prayers and their humbling of soul may, perhaps, effect something for them. Your prayers, if they are sincere, I would not quit, rather do I hope they may be such prayers as betoken spiritual life. But oh, dear Hearer, there is no efficacy in prayer to blot out sin! I will put it strongly. All the prayers of all the saints on earth and if the saints in Heaven could all join—all their prayers could not blot out through their own natural efficacy the sin of a single evil word! No, there is no deterrent power in prayer. God has never set it to be a cleanser. It has its uses, and its valuable uses. It is one of the privileges of the man who prays, that he prays acceptably, but prayer, itself, can never blot out a sin without the blood! "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission," pray as you may!

There are persons who have thought that self-denial and mortifications of an extraordinary kind might rid them of their guilt. We do not often come across such people in our circle, yet there are those who, in order to purge themselves of sin, flagellate their bodies, observe protracted fasts, wear sackcloth and hair shirts next to their skin—and even some have gone so far as to imagine that to refrain from bathing and to allow their body to be filthy, was the readiest mode of purifying their soul! A strange infatuation, certainly! Yet today, in India, you shall find the fakir passing his body through marvelous sufferings and distortions in the hope of getting rid of sin! To what purpose is it all? I think I hear the Lord say, "What is this to Me that you did bow your head like a bulrush, and wrapped yourself in sackcloth, and ate ashes with your bread, and mingled wormwood with your drink? You have broken My Law—these things cannot repair it! You have done injury to My honor by your sin, but where is the righteousness that reflects honor upon My name?" The old cry in the olden days was, "How shall we come before God?" and they said, "Shall we give our first-born for our transgression, the fruit of our body for the sin of our soul?" Alas, it was all in vain! Here stands the sentence. Here forever must it stand—"Without shedding of blood there is no remission." It is the life God demands as the penalty due for sin, and nothing but the life indicated in the blood-shedding will ever satisfy Him!

Observe again how this sweeping text puts away all confidence in ceremony, even the ceremonies of God's own ordinance. There are some who suppose that sin can be washed away in Baptism. Ah, futile fancy! The expression where it is once used in Scripture implies nothing of the kind—it has no such meaning as some attach to it, for that very Apostle, of whom it was said gloried that he had not baptized many persons lest they should suppose there was some efficacy in his administration of the rite. Baptism is an admirable ordinance in which the Believer holds fellowship with Christ in His death. It is a symbol—it is nothing more! Tens of thousands and millions have been baptized and have died in their

sins. Or what profit is there in the unbloody sacrifice of the “Mass,” as Antichrist puts it? Do any say it is “an unbloody sacrifice,” yet at the same time offer it for a propitiation for sin? We fling this text in their faces—“Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” Do they reply that the blood is there in the body of Christ? We answer that even were it so, that would not meet the case for it is without the *shedding* of blood—without the blood-shedding, the blood as distinct from the flesh—without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin!

And here I must pass on to make a distinction that will go still deeper. Jesus Christ, Himself, cannot save us apart from His blood. It is a supposition which only folly has ever made but we must refute even the hypothesis of folly when it affirms that the *example* of Christ can put away human sin, that the Holy life of Jesus Christ has put the race on such a good footing with God that He can now forgive its faults and its transgression. Not so! Not the holiness of Jesus! Not the life of Jesus! Not the death of Jesus, but the BLOOD of Jesus only, for, “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

And I have met with some who think so much of the Second Coming of Christ, that they seem to have fixed their entire faith upon Christ in His Glory. I believe this to be the fault of Irvingism—that it holds too much before the sinner’s eyes Christ on the Throne, whereas, though Christ on the Throne is ever the loved and adorable, yet we must see Christ upon the Cross, or we can never be saved! Your faith must not be placed merely in Christ Glorified, but in Christ Crucified. “God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “We preach Christ Crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.” I remember one person who was united with this Church (the dear Sister may be present now), that had been for some years a professor, and had never enjoyed peace with God, nor produced any of the fruits of the Spirit. She said, “I have been in a church where I was taught to rest upon Christ Glorified and I did so fix my confidence, such as it was, upon Him, that I neither had a sense of sin, nor a sense of pardon from Christ Crucified! I did not know and until I had seen Him as shedding His blood and making a Propitiation, I never entered into rest.” Yes, we will say it again, for the text is vitally important—“Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission,” not even with Christ Himself! It is the Sacrifice that He has offered for us that is the means of putting away our sin—this, and nothing else! Let us pass on a little further with the same Truth of God—

III. THE REMISSION OF SIN IS TO BE FOUND AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS.

There is remission to be had through Jesus Christ, whose blood was shed. The hymn we sang at the commencement of the service gave you the marrow of the Doctrine. We owe to God a debt of punishment for sin. Was that debt due or not? If the Law was right, the penalty ought to be exacted. If the penalty was too severe and the Law inaccurate, then God

made a mistake. But it is blasphemy to suppose that! The Law of God, then, being a righteous Law, and the penalty just, shall God do an unjust thing? It will be an unjust thing for Him not to carry out the penalty! Would you have Him to be unjust? He had declared that the soul that sinned should die—would you have God to be a liar? Shall He eat His words to save His creatures? “Let God be true, and every man a liar.” The Law’s sentence must be carried out! It was inevitable that if God maintained the prerogative of His holiness, He must punish the sins that men have committed. How, then, could He save us? Behold the plan! His dear Son, the Lord of Glory, takes upon Himself human nature, comes into the place of as many as the Father gave Him, stands in their standing and when the sentence of justice has been proclaimed and the sword of vengeance has leaped out of its scabbard, behold the glorious Substitute bares His arm and He says, “Strike, O, sword, but strike Me and let My people go!” Into the very soul of Jesus the sword of the Law pierced and His blood was shed, the blood not of One who was only Man, but of One who, by His being an eternal Spirit, was able to offer up Himself without spot unto God in a way which gave Infinite Efficacy to His sufferings. He, through the eternal Spirit, we are told, offered Himself without spot to God. Being in His own Nature infinitely beyond the nature of man, comprehending all the natures of man, as it were, within Himself by reason of the majesty of His Person, He was able to offer an Atonement to God of infinite, boundless, inconceivable sufficiency!

What our Lord suffered, none of us can tell. I am sure of this—I would not disparage or underestimate His physical sufferings—the tortures He endured in His body—but I am equally sure that we can, none of us, exaggerate or over-value the sufferings of such a soul as His! They are beyond all conception! So pure and so perfect, so exquisitely sensitive, and so immaculately holy was He, that to be numbered with transgressors, to be smitten by His Father, to die (shall I say it?) the death of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers, was the very essence of bitterness, the consummation of anguish! “Yet it pleased the Father to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief.” His sorrows in themselves were what the Greek liturgy well calls them—“unknown sufferings, great griefs.” Hence, too, their efficacy is boundless, without limit. Now, therefore, God is able to forgive sin. He has punished the sin on Christ—it becomes justice, as well as mercy, that God should blot out those debts which have been paid. It were unjust—I speak with reverence, but yet with holy boldness—it were unjust on the part of the Infinite Majesty, to lay to my charge a single sin which was laid to the charge of my Substitute. If my Surety took my sin, He released me, and I am clear! Who shall resuscitate judgment against me when I have been condemned in the Person of my Savior? Who shall commit me to the flames of Hell, when Christ, my Substitute, has suffered the tantamount of Hell for me? Who shall lay anything to my charge when Christ has had all my crimes laid to His

charge, answered for them, expiated them and received the token of quit-tance from them, in that He was raised from the dead that He might openly vindicate that justification in which, by Grace I am called and pri-ileged to share? This is all very simple, it lies in a nutshell, but do we all receive it—have we all accepted it? Oh, my dear Hearers, the text is full of warning to some of you! You may have an amiable disposition, an ex-ccellent character, a serious turn of mind, but you quibble at accepting Christ! You stumble at this stumbling stone! You split on this rock. How can I meet your hapless case? I shall not reason with you. I refuse to en-ter into any argument. I ask you one question. Do you believe this Bible to be Inspired of God? Look, then, at that passage—“Without the shed-ding of blood there is no remission.” What say you? Is it not plain, abso-lute, conclusive? Allow me to draw the inference. If you have not an in-terest in the blood-shedding, which I have briefly endeavored to describe, is there any remission for you? Can there be? Your own sins are on your head! Of your hand shall they be demanded at the coming of the great Judge. You may labor, you may toil, you may be sincere in your convic-tions and quiet in your conscience, or you may be tossed about with your scruples, but as the Lord lives, there is no pardon for you except through this shedding of blood! Do you reject it? On your own head will lie the pe-ri! God has spoken. It cannot be said that your ruin is designed by Him when your own remedy is revealed by Him!

He bids you take the way which He appoints, but if you reject it, you must die! Your death is suicide, be it deliberate, accidental, or through error of judgment. Your blood is on your own head. You are warned!

On the other hand, what a far-reaching consolation the text gives us! “Without shedding of blood there is no remission,” but where there is the blood-shedding, there is remission! If you have come to Christ, you are saved. If you can say from your very heart—

***“My faith does lay her hand,
On that dear head of Yours,
When like a penitent I stand,
And here confess my sin.”***

Then your sin is gone! Where is that young man? Where is that young woman? Where are those anxious hearts that have been saying, “We would be pardoned now”? Oh, look, look, look, look to the Crucified Sa-rior and you are pardoned! You may go your way, inasmuch as you have accepted God’s Atonement. Daughter, be of good cheer, your sins, which are many, are forgiven you! Son, rejoice, for your transgressions are blot-ted out!

My last word shall be this. You that are teachers of others and trying to do good, cleave fast to this Doctrine. Let this be the front, the center, the pith and the marrow of all you have to testify. I often preach it, but there is never a Sabbath in which I go to my bed with such inward con-tentment as when I have preached the Substitutionary Sacrifice of Chr-ist. Then I feel, “If sinners are lost, I have none of their blood upon me.”

This is the soul-saving Doctrine—grip it and you shall have laid hold of eternal life! Reject it and you reject it to your confusion! Oh, keep to this! Martin Luther used to say that every sermon ought to have the Doctrine of Justification by Faith in it. True, but let it also have the Doctrine of Atonement in it. He says he could not get the Doctrine of Justification by Faith into the Wurtembergers' heads and he felt half-inclined to take the book into the pulpit and fling it at their heads in order to get it in! I am afraid he would not have succeeded if he had. But oh, how would I try to hammer again, and again, and again upon this one nail—"The blood is the life thereof." "When I see the blood, I will pass over you."

Christ giving up His life in pouring out His blood—it is *this* that gives pardon and peace to every one of you, if you will but look to Him—pardon now, complete pardon, pardon forever! Look away from all other confidences and rely upon the sufferings and the death of the Incarnate God who has gone into the Heaven, and who lives today to plead before His Father's Throne, the merit of the blood which, on Calvary, He poured forth for sinners! As I shall meet you all in that great day, when the Crucified One shall come as the King and Lord of all, which day is hastening near—as I shall meet you then, I pray you bear me witness that I have strived to tell you in all simplicity what is the way of salvation! And if you reject it, do me this favor, to say that at least I have proffered to you in Jehovah's name this, His Gospel, and have earnestly urged you to accept it, that you may be saved! But, by God's Grace, I would rather meet you there, all covered in the one Atonement, clothed in the one righteousness, and accepted in the one Savior! And then together will we sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed us to God by His blood to receive honor, and power, and dominion forever and ever." Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ISAIAH 57.**

**A lament for the death of the righteous—many
of them put to death by persecution.**

Verses 1, 2. *The righteous perishes, and no man lays it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come. They shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.* When there is a storm coming on, you may see the shepherds among the hills gathering their sheep and taking them home. And when good men die in large numbers and the Church's ranks are thinned, it is sometimes a token that bad times are coming on—and so God takes away the righteous from the evil to come. Oh, did men know what the world loses when a good man dies, they would regret it far more than the death of emperors and kings who

fear not God! But as for those who are made righteous by the Grace of God, they need not fear to die. To them it will be a rest—a sleep with Jesus—till the trumpet of the Resurrection—and all the evil that will come upon the world will not touch them. They shall rest till the Master comes! Now, the rest of the Chapter is a very terrible description of the sin of the people of Isaiah's day. And at last it contains a very brilliant display of the Grace of God.

3, 4. *But draw near here, you sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the harlot. Against whom do you sport yourselves? Against whom make you a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue? Are you not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood?* Because this people so exalted against God and His Gospel, God would not allow that they were the true seed of Israel at all. He makes them out to be a false, degenerate breed—and He asks them how they dare to sport against His Prophets and draw out the tongue, and make a wide mouth against those who spoke for the God of Israel.

5. *Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valley under the cliffs of the rocks?* The Lord had said that they should offer sacrifices only on one altar at Jerusalem—and to Him alone—but they had set up altars under all the ancient oaks to worship all sorts of gods. In addition to this, they had gone so far after the cruel way of the Pagans that they offered their own children in sacrifice in the valleys, under the cliffs and the rocks.

6. *Among the smooth stones of the stream is your portion: they, they are your lot; even to them have you poured a drink offering, you have offered a meat offering. Should I receive comfort in these?* They had set up the smooth stones which they had found in the brook, and made them into altars—no, made gods of them—for when man wants to make a god, anything will do, whether it is the fetish of the cannibal, or the round robin of the ritualist. It little matters which. A piece of bread will do, for a god, as well as a piece of stone. Anything will man worship, sooner than worship the great, invisible, eternal God!

7, 8. *Upon a lofty and high mountain have you set your bed: even there you went up to offer sacrifice. Behind the doors, also, and the posts have you set up your remembrance.* Where they ought to have put up texts of Scripture and the remembrance of God's Law, they had set up memorials of their false gods everywhere, for when men become superstitious and worship falsely, they seem to be far more eager about it than those who worship the true God. They go on all fours at it, and give themselves wholly up to their superstitions.

8, 9. *For you have uncovered yourself to another than Me, and are gone up. You have enlarged your bed and made you a covenant with them. You loved their bed where you saw it. And you went to the king with ointment, and did increase your perfumes and did send your messengers far off, and did debase yourself even unto Hell.* When they were in trouble, instead of going to God, they went to the king of Egypt, that he might come

and help them against the king of Assyria—but they would never turn to God! They loved idols and so they trusted in an arm of flesh. They forgot the invincible arm which had overthrown Pharaoh at the Red Sea and worked such wondrous miracles for the deliverance of His people. And they made gods of the kings of the earth and trusted in them, “and did debase yourself even unto Hell.”

10. *You are wearied in the greatness of your way.* They did so much and they were so superstitious, that they even wearied themselves with it.

10. *Yet said you not, There is no hope: you have found the life of your hand; therefore you were not grieved.* So long as they did but live, they did not think that there was any hope of anything better—and so they were not grieved for all their sin and all their trouble.

11. *And of whom have you been afraid or feared, that you have lied and have not remembered Me, nor laid it to your heart? Have not I held My peace even of old, and you fear Me not?* This is the old trouble—that because God does not smite down sinners, then and there, they take liberties with Him. They do not know that His patience—His slackness, as they call it—is long-suffering because He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. And so He puts up His sword. Yet He says, “Have not I held My peace, even of old, and you fear Me not?”

12. *I will declare your righteousness, and your works; for they shall not profit you.* They said, “Why, we are very righteous. Have not we got a god in every corner? As for our works, we have plenty of them. Have not we temples built everywhere, and altars set up on every hill and in every valley?” “Yes,” says God, “such is your righteousness. They shall not profit you.”

13. *When you cry, let your collection of idols deliver you: but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that puts his trust in Me shall possess the land, and shall inherit My holy mountain—* Oh, what a sarcasm! But how just. You that love not God, when you are in trouble, let your sins deliver you if they can! Let your pleasures comfort you!

14, 15. *And one shall say, Cast you up, cast you up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of My people. For thus says the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place with him, also, who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* We dwell in time and, by-and-by, we are hurried into eternity—but God always dwells in eternity! It is a very beautiful thought that He should have two dwelling places. A blasphemer once met a humble Christian and he said, “Pray, is yours a great God or a little God?” “Well,” said he, “He is so great a God that the Heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, but He condescends to make Himself so little that He can dwell in

my poor humble heart.” God has two temples. The one is the high and holy place—the other is the lowly and the humble place. May we have Him in our hearts—and then shall we be in His Heaven before long.

16. *For I will not contend forever, neither will I always be angry.* God does not like being angry, and though sin provokes Him, yet He feels not at ease when He is wrathful.

16. *For the spirit would fail before Me, and the souls which I have made.* It would destroy them. Man could not bear God’s anger forever.

17-19. *For the iniquity of his covetousness was I angry and smote him: I hid and was angry, and he went on in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him, also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips.* God teaches men how to speak words of penitence, and faith, and prayer and praise.

19. *Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, says the LORD; and I will heal him.* He puts it twice over, because it is such a prodigy of Grace that God should heal sinners that are so polluted with sin! He puts it over again. “I will heal him.”

20. *But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.* “Work up” such is the word—“whose waters work up mire and dirt” continually, as it were, in a work, and bringing up its filthiness from the bottom—bringing it to the shore—taking away the brightness from every wave and the crystal blue from every drop. Its waters cast up mire and dirt.

21. *There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked.*

—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.**

CHRIST'S ONE SACRIFICE FOR SIN

NO. 2283

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1892.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING JUNE 29, 1890.

***“Now once in the end of the world has He appeared
to put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself.”
Hebrews 9:26.***

I NEED not read the text again, for I shall not go far away from it, but again and again shall we come back to these precious words about our Lord's one great Sacrifice for sin.

What Christ meant to do on the Cross, He actually did. I always take that for granted. He did not die in vain. He did not leave any part of His work undone. Whatever was His intent, by the laying down of His life, He accomplished it, for, if not, dear Friends, He would come here again! If any of His work were left undone, He would return to the earth that He might finish it, for He never did leave a work incomplete, and He never will! Christ effected the redemption of His people by one stroke—coming here, living, and dying—He put away sin. He did not merely *try* to do it, but He actually accomplished the stupendous work for which He left His Glory-Throne above.

He did not die to make men salvable—He died to save them. He did not die that their sin might be put away by some effort of their own—He died to put it away. “Once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself.” There was one death, one Sacrifice, one Atonement, and all the work of man's redemption was forever accomplished, so that we can sing—

***“Love's redeeming work is done;
Fought the fight, the battle won.”***

If the mission on which Christ came to this earth had not been fulfilled, I say again, He would have returned to complete the work that He had begun.

That would have meant that He should often have been offered since the foundation of the world, an idea which we cannot hold for a single moment! For Christ to die twice would be contrary to all analogy. He is the second Adam. He, therefore, is like unto men. Read the words of Paul in the verse following our text, “It is appointed unto men once to die” (not twice), “but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second

time without sin unto salvation.” For Him, who is the true Adam, to die twice, would be contrary to the analogy of things.

It would also be most repugnant to all holy feeling. For Christ once to die a shameful death upon the Cross on Calvary has made an indelible mark upon our heart, as though it had been burned with a hot iron. I have sometimes half said to myself, “God forbid that His dear Son should ever have died! “The price seemed too great even for our redemption. Should He die, the Holy One and the Just, the Glorious and Blessed Son of God? The answer to that question is that He has died. Thank God He can never die again! It were horrible to us to think that it should be possible that He should ever be called upon to bear our sins a second time!

It would be traitorous to His Person, it would be dishonorable to His Gospel to suppose that His Sacrifice is still incomplete and that He might be called upon to die again because His first death had not satisfied the claims of Divine Justice. The simple suggestion, even for the sake of argument, is almost blasphemous! Christ either paid the ransom price for His people, or He did not. If He did, it is paid. If He did not, will He come again, you think? That can never be! Toplady knew that Truth of God when he taught the saints to sing to their Lord—

**“Complete Atonement You have made,
And to the utmost farthing paid
Whate'er Your people owed.
Nor can His wrath on me take place,
If sheltered in Your righteousness,
And sprinkled with Your blood.”**

The idea that Christ's one Sacrifice for sin is not sufficient to accomplish His purpose is also opposed to Revelation. We are told that, “Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more, death has no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He lives, He lives unto God.” The sinner for whom Christ died is free because of his Substitute's death. And the Substitute, Himself, is free, for He has discharged every liability and given to God the full satisfaction that Divine Justice required—

**“He bore on the tree the sentence for me,
And now both the Surety and sinner are free.”**

Take a good look at Calvary. Get the Cross distinctly photographed upon your eyeballs. Behold the five wounds and the bloody sweat. The whole Gospel was hung on the Cross. It was all there—the battle and the victory, the price and the purchase, the doom and the deliverance—the Cross and the crown. See again, in the death of Christ on the Cross, a clear idea of what He meant to do and of what He actually did when He laid down His life for us. And be glad that once, and only once, this great deed had to be done! Nothing more is needed—Christ has put away the sin of those for whom the Covenant was made, according to the Word of God that we read just now—“Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” “Now, where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.”

That will stand as a preface. Now I want, with great earnestness—I fear with much weakness, but still with great earnestness—to set before you, beloved Friends, a summary of the way in which Christ has saved His people. It matters not how feebly the Truth of God is put to you. If you do but lay hold of it and firmly grasp it by faith, your souls are saved. I shall have to speak to you briefly upon five things. First, *the gigantic evil*—“sin.” Secondly, *the glorious Remover of it*—“HE.” Thirdly, *the memorable event*—“Once in the end of the world has He appeared.” Fourthly, *the special Sacrifice*—“the Sacrifice of Himself.” Fifthly, and lastly, *the grand achievement*—“to put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself.”

I. First, notice, in considering what our text says, that Christ has put away THE GIGANTIC EVIL. “Once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin.” “Sin.” It is a very little word, but it contains an awful abyss of meaning!

“Sin” is transgression against God, rebellion against the King of Kings, violation of the law of right, commission of all manner of wrong. Sin is in every one of us—we have all committed it, we have all been defiled with it. Christ came “to put away sin.” You see, the evil is put in one word, as if wrong-doing was made into one lump, all heaped together and called, not “sins,” but, “sin.” Can you catch the idea? All the sinfulness, all the omissions, all the commissions and all the tendencies to rebel that ever were in the world are all piled together, hill upon hill, mountain upon mountain—and then called by this one name, “sin.”

Now, *sin is that which makes man obnoxious to God*. Man, as a creature, God loves. Man, as a *sinner*, God cannot love. Sin is loathsome to God. He is so pure that He cannot bear impurity, so just that the *thought* of injustice is abhorrent to Him. He cannot look upon iniquity without hating it—it is contrary to His Divine Nature. His anger burns like coals of juniper against sin. This it is that makes sin so dreadful to us, because, in consequence of it, we have become obnoxious to God!

And sin, dear Friends, also *involves man in punishment*. Inasmuch as we have committed sin, we are exposed to the just and righteous wrath of God. Wherever there is sin, there must be penalty. Laws made without the sanction of reward and punishment are inoperative. God will never suffer His righteous Law to be broken with impunity. His Word still declares, “The soul that sins, it shall die.” Where there is sin, there must be punishment, and although the doctrine is not preached as often as it ought to be, yet every man’s conscience knows that there is a dreadful Hell—there is a worm that dies not, there is a fire that never can be quenched—and all these are reserved for unforgiven sinners. This makes sin a terrible evil! Unless God vacates the Throne of the universe, sin must be visited with punishment and banished from His Presence.

Yet again, dear Friends, *sin effectually shuts the door of hope on men*. The guilty cannot dwell with God while they are guilty. They must be cleansed from sin before they can walk with Him in white. Into Heaven there enters nothing that defiles and if you and I are not pardoned, we

must be separated from God forever. We can do nothing while sin remains upon us and nothing can bring us reconciliation with God. Sin must be put away first. It lies across the road to Heaven and blocks up the door by which we come to God and, unless it is removed, we are lost, lost, lost, and lost forever!

Do you all know, in your consciences and hearts, what sin means? I remember that when I learned that dread lesson, I felt that I was the most unhappy youth in all Her Majesty's dominions! Sin went to bed with me and seared me with visions. Sin rose with me and made the most glorious landscape dark and gloomy. I had a terrible sound of judgment to come always ringing in my ears. I knew that I was guilty—I did not need for God to condemn me—I condemned myself! I sat in judgment upon my own heart and I condemned myself to Hell. Sin! If you really feel it, no branding irons in the hand of the most cruel inquisitor would ever pain you as sin does! Speak of diseases and there are some that cause intense agony, but there is no disease that pains like sin on the conscience! Sin on the conscience! It is a prison, a rack, a cross whereon all joy hangs crucified and bleeding to death.

That is the first thing in my text, the gigantic evil. In proportion as you feel the evil of sin, you will rejoice to hear that Christ came to put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself! That is my next point.

II. In the second place, having spoken of the gigantic evil that needed to be removed, let me now speak of THE GLORIOUS REMOVER OF IT. Who was it that undertook to remove this mountain of guilt? "Once in the end of the world has HE appeared." Who is this who has appeared to put away sin?

I will not delay for a moment, but tell you at once that He that appeared was *very God of very God!* He against whom sin had been committed! He who will judge the quick and the dead! *He it was who appeared to put away sin!* Is there not great comfort in this fact? It is the Son of God who has undertaken this more than Herculean labor! He appeared, Sinner, to save YOU! God appeared to put away sin! Lost One, to find *you*, the great Shepherd has appeared! Your case is not hopeless, for He has appeared! Had anybody other than God undertaken the task of putting away sin, it could never have been accomplished! But it can be accomplished, now, for HE who appeared is One with whom nothing is impossible! Listen to that and be comforted.

Who is it that appeared? It is HE, *the commissioned of the Father.* Christ did not come as an amateur Savior, trying an experiment on His own account. He came as the *chosen* Mediator, ordained of God for this tremendous task. The Savior that I preach to you is no invention of my own brain. He is no great One who, of His own accord, stepped into the gap without orders from Heaven. No! He appeared whom the Father chose for the work and sent, commissioned to perform it. His very name, Christ, tells of His anointing for this service—

"Thus says God of His Anointed—

**He shall let My people go.
 'Tis the work for Him appointed,
 'Tis the work that He shall do—
 And My city
 He shall found, and build it, too.”**

“He appeared,” He who was *pledged in Covenant* to do it, for, of old, before the world was, He became the Surety of the Covenant on behalf of His people! He undertook to redeem them. His Father gave Him a people to be His own and He declared that He would do the Father's will and perfect those whom the Father had given Him. “He appeared.” Ah, dear Friends, if the brightest angel had appeared to save us, we might have trembled lest he should be unequal to the task! But when He comes whom God has sent, whom God has qualified, and who is, Himself, *God*, He came upon an errand which He is able to accomplish! Think of that and be comforted.

III. But now, in the third place, we come to THE MEMORABLE EVENT mentioned in our text. We are told that in order that He might save us, Christ appeared—“Once in the end of the world has *He appeared*.” He could not sit in Heaven and do this great work. With all reverence to the blessed Son of God, we can truly say that He could not have saved us if He had kept His Throne and not left the courts of Glory. But He appeared! I have not to tell you, at this time, that He *will* appear, although that, also, is true, for, “unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation,” but He *has* appeared.

He appeared, first, *as a Babe at Bethlehem*, swaddled like any other child. This Babe is “The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” and He has “appeared” on earth in human form. Made in fashion as a Man, He has taken upon Himself our Nature, the Infinite is linked with the Infant, the Eternal with the Child. He, on whom all worlds are hanging, hangs upon a woman's breast! He must do that, or He cannot put away sin.

Thirty years rolled on and He had toiled, in obscurity, as a carpenter at Nazareth. The Baptist comes and proclaims the Advent of the Redeemer and He is there to the moment! Into the waters of Jordan He descends, and John with Him, the servant baptizes His Lord and, as He rises from the water, the heavens are opened, the Dove descends—it rests upon Him and God proclaims Him to be His Son, in whom He is well pleased! Thus Christ, *anointed at Jordan*, appeared to inaugurate His public ministry and, by His Baptism, to begin working a robe of righteousness which is forever to adorn us, poor naked sinners. “In the end of the world He appeared.” His manifestation commenced at Bethlehem and was continued at Jordan.

Three more years rolled by—years of toil and suffering—and now the great debt was to be paid, the bill was presented. Would He be there to meet it? The charge was laid. Would He be there to answer to it? Where would He be but among those olives *in Gethsemane*, *surrendering Himself*? The night is chill, the moon is shining and He is there in prayer. But what

prayer! Never did the earth hear such groans and cries! He is there wrestling, but what wrestling! He sweats, as it were, great drops of blood, falling to the ground. The sinner is called for and the sinner's Substitute has put in an appearance on his behalf in the lonely garden of Gethsemane, so rightly named, the olive press. In a garden, man's first sin was committed—in a garden, man's Substitute was arrested.

But now comes the darkest hour of all. Christ appeared *on Calvary, atoning for sin*. The sun is veiled as though unable to look upon such a scene of sorrow! Hear the dread artillery of Heaven—the Father thunders forth His wrath against sin! Behold the flames of fire, the forked lightning of God's anger against all iniquity! Who is to bear them? In whose breast shall they be quenched? HE comes! On yonder tree He presents Himself! He hides not His face from shame and spitting and, at last, upon the Cross, He hides not Himself from Divine desertion. Hear His piteous cry, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Then was fulfilled the prophecy given by the mouth of Zechariah, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, says the Lord of Hosts." That sword is sheathed in Christ's heart—

**"Jehovah bade His sword awake,
O Christ, it woke against Thee!
Your blood the flaming blade must slake,
Your heart its sheath must be!
All for my sake, my peace to make:
Now sleeps that sword for me."**

Yes, Christ appeared! He was visibly crucified among men and observed by the gloating eyes of cruel men of hate. He appeared in that dread day of judgment and of vengeance. So it was, and only so, that He was able to put away sin.

We have come thus far and the path has been strewn with wonders, but only he who knows the meaning of the word, "sin," will see any wonder in it. If sin has made the earth tremble under your feet. If sin has scorched you like the blast of a furnace. If sin has burned into your very soul and killed all your joy, you will hear with delight that God appeared here as Man for this purpose—to put away sin!

IV. Now, we must go a step farther and consider THE SPECIAL SACRIFICE which Christ offered. He who appeared, put away sin by a Sacrifice, and that Sacrifice was Himself—"Once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by *the Sacrifice of Himself*."

There was never any way of putting away sin except by sacrifice. The Bible never tells us of any other way. Human thought or tradition has never discovered any other way. Find a people with a religion and you are sure to find a people with a sacrifice. It is very strange but, wherever our missionaries go, if they find God at all thought of, they find sacrifices being offered. It must be so, for man has this Law of God written upon his very conscience.

Christ must bring a Sacrifice—but observe what it was—*He offered Himself*! "He appeared to put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself," *His*

whole Self. Christ did not give to us merely a part of Himself—He gave Himself. Let me say those sweet words again, “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” His blood? Yes. His hands, His feet, His side? Yes. His body, His soul? Yes—but you need not say all that—“He gave Himself.” “Who His own Self bore our sins in His own Body on the tree.” Whatever Christ was in Himself, He gave that. He offered Himself as a Sacrifice for sin. What a wonderful Sacrifice! Ten thousand bulls, myriads of sheep, enough to cover all the pastures of the earth—what would their blood avail? But God, God Incarnate, Immanuel, God With Us, offers HIMSELF! What condescension, what love, what Infinite pity that He should sacrifice Himself for His enemies, for those who had broken His holy Law!

Christ offered Himself alone. He put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself, not by the sacrifice of His Church, not by the sacrifice of martyrs, not by the offering of wafers and consecrated wine—but by the Sacrifice of Himself alone! You must not add anything to Christ's Sacrifice. Christ does not put away sin through your tears, your grief, your merit, or your alms giving. No, He put away sin by the Sacrifice of *Himself*—nothing else. You must take nothing *from* Christ's Sacrifice, and you must add nothing to it.

That Sacrifice, too, if I read the Greek right, was a slain Sacrifice, a bloody Sacrifice. Christ gave His life. It is written, “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” He shed His blood. “The blood is the life thereof,” is true of Christ's Sacrifice, for without blood-shedding it would have been of no avail. He poured out His soul unto death. In instituting that dear memorial feast, which you are bid to observe in remembrance of Him, He said, “This is My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” The putting away of sin was accomplished by Christ dying in the place of guilty men. Christ says, “I will take the punishment of sin.” He takes it. He bears it on the Cross. Sinful man, hear this! Take that fact to be true and rest your whole soul on it—and you are saved. Christ died for Believers. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever *believes* in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” If you believe in Christ, that is, if you *trust* Him; if you trust Him *now*, if you trust Him *altogether*, if you trust *only* Him, and say, “There I am resting, believing that Christ died for me,” you are saved, for Christ has put away your sin! You shall not die. How can a man die when His sin is put away by Christ's all-sufficient Sacrifice?—

***“If sin is pardoned, I'm secure,
Death has no sting beside.
The law gives sin its damning power,
But Christ, my Ransom, died.”***

Christ's appearing, then, was that He might, as a High Priest, present a Sacrifice. He presented Himself to the death on the Cross. He died and by that dying He has put away sin.

V. That brings me to my closing point, THE GRAND ACHIEVEMENT. Christ appeared “*to put away sin.*” What can that mean?

It means, first, that Christ has put away sin *as to its exclusion of men from God*. Man, by his sin, had made this world so obnoxious to Jehovah that God could not deal with its inhabitants apart from Christ's Sacrifice. He is infinitely merciful, but He is also infinitely just—and the world had become so putrid a thing that He declared that He regretted that He had made man upon the earth. Now this whole world of ours would have gone down into eternal ruin had not Christ come. John the Baptist cried, "Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world," the whole bulk of it! It was then and there removed at one stroke, so that God could deal with man, could send an embassy of peace to this poor guilty world, and could come upon Gospel terms of Free Grace and pardon to deal with a guilty race. That was done. You may all thank God for that!

But there is more needed than that. When God comes to deal with men, we find, next, that Christ has, for every Believer, taken away sin *as to its punishment*. I mean what I say. God cannot punish twice for the same offense! To lay sin upon Christ and then to demand its penalty of those for whom He stood as Substitute would be to demand compensation twice and punishment twice for one offense—and this can never be—

***"Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine."***

That were a gross injustice and the Judge of all the earth must do right. Behold, then, this fact. If you believe in Christ Jesus, He bore the punishment of *your* sin. In that short space upon the tree, the Infinity of His Nature enabled Him to render to God's justice a vindication which is better than if all for whom He died had gone to Hell! Had all been lost, God's justice would not have been vindicated as well as when His own dear Son—

***"Bore, that we might never bear,
His Father's righteous ire."***

He has made the Law of God more honorable by His death at its hands than it could have been if all the race of men had been condemned eternally. Oh, Soul, if you believe in Jesus, the chastisement of your peace was upon Him, and with His stripes you are healed! "He was made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree." And was He cursed for me and shall I be cursed, too? That would not be consistent with Divine equity! The true Believer may plead the Justice as well as the Mercy of God in the matter of his absolution. If Christ died, then all who were in Christ died with Him. And when He rose, they all rose with Him. And when God accepted Him by raising Him from the dead, He accepted all who were in Him. Glory be to His holy name!

Further, Christ put away sin *as to its condemning power*. You have felt the condemning power of sin. I have supposed you have done so. If so, listen. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." You are a sinner, but your sin is not imputed to you, but to Him who stood as your Sponsor, your Paymaster, your Surety! Your sins were

numbered on the Scapegoat's head of old, even on Christ, the divinely-ordained Substitute for all His people. As David wrote, "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile!" Your sin does not condemn you, for Christ has been condemned in your place! "Neither do I condemn you," says the Lord—"Go in peace."

Yet once more, sin is put away now *as to its reigning power*, for, if sin is pardoned through the atoning blood, we come to love Christ and, loving Christ, away goes every sin! The man for whom Christ died, who knows it, who knows that Christ put away sin, must love Christ—and loving Christ, he must hate sin—for to love sin and to love Christ at the same time would be impossible. If He bore my guilt, then I am not my own, for I am bought with a price, even with His most precious blood! He that suffered in my place shall now be my Master. I lie at His dear feet and bless His name—

***"Oh, how sweet to view the flowing
Of His sin-atoning blood,
With Divine assurance knowing
He has made my peace with God!"***

When you get as far as that, then you love Christ and serve Him. I have told you before of the bricklayer who fell off a scaffold and was taken up so injured that it was seen that he must soon die. A good clergyman, bending over him, said, "My dear Man, you had better make your peace with God." The poor fellow opened his eyes, and said, "Make my peace with God, Sir? Why, that was done for me more than 1,800 years ago by Him who took my sin and suffered in my place." Thank God for that! I hope that many of you could say the same—you would not, then, talk about making your peace with God, or about doing something to reconcile you to God. The very thought of adding *anything* to Christ's finished work is blasphemy! Believe that He has done all that is required and rest in it—and be happy all your days.

With this remark I finish. Sin is put away *as to its very existence*. Where has sin gone to when a man believes in Christ? Micah says, "You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea," where they will never be fished up again. The devil, himself, may fish to all eternity, but he will never fish them up again! God has cast the sins of Believers into the depths of the sea! Where have they gone? "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." How far is the east from the west? Will you go and measure it on the globe? Fly up to the heavens and see how far you can go east, and how far you can go west. Is there any boundary to space? So far has God removed our transgressions from us!

A more wonderful expression is this, "You have cast all my sins behind Your back." Where is that? Where is God's back? Is there any place behind His back? He is present everywhere and seen everywhere. It is *nowhere* at all, then—and our sins are thrown into the nowhere! He that be-

believes in Christ may know for sure that his iniquities have gone into the nowhere! Listen once more—"In those days, and in that time, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." Thus is sin annihilated for all who trust the Savior! Listen to Daniel's description of the work of Messiah, the Prince, "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins." If He has made an end of them, there is an end of them! O my Heart, sing hallelujah! Let every beat of my pulse be a hallelujah unto Him who has put away my sin! Poor Sinner, if you are black as the devil with sin, crimson to the very core with iniquity, yet wash in the Fountain filled with the blood of the Lamb, and you shall be whiter than snow, for the Lord Jesus, by the Sacrifice of Himself, has forever put away the sin of all who trust Him!

Dear Hearers, have you laid hold of this great Truth of God? I do not care to what sect you belong and I do not care what your standing in life is—and I do not care what your opinion in politics may be. Has Christ put away your sin? If He has, be as happy as the days are long in summertime! And be as bright as the garden is colorful in June! Sing like angels—you have more to sing about than angels have—for never did they taste redeeming Grace and dying love! They were never lost and, therefore, never found! Never enslaved and, therefore, never redeemed! God in human flesh has died for you. God loved you so that He would be nailed to a tree for you! You have sinned, but you are, today, as if you had never sinned. "He that is washed is clean every whit." "And you are washed." Oh, I say again, let your heart beat hallelujah! Let your pulse seem to say, "Bless, bless, bless, bless, bless the Lord!"

"Oh," says one, in a mournful and sorrowful tone, "I am afraid it is not so with *me*." Well, then, do not go to sleep, tonight, until it is! If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is so. "Well, I hope that it is so," says one. Away with your hoping! What is the good of that? There are many people that go hoping, hoping, hopping, hopping! Get out of that hoping and hopping—and walk steadily on this sure ground! Christ died for all who believe in Him, effectually died, not died according to that theory which teaches that He died no more for Peter than He did for Judas, and died for those who are already in Hell as much as He died for those who will be in Heaven! The universal theory of the Atonement has precious little comfort in it, albeit that Christ's death was universal in the removal of the hindrance to God's dealing on terms of mercy with the world, yet He laid down His life *for His sheep*. He loved His Church and gave Himself for it. He has redeemed us from among men, out of men. He has taken us to be His own by the purchase of His blood! We are redeemed, washed, saved!

If this is your case, go home and be glad! Let nobody beat you in holy merriment. There is a passage at the end of the parable of the prodigal that I like very much—"and they began to be merry." The parable does not tell us when they left off being merry and, I suppose, they are still merry! I know that ever since my Father put the ring on my finger, and shoes on

my feet, and gave me the kiss of love, and I knew that I was forgiven, I have been merry—and I mean to still be merry, till my merriment is lost in the merriment above—where they keep perpetual holiday and sing to the praise of the Redeemer, “You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” To Him be honor, and glory, and blessing, forever and ever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON
HEBREWS 9:24-28 AND 10:1-18.

Hebrews 9:24. *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands. Christ has not entered into any earthly temple or tabernacle.*

24-26. *Which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the Presence of God for us: nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the High Priest enters into the Holy Place every year with blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once.—And only once.*

26. *In the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself.* The Levitical priests continually repeated their sacrifice, for it was not effectual when offered only once. But our great High Priest has, once and for all, presented a Sacrifice which has made a full atonement for all His people's sins and there is, therefore, no need for it to be repeated.

27. *And as it is appointed unto men once to die.* Notice how the Apostle continues to introduce that important little key word, “once.”

27, 28. *But after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered.— Only once.*

28. *To bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.* May we be among the privileged company that look for Him!

Hebrews 10:1. *For the Law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.* A man could go to the Levitical sacrifices 20 years running and yet be no forwarder. He must go again and again as long as he lived. They were only figures and shadows and types—the real Sacrifice is Christ.

2. *For then.*—If they had been effectual.

2. *Would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.* Once forgiven, the sin would not have come back again. If the sacrifice had really cleansed the conscience of the offerer, he would not have had cause to present it again.

3-5. *But in these sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should*

take away sins. Therefore when He comes—He who is the Essence of it all—“When He comes.”

5-7. *Into the world, He says, Sacrifice and offering You would not, but a Body have You prepared Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have had no pleasure. Said I, Lo, I come, (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me), to do Your will, O God.* Types were no longer needed when the great Antitype had come! Christ was no longer pre-figured, for He was there in Person. He put away the old shadows of the blood of bulls and goats when He brought His own real Sacrifice, the true Atonement for sin.

8, 9. *Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin You would not, neither had pleasure therein; which are offered by the Law; then said He, Lo, I come to do Your will, O God. He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.* The old Law of God is gone, the first sacrifice is no longer presented, for the second is come, the real offering of Christ, the Lamb of God.

10. *By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all.* Once, and only once. How Paul loves to recall this fact!

11, 12. *And every priest stands daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this Man.* Note these glorious words, “This Man.”

12, 13. *After He had offered one Sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool.* He would not have sat down if His work had not been done! He would not have ceased from His priestly service of presenting sacrifice if His one Offering had not been sufficient! This Man’s offering once, once, once, has done all that God demanded and all that man required!

14. *For by one Offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified.* This glorious message is for you, Beloved, if you believe in Christ. By His one Sacrifice He has done all that you need—He has perfected you forever!

15-17. *Whereof the Holy Spirit also is a witness to us: for after that He had said before, This is the Covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put My Laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.* Treasure up these golden words—“Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

18. *Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.* The offering for sin is in order that sin may be put away. And if it is put away, so that God, Himself, will remember it no more, what more is needed? What more could be desired? Therefore, let us rest in the one great finished work of Christ and be perfectly happy! Sin is gone, wrath is over, for those for whom Christ died—they are perfected forever through His one great Sacrifice.

JESUS PUTTING AWAY SIN

NO. 759

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 7, 1867,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*"...now once in the end of the age has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."
Hebrews 9:26.*

WHEN the conscience is unenlightened and the heart is rebellious, man is divided from his God by a false sense of personal righteousness. He imagines that God deals harshly with him, that He looks upon his sin in too severe a light, and that although He may be offended, yet, in some other respects, he has a claim upon the consideration of his Maker. As soon, however, as the Spirit of God illuminates the understanding, this self-righteousness disappears! It is a flimsy cobweb which the broom of the Law soon sweeps away. It is no more substantial than the mist of the morning, and it is at once dissipated by the rising sun of Divine Grace.

Then man feels himself divided from his God by another and more real barrier—he has given up his self-righteousness, but now he is painfully conscious of his *sinfulness*, which appears to him to be an impassable gulf—separating him forever from the just and holy God. The more the conscience becomes quickened and the more fully the understanding is enlightened, the more desponding does the man become as to any hope of his ever becoming acceptable to the Most High. He puts himself into God's position—his enlightened understanding enables him to look upon sin in some degree as God would regard it—and he is horrified to think that he should have been so ungrateful to so kind a Father!

He is ashamed that he should have broken laws so perfectly just, and he is altogether out of heart with himself for having done despite to a government every way so generous and righteous as the moral government of God. The awakened sinner says within himself, "I can never make recompense for the injury which I have done to God's honor. It is not possible that anything I do or suffer may compensate for my continued rebellion and obstinacy. Even if I could cease from sin in the future, yet I cannot hope to meet my God with peaceful mind when I remember the unhallowed and disgraceful past."

And thus the very enlightenment of conscience, which is one of the best signs of hope in quickened sinners, causes in him a consciousness of sin which becomes to him the ground of self-despair. I have no doubt I have some such in this congregation. Even among you who have believed in Jesus there may be some such. Every now and then we must go back to first principles and get, again, a distressingly vivid sight of sin. We need, once more, to understand how God can be just and yet the justifier of him that believes.

Brethren, if you are now desirous to be at one with God. If your spirit longs for His embrace—and yet you feel as if you could not come to God by reason of the sin which troubles you—it will be a great joy to you to know that eternal wisdom has devised a plan, and carried it out, too, for

the effectually putting away of sin! This is a wonder of wonders which will create, forever, enthusiastic gratitude among celestial spirits. Eternity shall not diminish the amazement of our minds at the thought that the impenetrable partition wall of our sin has been broken down, and the awful veil of thick darkness which shut us out from the Mercy Seat has been forever removed.

Belshazzar's knees knocked together and the joints of his loins were loosened when he saw the handwriting on the wall which declared his condemnation. What joy would have filled his despairing spirit if suddenly that writing had been blotted out, and another hand had written "I have loved you with an everlasting love"! Can you conceive the joy of that astonished monarch—the transport of that frightened throng?

Yet this morning I have as good news to tell to the penitent as though such were their position, and such the act of pardoning mercy! Jesus has blotted out the handwriting which was against us, and written words of love concerning us! The Angel of Wrath once stood over Jerusalem, having a drawn sword in his hand, but Jehovah has put away the sin of His people and now the avenging sword is returned to the scabbard and God regards His Zion with everlasting love! I have said that this is a wonder, and so it is, when you recollect that the angels fell.

The sons of the morning kept not their first estate, but for fallen angels there is no putting away of sin. Shut up forever, chained with adamantine bands, their sufferings shall know no pause, their anguish shall find no end. And yet *we*, creatures of inferior mold, we have enlisted the sympathy of the Ever Blessed who undertook to make atonement for our sin, and has achieved the purpose of His Grace. Brethren, it might have been easy enough for God to have put away human sin itself by the destruction of our race. It would no more need an effort of power on God's part to destroy us than for us to tread upon a moth—no, His mere *will* could have done it—and I do not know that one of the crowns of His glory would have lost a jewel.

He might instantly have created another race superior to ourselves if so it had pleased Him, and every gap which the destruction of mankind might have caused in the universe might have been at once filled up. But, wonder of wonders, He spares us at a vast expense—He spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all! It has sometimes been asked why God did not pardon sin without an atonement. That is a question which we must leave those to answer who propound it. We do not doubt but what God might have done so if so He had willed—we doubt whether He ever would have willed to do so, for our view of the constitution of His glorious Character seems to require that sin should be punished.

But that is not a question for us—we *know* that the Lord has not willed to let sin escape. He has been pleased to make the display of His Grace to sinners an opportunity for the revelation of all His other attributes, that—

**“God, in the Person of His Son,
Has all His mightiest works outdone.”**

Without raising questions which would minister no profit to us, it is ours to behold the great love which the Lord has loved us—that He sent His Son to redeem us from our iniquities by the shedding of His own most precious blood—

***“Oh, fathomless abyss!
Where hidden mysteries lie!
The seraph finds his bliss
Within the same to pry.
Lord, what is man, Your desperate foe,
That You should bless and love him so?”***

I propose, this morning, as God may help me, to comfort those who are longing for reconciliation with God by showing them that no difficulties exist, since Jesus Christ has forever put away the sin which would have separated a penitent soul from its God. We shall look at the text carefully, and I think we shall notice in it several things which minister comfort to seeking sinners. Jesus Christ has appeared once, in the end of the age, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

I. Let us consider, first, THE TIME OF THIS GREAT PUTTING AWAY OF SIN, in the end of the world, or the age—“in these last days”—as one of the Apostles words it. Why was that time selected? Was it not in order to exercise the faith of ancient saints, who, like Abraham, saw Christ’s day in vision—saw Him and were glad? They were denied the great privilege which we possess. Prophets and kings desired it long, but died without the sight. Nevertheless, above the mausoleum of ancient saints we read this inscription, “These all died in faith.”

They rested in confidence in the Messiah that was to come, and their faith received its reward. Did not God place the putting away of sin at the close of the age in order to glorify His Son by letting us see that the very anticipation of His death was sufficient for the salvation of men? Before Peter touched the sick, we find that his shadow had a healing efficacy, and so, before Jesus literally took upon Himself our flesh, we find that the shadow of His Advent saved the chosen sons of men!

Long before the sun has risen in these summer mornings, the twilight begins. Before his wheel has touched the horizon, his refracted light banishes the darkness. And so, before the Savior actually came there was a blessed twilight of Gospel Grace, in the light of which Patriarchs found their way to Jerusalem the golden. Let us glorify the blood of Jesus, which in God’s decree was shed from *before* the foundations of the world! Let us magnify the Divine Sacrifice which, before it was led to the slaughter was capable of redeeming from death and Hell unnumbered thousands of God’s elect!

Was not this Sacrifice placed at the end of the world to be, as it were, the crown of all Jehovah’s works? I see before me a stupendous pyramid, the base of it is exceedingly broad. It is the inanimate creation. Stars unnumbered lie close together at its base like the sands of the Libyan desert. Ponderous masses of matter underlie the whole amazing structure, all radiant with the glory of God with a light like a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

Measureless fields of space and all but infinite leagues of matter form the grosser basis of the pyramid which now rises before my astonished vision. Overlying this, as though it were a layer of malachite or emerald veined with blue, and scarlet, and vermillion, I see the vegetable creation with all its beauty of form and splendor of color—cedar and hyssop, olive and lily, oak and bramble. No art of man or polished jewels of the mine can rival its magnificence. Over these, sparkling like the stone which was

full of eyes, I see the animal kingdom with its mingled varieties of symmetry and strength, energy and vitality.

Here on high the pyramid is narrower, but its light is far more excellent, for the likeness of the living creatures sparkle and flash like burning coals of fire, with an energy unseen in the broader foundations which are placed beneath. Beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl all magnify the master Builder who has ordained for them their place in the pyramid of His manifested glory. Higher still I see man, who is made to have dominion over all the lower works of God—man, of whom it is written, “You have been in Eden the garden of God. Every precious stone was your covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold.”

Above these I see men twice made—the *regenerated* men, the precious sons of Zion—comparable to fine gold, the peculiar portion and crown jewels of Jehovah. But can my eyes endure to gaze upon the glowing brightness which forms the apex of the glittering pyramid? I look, and lo, above the firmament, higher than the Heaven of Heaven, I see the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone, and upon the throne there sits the Son of Man in all the brightness of His Father’s glory, encircled with a rainbow like unto an emerald, and hymned by innumerable spirits in strains like these: “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for You have created all things, and for Your pleasure they are and were created.”

O my Soul, are you not overwhelmed with the vision of Man upon the Throne of God? Man most true and manlike, born of a virgin, the woman’s promised Seed and yet God over all, blessed forever! When that pyramid was crowned with such a matchless Topstone well might the morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy! Well might there be from men and angels joyous shouts of “Grace! Grace unto it.” The great Master of the feast has kept the best wine until now! Richest and rarest of the wines on the lees, well refined is that which was shed on Calvary by the soldier’s spear! Rich was the store which the glorious Monarch of the ages placed upon the table of His benevolence!

But in these last days He brings out the choicest of His dainties, the Bread of Heaven, the wine which makes glad the heart of God and man. “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” The practical point I drive at in referring to the period of our Lord’s Sacrifice is just this—you and I live in a period when the putting away of sin has been perfectly accomplished. Beloved, sin is put away! We have not to exercise the faith of a Noah, or an Isaac, or a David in looking forward to the expiation as a blessing *yet to come*, but the testimony of the Holy Spirit is that Jesus has once and for all finished transgression, and made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness!

Jesus has been led like a lamb to the slaughter. The Passover is slain, the Propitiation is made. It is a recorded *fact*. It is a fact that never can be blotted from the annals of time, that redemption is finished! Sin is put away by the one great Sacrifice, and we may come to God who is reconciled through the death of His Son. May I press this upon those of you who would come to God, but are afraid? Come back, poor Prodigal! The heart of God towards you is that of a loving Father! You need not fear! Come back, you Wanderer, however far you may have gone—

“Sprinkled now with blood the Throne,

***Why beneath your burdens groan?
On My pierced body laid,
Justice owns the ransom paid.
Bow the knee, and kiss the Son;
Come and welcome, Sinner, come.”***

If, in the earliest ages you had come in *faith* that this atonement would be offered, you would have been accepted. But how can you linger when the atonement is already presented? Once, in the end of the ages, the work of Divine Grace has been done. You have not to wait until the bridge spans the gulf. You have not to enquire who shall roll away the stone, for, behold, One greater than an angel has descended and rolled away the stone from Heaven's gate and opened the kingdom of Heaven to all Believers!

There are no barriers now between a seeking soul and God except such as unbelief shall set up. I pray you, build no barricades to exclude yourself from happiness! Christ has dashed down all the partition walls that your sin had erected and there is a straight path from your present position right up to God's greatest glory! Come now, even *now*, unto the Lord, believing in the Atonement which is achieved.

II. Secondly, let us meditate upon THE PERSON ACCOMPLISHING THE WORK. Once, in the end of the world, has HE appeared. Remember who it was that came to take away sin that you may find solid and substantial ground for comfort, and may the Holy Spirit help you to stand upon it. He who came to take away sin did not come unsent. He was appointed and delegated by God. As Toplady has put it in his hymn—

***“The God for your unrighteousness
Deputed to atone.”***

He was not only so appointed and elected, but He was also qualified by God. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him. He came in His Father's name, clothed with His Father's authority: “I do not My own will,” He said, “but the will of Him that sent Me.” He continually calls it His Father's work and business which He came to do. This ought to give us richest consolation. Jesus is no amateur Savior who has no right to appear as our Representative—He comes in a legal and proper manner. The King of kings has appointed Him, and what He does He does in the name and by the authority of God.

God has sent His Son into the world. His death, though voluntary on His own part, was not without the consent and will of His Father. It pleased the Father to bruise Him—He has put Him to grief. Should we not, when God has set Him forth as a Propitiation for sin—should we not cheerfully accept whom God appoints?

Attentively observe the constitution of His Person. He who came to save men is no other than God! Therefore is He capable of viewing sin from God's point of view and capable of understanding what was due God. By bracing His Godhead to His Manhood He was capable, in his twofold Nature, of sustaining pangs which humanity could not have endured apart from Godhead, and of receiving into His infinite mind a sight of sin and a horror concerning it such as no finite mind ever could have endured.

You think you comprehend sin? My Brothers and Sisters, you cannot! It is an evil too monstrous for the human mind fully to know its heights and depths, its lengths and breadths. But Christ, who is God Incarnate, knew what sin meant. He plumbed it to the very bottom and knew how

deep it was. He gazed upon it and felt all the horror of its unrighteousness, ingratitude, and turpitude. Its sinfulness struck His mind with all its force and overwhelmed His holy soul with a horror which none but He could bear. He was a perfect Man and therefore had no need to die, else His death were for Himself.

It behoved Him to suffer, not because He was the Son of God, or the Son of Man, but because He was the *Redeemer*, the *Sponsor* and the *Surety* of men! Can you trust Him? When I have felt the burden of my sin, I do confess I have at times felt as if it were too great to be taken away by any conceivable power. But, on the other hand, when I have seen the excellence of my Master's Person, the perfection of His Manhood, the glory of His Godhead, the wondrous degree of His anguish, the solid value of His obedience, I have felt as if my sin were too little a thing to need so vast a Sacrifice!

I have felt like John Hyatt who, when dying, said he could not only trust Christ with one soul, but he could trust him with a million souls if he had them. Were my sins greater than they are, and God forbid they should be. Were my sense of them 10,000 times more vivid than that sense is now—and I could wish I had a more clear and humbling view of my own iniquity—yet even then I know my Lord and Master is a greater Savior than I am a sinner.

From the constitution of His Person as God and Man I am certain that if I had heaped up my iniquities till they assailed the skies, and though, like the giants in the ancient mythology I had piled Pelion upon Ossa, mountain of sin upon mountain of rebellion, and had thought to scale the very Throne of God in my impious rebellion—yet the precious blood of Jesus Christ could cleanse me from all sin! My dear Hearer, if you are trembling because of your guilt, do not try to be rid of a sense of the guilt of sin but study much and devoutly the Person of God, the Sin-Bearer. Let your thoughts dwell upon the great Savior and His work, and so shall you be able to say, "I will, even *I* will believe that Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto Him, and I will cast myself upon Him. I will rest in His Atonement now."

I feel as if I must pause to say to some here how anxiously do I wish that they would, this morning, have done with seeking rest where no rest is to be found! Have done with reliance upon anything within or anything without, except the Son of God! God Himself puts away sin. What more do you want? You have a God to be your Savior, and will you link *your pitiful weakness* with His Omnipotence? Would you yoke an ant with a cherubim? Will you join your rags to the fair white linen of the righteousness of Christ? Your *nothingness*—shall that contribute to His fullness?

Your strength? It is perfect weakness and your merit is a lie! Will you bring these to put them side by side with Jesus? No, Sinner, may the Holy Spirit constrain you now to rest on Him who, in such a glorious manner, has put away sin in the end of the ages by the sacrifice of Himself! If those two points do not yield you comfort, I will gladly hope and pray that a third consideration drawn from the text may do so.

III. Note in the text THE APPEARANCE MENTIONED. "Now once in the end of the ages has He appeared to put away sin." Dwell on this. The way by which God has put away sin is one which is not obscure, concealed, recondite, inexplicable, but one which is eminently plain and manifest!

You will remember that when the High Priest made atonement for sin, he took the basin filled with blood and passed within the veil. No one saw him there. And while he stood before the Mercy Seat and sprinkled blood, no human eye beheld it—his typical work was a thing of *mystery*.

But, my Brothers and Sisters, the great High Priest and Prophet of our profession has torn the veil and appeared *openly*, and the putting away of sin by Him is a manifest thing which can be seen by the understanding! No, in some respects it was even seen by human eyes and heard by mortal ears! Christ appeared, that is to say, when He came down among men He lived for no less than 32 years under daily human inspection. He was seen as a Child in the manger by shepherds and by Eastern wise men. He was not concealed and put away like Moses, hidden from the Egyptian murderers, but He was the Observed of all observers.

As a Child, no doubt, His bringing-up was well known, so that they said, “His sisters and His brothers, are they not all with us?” “As for this man, we know where He is.” That short portion of His life which was allotted to public ministry was public in the highest degree. “In secret,” said He, “I did nothing.” “I taught openly in your streets.” For “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” says John, “and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth.” No, more not only was His Manhood apparent, but His Godhead, too. Did He not raise the dead with His voice?

When He walked on the sea, when He healed the leper, when He opened the blind eyes, when He unstopped the deaf ears—were not all these gleams and glimpses of His eternal power and Godhead? These things were not seen by a few priests set apart to enter into the sacred circle, and then to bear witness, but throughout all Galilee and Judea it was openly heard abroad that the Messiah had come, and “these things were not done in a corner.”

And further, Brethren, the great act by which our Lord redeemed us was an open act. True, there were inward depths into which the human mind cannot dive. God knows, and God alone, all that His Beloved suffered. But still, the scourging and the mocking, the spitting and the crowning with thorns, the nailing and the Crucifixion and the death—these were open and manifest things. Did not all Jerusalem ring with the news that Jesus of Nazareth, a Man sent of God, had been put to death? And I will proceed a step further.

Not only were the Incarnation of Christ and His Deity, and His death manifest things, but the way in which these things relate to the forgiveness of sin is also clearly revealed to us. We do not come to you this morning, and say, “Believe in Jesus Christ—it is a great mystery, you cannot understand it, but if you trust in Jesus Christ, God will save you.” No, we tell you that there is a ground for your trust which your reason may apprehend—it is this, that Jesus Christ stood in the place and stead of sinners—that God visited Him with the stripes which were due to *us*. That, to use the words of our hymn—

**“He bore, that we might never bear
His Father’s righteous ire.”**

Now, this is a clear explanation of the plan of salvation. Not thus is it with the mummeries of superstition. The priests of Baal tell us that when they take an infant in their arms, and put water on its face, using a certain ritual, that the unconscious babe becomes then and there a member

of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven! Can they tell us how this marvelous change is worked upon a dormant intellect, a slumbering soul?

No, they can only mutter that it is by some occult influence! Occult, indeed! For the child grows up to live as others live, and perhaps to die in unbelief. Such mummeries, with their base pretensions to occult influences, are worthy to be ranked with the whispers and incantations of the witch of Endor, or the dealings of Balaam, the son of Peor. But *we* can tell you how it is that sin is put away by the Sacrifice of Christ. There is nothing occult in the Cross.

The doctrine of the Atonement appeals to the understanding and the judgment. Christ pays the debt—then, of course, the Believer is free. Christ suffers for me. Then how can two suffer for the one offense? Here is something for men in their wits to think of—something for the most profound intellect to ponder over. As for the shams of confession, priestly absolution, etc., which Baal's priests are continually thrusting in your way instead of our blessed Lord and Master—such shams that my soul boils at the very thought of them—regard them not, neither endure them!

With their vestments, their genuflections, and their ceremonies they are as wizards that peep and mutter and forge a lie to deceive. They would use an unknown language if they dared, like Babylon's priests. As it is, their intoning makes plain words hard to be understood. Their religion is not a revelation, but an rejection—not a *manifestation* of God—but a *veiling* of His face. Like the children of the old Covenant of Bondage, they have a veil over their faces and they see not the Truth of God! But we who preach Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Gospel use great plainness of speech, for we tell you good news which you can comprehend.

We tell you that Truth of God which appeals to your understanding and intellect—for once in the end of the ages Jesus Christ has made a disclosure of Himself. He has brought life and immortality to light and has revealed to you how God can be just, and yet the Justifier of the ungodly. Surely there is no one here who does not understand the plan of Substitution. If there were, I would try to elucidate it still further. Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, stood in the place of men—in *your* place, dear Hearer, if you trust Him! He suffered for *you*.

You can understand how God is just in taking this Sacrifice, offered voluntarily, instead of your sacrifice—punishing Christ instead of you, and then saying to you—“I have vindicated the honor of My government. I have magnified My Law and shown that it must not be trifled with, and now I forgive you—freely do I pardon you, for Jesus died.” I pray you receive with your heart what you have accepted with your understanding.

My dear Hearer, kick not against a Gospel so simple, so just to God, so safe to you! Yield to it, I pray you, yield *now*, and remember, if you believe in the appointed Savior you are saved! If you will trust yourself now with Jesus Christ, He will not fail you. He will cover you with His righteousness, cleanse you with His blood, protect you by His power, and, by-and-by enshrine you in His glory, world without end. But we must pass on.

IV. A fourth matter which should yield us consolation is THE SACRIFICE ITSELF. “Once in the end of the ages has He appeared to put away sin”—how? “By the sacrifice of Himself.” Observe, Brothers and Sisters,

Christ did not come into the world merely to put away sin by His *example*—His example is most blessed—and if we follow it, it becomes a potent means of promoting virtue. Jesus did not come into the world merely to put away sin by His *teaching*—although His teaching does do that wherever it is received, since in the strength of His doctrine men become mighty through His Spirit to overthrow their inbred sin.

But we are told in the text that He came to put away sin by *sacrifice*. Oh, how some people writhe and rage at this! Those Socinians who sat at the foot of the Cross when Jesus Christ died, and said, “Let Him come down from the Cross and we will believe in Him,” held the same beliefs as their successors who will admire Jesus everywhere but as a sacrifice for *sin*. Many men kick the Crucified Son of God. “No,” they say, “the doctrine of the Atonement, the doctrine of suffering for sin—sin being put away by blood—it is that which we cannot endure.”

Know, then, you proud objectors, that this is the Gospel—the sum and substance, and essence of Mercy’s message—this is the Good News from Heaven, that Jesus Christ has put away sin not by His *teaching*, nor by His *example* alone, but by making a *bloody sacrifice* of Himself! I fear that this doctrine is covertly assailed by a school of men who mingle with the orthodox, and are much admired for their intellect and boasted liberality. In some way or other they try to get rid of this sacrifice by blood.

Substitution, Atonement by suffering they cannot believe in, but I pray you, dear Friends, as you would be saved, hold this Truth of God. No, do more! Build your soul’s only hope upon it, for no other foundation can man lay than this—the foundation of salvation through faith in Jesus’ blood. “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” And nothing but the blood! Take the blood of Jesus away and you have removed the only effectual consolation from a troubled conscience.

Note that the text affirms that our Lord took away sin by the sacrifice, not of His honor, though He left that and forsook the courts and courtiers of Heaven. Not by the sacrifice of His wealth, for though He was rich, yet for our sake He became poor. It does not say that He took away sin by the sacrifice of His reputation though He did make a sacrifice of that, and made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant—but it was the sacrifice of HIMSELF—His body and His soul.

It was that sacrifice, my Brothers and Sisters, which commenced in Gethsemane when the bloody sweat bedewed Him from head to foot—when every portion of His body and every power of His soul was full of anguish and dismay. It was that sacrifice which was carried on in the halls of Pilate, before the judgment seat of Caiaphas, at the bar of blustering Herod—a sacrifice which He offered when they scourged Him. When they plaited a crown of thorns. When they spat upon Him. When they struck Him with their fists and mocked Him—a sacrifice which culminated when He hung upon the Cross in the extreme of thirst, and shrieked, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

O Sinner, I would that you would stand at the foot of the Cross and think of Jesus till you could find comfort! I believe the shortest way to faith is to consider well the *Object* of faith. The true way to get comfort is not to try and comfort yourself away from the Cross, but think of Christ dying for you till you are comforted. Say to your soul, “I will never depart from the Cross until I am washed in His precious blood!—

‘Blest Savior, at Your feet I lie,

***Here to receive a cure or die.
But Grace forbids that painful fear,
Almighty Grace, which triumphs here.”***

You know the healing came to the sin-bitten by looking at the serpent—not by looking at their own wounds, nor yet by hearing about the cure of others! And, even so, healing will come to you—not by looking at sin, nor hearing about Christ—so much as by fixing your mind’s eye upon the Cross and meditating upon Him who died there, till, as by considering His merits you believe on Him and so are saved!

Beloved, put these two or three thoughts together. God comes into the world as Man—the Mediator dies. Easily said, but what a weight of meaning in it! Now, what merit there must be in the suffering and death of the dying Mediator! What power there must be in the blood of Him who, while He is Man, is nevertheless God! Come, guilty Sinner! Plunge into this Fountain filled with blood, and you shall be made clean, or else God speaks not the truth. Come, you blackest, foulest, filthiest, most defiled of all the human race! Come now and look to Jesus, dying, bleeding, and you must be saved, for God’s Word is pledged to it! He cannot cast into Hell the soul that rests upon the sacrifice of Christ. Only let us be well persuaded that sin is put away by nothing but by the Lord Jesus making himself a Sacrifice.

V. Still, if this should not yield comfort, though I pray it may, for one moment I ask you to think, in the fifth place, of THE THOROUGHNESS OF THE WORK WHICH WAS CONTEMPLATED. In the end of the ages Christ was revealed to put away sin. He did not come into the world to palliate it merely, or to cover it up, but He came to put it away. Observe, He not only came to put away some of the attributes of sin, such as the filth of it, the guilt of it, the penalty of it, the degradation of it—He came to put away sin *itself*, for sin, you see, is the fountain of all the mischief.

He did not come to empty out the streams but to clear away the fatal source of the pollution. He appeared to put away sin itself, sin in its essence and being. Do not forget that He *did* take away the filth of sin, the guilt of sin, the punishment of sin, the power of sin, the dominion of sin—and that one day He will kill in us the very being and existence of sin—but remember that He aimed His stroke at sin itself.

My Master seemed to say, as the king of Syria did of old, “Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king.” He aimed His shafts at the monster’s head, smote his vital parts, and laid him low. He put Hell itself to flight, and captivity was led captive. What a glorious word—our Lord put away sin! We read in the Word of God, sometimes, that He cast it into the depths of the sea. That is glorious, nobody can ever find it again—in the shoreless depths of the sea Jesus drowned our sins!

Again, we find He removed it as far as the east is from the west. Who can measure that distance? Infinite leagues divide the utmost bounds of space—so far has He removed our transgressions from us. We read again that He has made an end of sin. You know what we mean by making an end of a thing—it is done with, annihilated, utterly destroyed and abolished. Jesus, we here read, has put sin away, He has divorced it from us. Sin and my soul are no more married! Christ has put sin away—He has borne it away as the scapegoat carried the iniquity of the people in type and shadow. He has literally taken upon Himself the sins of all His peo-

ple, and, stronger than Atlas, has borne the load and carried it away and hurled it into His sepulcher where it lies buried forever.

“Who shall lay anything to the charge or God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” Sin is clean gone. If you believe in Christ, there is nothing that can be laid to your charge! The past, the present, the future—every sin was laid on Christ! Sins of tongue, and brain, and heart, and hand, and thought were all laid on Him. Sins against men, sins against God, adultery, murder, blasphemy—everything—all were laid on Jesus!

He became, as it were, the common reservoir for all the sin of His people to meet, and then He emptied it all out by His atoning Sacrifice, so that the filth of His people is removed. He has crossed the Kedron and put away the filth of sin. You and I may sing concerning sin as Israel sang concerning Egypt when the ransomed nation stood upon the shore of the Red Sea. “The depths have covered them: there is not one of them left.”

O for a sweeter voice than Miriam’s! O for virgins more joyful and more tuneful than the daughters of Israel! O for high-sounding cymbals and lofty timbrels to resound with our exulting song! “Sing unto Jehovah Jesus, for He has gotten unto Himself the victory! He has appeared and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself! And now, as for our iniquities, the depths have covered them—there is not one, not one, not one of them left! They sank unto the bottom like a stone! They sank like lead in the mighty waters! Sing you unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously!”

VI. O that some soul may get a ray of light from the last consideration, if all others shall have failed! THE EVIDENT COMPLETION of this work, upon which we have already touched, demands a word because of its being rendered conspicuous by the word, “once.” “Once in the end of the ages He has appeared to put away sin.”

If He had not put away sin, He would have come again to do it, for Jesus Christ never leaves His work unfinished. What He undertakes He achieves. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands. My Brothers and Sisters, Christ’s *one* offering put away all sin forever. Away! Away with those priests of Baal with their “unbloody sacrifice,” as they call it, offered daily for the propitiation of sin! Traitors to God’s truth! Traitors to the souls of men! May they never dominate in this land, but may their barefaced impertinencies be cast forth as dung upon the face of the earth, and may they themselves be rejected as salt which has lost its savor!

What right have they to eat the bread of a Protestant people while doing the Pope’s work? Our Lord has once and for all made an Atonement, and all attempts to tamper with His finished work is treason such as shall be answered for in the court of Heaven! And terrible shall be the doom of those who have dishonored Christ in the point where He is most jealous of His honor.

Brethren, Christ’s being in Heaven today is a proof that there is nothing to divide a sinner from God on God’s part—

***“If Jesus had not paid the debt,
He never had been at freedom set.”***

He would have been imprisoned in the prison of the tomb at the present moment if He had not discharged all the debts and liabilities of His people. And His exaltation in Heaven is the evidence that He has completed His work. There He takes His seat because the work is done. If the work had not been accomplished, He would be suffering, suffering often, until at the last He could say, "It is finished."

But His redemption is complete! Sin is put away and Believers are saved. What I have to say, in conclusion, is this. Will you not come, poor, guilty, empty, needy Sinners? Will you not come and partake of the glorious fullness of Christ's merit this morning? O why do you stand back? You need no fitness. Wait not for it. No goodness is asked of you. Do not look for it. All goodness dwells in Him. Come with your hard hearts, He will soften them! Come with the stone that is within, He will take it away and give you a heart of flesh. Come to Jesus now for all—

"True belief and true repentance, every Grace that brings us near, Without money, come to Jesus Christ and buy."

Oh, if I knew how to preach my Master to you plainly, I would! If the words would be called vulgar, I should not care for that so long as I could make men see what is the mystery of Christ Jesus, which was hid in the ages past, but now is made manifest in Him. O trust Him, Souls, trust Him, and you shall be saved!

I heard the day before yesterday what greatly cheered me. I heard that at the late meeting of Believers at Chicago, one came from the far West who asked for a missionary to preach in a newly-formed district, and the reason he gave for wishing for the missionary was this—that they had read my sermons on Sunday, and that no less than 200 souls had been converted to God by the reading of those sermons. When I read that report I did exceedingly rejoice, but then I thought, "Alas, there are many who have those sermons first hand, and get no blessing from them." And I thought of some of you who had heard me these many years, and I have been faithful to you—I trust I have—God knows I desire to be—and yet you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity!

While across the blue Atlantic, the *echo* of our words has called men from the grave of sin to life in Christ, you, though you love to listen to us, have not heard our voice in the depths of your soul! Shall it always be so? It will be, I fear, with some of you, for I foresee your ruin. You will go down to Hell with the Gospel sounding in your ears and wake up in the pit with this to aggravate your woe, that you knew the Gospel and refused it! How shall you escape if you neglect so great a salvation, so great that angels cannot tell its greatness, and human tongues are dumb, at best, when they attempt to speak of the excellent glory of it? Why will you reject it when it is in your hands, when, if you with your hearts believe and with your mouths confess Christ, you shall be saved? Why those hard hearts? Why those silent mouths? May the Eternal Spirit bring you to Jesus, and His shall be the praise, world without end. Amen.

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THE PUTTING AWAY OF SIN NO. 911

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 16, 1870,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Now once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin
by the sacrifice of Himself.”
Hebrews 9:26.***

WHEN the old dispensation was becoming worn out, and like a vesture ready to be laid aside. When the end of the typical twilight had come, then Jesus Christ came forth from the Father and brought the dawning with Him. When the often appearing of the Aaronic priests had not availed for the putting away of sin, He came whose once appearing perfected the work. As it was said to the master of the feast, “You have kept the best wine until now,” so might it be said of the great God of Grace, whose crowning gift to man came late, but not too late, to enrich the banquet of His love. There was a fullness of time before which the Messiah could not be cut off, but when that hour was come He was not slow with His sacrifice—He appeared in the appointed place to make Atonement for human guilt.

We have, this morning, to proclaim in the hearing of this congregation an old Truth of God to which you have listened many and many a time. But it is a Truth which should be and will be exceedingly delightful to all those whose consciences are troubled with sin. If there are any here who are conscious of the burden of their past guilt, are quickened so as to be sensitive of the curse, can hear the rolling thunder of the impending wrath of God—to them it will be a great joy to hear of One who can put away sin! It is for such as you are that the great Redeemer in the end of the world came among men.

He could not come to put away sin from those who had none, or from those who by their own efforts could put that sin away from themselves. It is, then, for such as you are who are hopelessly sinful. Hopelessly so, I say, if viewed from any aspect short of the work of Jesus Christ. It is for such as you that He has come. If your house were on fire you would rejoice to hear the fire engines coming down the street, for you would feel an absolute certainty that they were coming to you—because your house was in a blaze—if no one's else might be.

If there were appointed, today, a commissioner for the relief of such traders as might be in difficulties, whose capital was little, and whose liabilities were great—if you were in that condition you would feel at once that a hope was held out to you—because the commissioner's office supposes a condition of circumstances in which you are found. The news of Christ's coming into the world to put away sin sounds like the joy blasts of the silver trumpets of Jubilee to those who know themselves to be full of sin, who desire to have it put away, who are conscious that they cannot remove it themselves, and are alarmed at the fate which awaits them if the sin is not by some means blotted out.

Listen, you anxious ones, and if there are no charms of eloquence about the speaker, and if he seeks out no gaudy words that might draw attention to himself, yet let the theme, so suitable to you, so necessary to you, chain your ear and win your heart! And may God the Holy Spirit make the preaching of Christ to you to be the opening of the prisons to them that are bound.

There is one thing in the text which should be sure to hold, as though spell-bound, the attention of every trembling sinner. It is this—the Christ of God, who in the end of the world has appeared, did not come to deny the fact of human sin—to propagate a philosophy which might make sin appear harmless, or define it as a mere mistake, perhaps a calamity, but by no means a Hell-deserving crime. I am sure that every sensitive conscience would loathe such teaching. It could yield no comfort whatever to a soul which had felt sin to be exceedingly sinful.

Jesus Christ did not come into the world to help you to forget your sin. He has not come to furnish you with a cloak with which to cover it. He has not appeared that He may so strengthen your minds, (as men would have it), that you may learn to laugh at your iniquities and defy the consequences of them. For no such reason came the Son of Man. He has come not to lull you into a false peace, not to whisper consolation which would turn out to be delusive in the end, but to give you a real deliverance from sin by putting it away and so to bring you a true peace in which you may safely indulge.

If sin is put away, then peace is lawful. Then rest of spirit becomes not only a blessing which we may enjoy, but which we must enjoy, and which, the more we shall enjoy the better shall we please our God. O Sinner, the tidings that I bring you this morning are not the mere glitter of a hope that shall delude, not a present relief for the woe you feel, but a real cure for all your ills, a sure and certain deliverance from all the danger that now hangs over you!

I. We will proceed at once, then, to deal with our glorious text, and at the outset let us remember that IT IS A VERY HARD THING TO PUT AWAY SIN. Meditate awhile upon this Truth of God, for it will help you to magnify the power, the wisdom, and the Grace of Christ who has put it away. It is a very hard thing to put away sin, all the Jewish sacrifices could not do it. They were very costly—sometimes thousands of bullocks were slaughtered. They were *ordained of God Himself*.

In the tabernacle everything was done according to the pattern seen in the Holy Mount by Moses. In the Temple no sacrifice was presented but according to Divine command. The whole Aaronic ritual was very impressive. The priests in their holy robes, pure white linen garments, the golden altar, candlesticks, and table, the fire, the smoke, the incense. The whole thing was calculated very much to impress the mind. The first Covenant provided a very magnificent service, such as never will be excelled, but for all that—costly, Divinely arranged, impressive—it could *not* put away sin. And the evidence of this is found in the fact that after one Day of Atonement they needed another atonement next year.

Now, if sin had been put away, there would have been an end of sin-offering. There is an end of paying when the debt is discharged—an end of punishment when penalty is fulfilled. There is an end of propitiation when God is satisfied. Why need the fuller cleanse the garment if it is already

immaculately white? Why need the refiner cast on fresh fuel if the gold is already rid of all alloy? What need, then, of a further sacrifice for sin if sin is effectually removed?

My Brethren, sin was still there. After all the sin-offerings it was not washed away, and such men as David felt this when they cried, "You desire not sacrifice; else would I give it: you delight not in burnt offering." Here were thousands of years, then, of the shedding of the blood of bulls and goats according to Divine command, and yet sin still remained, for its removal was a harder thing to achieve than the blood of bulls and goats could compass. Nor could sin be put away by ceremonies. There were those in our Lord's days who, not content with doing what God had commanded, *invented* rites and ceremonies of their own, or carried out those commanded in a manner never intended by God.

These men practiced washings of all kinds. They fasted and genuflected. They broadened the borders of their garments. They wore phylacteries, they paid tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and so on—and hoped, by carrying out these minutiae and by adding to the traditions of the fathers obediently observed—they might succeed in getting up a righteousness which should cover their sin. But our Lord expressly tells us that this was a complete failure, for though they succeeded in making clean the outside of the cup and the platter, their inward parts were very wickedness. And while they were as outwardly clean as sepulchers that had been newly white-washed, yet their inward parts were full of rottenness. There had been no cleansing of themselves by all that they had done.

And it is so now, my dear Hearers—no outward forms can make you clean. The leprosy of sin lies deep within. Not even rites that God has given—I repeat it—not even rites that *God* has given, can avail, however reverently observed, to remove so much as *one single sin*. More than this, repentance itself cannot purge a man from sin. If anything could do it, surely this might. Let me not be mistaken—wherever *God* gives real repentance of sin, there sin is forgiven—for repentance and remission go together. But no man is pardoned because of any merit in *his* repentance. Repentance is a *gift* given to us graciously at the same time as remission of sins, but it is not the *cause* of remission. It comes with it, and is one of the outward evidences of it, but it is by no means the cause of it.

Now observe the proof of this in the case of David. David was as penitent as a man could well be. His Penitential Psalms remain forever the most wonderful expressions of a broken heart, yet David nowhere claims forgiveness because of his contrition. Take the fifty-first Psalm as a specimen. David nowhere concludes that he is forgiven because he repents, or that his tears can wash him white. His petition is, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean"—alluding to the sacrificial blood which was sprinkled by a piece of hyssop. "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Nothing about, "*I* have washed my couch with tears, and therefore *I* am whiter than snow. *I* have made my bed to swim with my heart-sorrow for my transgression, and therefore *I* am pure." His remorse was very acute, but he never rests on that. He looks to the hyssop. He turns himself to the sacred Fountain of the atoning blood, and there he hopes for cleansing. Ah, dear Hearer, and so must you!—

**“Could your tears forever flow,
 Could your grief no respite know,
 All for sin could not atone—
 Christ must save, and Christ alone.”**

Be it also known that no form of suffering in this world can put away sin. There is a notion, especially among the poorer classes of London, based very much upon a mistaken interpretation of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, that in the next world those who have been very poor, and have suffered a great deal, will as a sort of recompense be taken up to Heaven—while the rich, simply because they were rich, will be sent down to Hell. Such was by no means the teaching of Christ! It is as wide as the poles asunder from His meaning.

No, my dear Hearer, you might be as poor as Lazarus, you might even lie as he did on the dunghill with the hounds to lick your wounds—but this would not win you a place in Heaven. Your sufferings here by no means make an atonement for sin. You remember that man who suffered more in body and in estate than any other man that we have ever read of? I mean Job. You remember how all his children were taken away at a stroke? How his property was all destroyed? How he then found himself covered from head to foot with a horrible disease?

It was a disease so dreadful that he could not sit in the house, and he betook himself to a dunghill, and laid hold upon a piece of a pot to scrape himself with. Now after he had passed through all that misery and a great deal more, what was his condition? God appeared to him in a whirlwind, and spoke to him—do you find that Job, because of his sufferings stood up before the Lord, and said, “I have suffered all this, and am now clear of all sin”? No, no! He cried in great humility, “I abhor myself in dust and ashes.” His sufferings had not made him meritorious. He did not claim anything of the kind, but in the Presence of the Most High he abhorred himself, he humbled himself into the very dust.

His confidence was not placed in himself, but in the Savior, for you hear him say, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” His hope looked to the *Redeemer*, and not to the sufferings which he had himself endured. Believe me then, my Friend, you may carry many grievous diseases about you, and endure great poverty and all kinds of afflictions—you might even torture yourself as Romanists and idolaters do—but all that will be of no service to you in the matter of Divine forgiveness. Sin is not to be put away by anything of this sort.

Nor, my dear Friends, can any form of self-denial, however terrible it might be, put away sin. Some have fancied that when they have repented of sin after a sort, and forsaken it, that then by denying their bodies, by enduring much physical suffering, they might make atonement. But it is not so. You remember how the Prophet asks what man shall give that he may be accepted with God. “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

That last question reaches far into the realm of self-sacrifice. “Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” Yet even this would be of no avail. We read of fathers and

mothers in heathen countries who give their children up to idols. Our hearts are shocked by the story of Moloch—believed to have been a huge image of hollow brass in which a great fire was lighted until it became red hot—and then parents brought their first-born babes and placed them in the red hot arms of this God—that they might there be consumed to ashes. I say when you hear of this, you think what cruel monsters they must have been!

Ah, it was not so! Many of those fathers were as loving to their children as you are, and the mothers as affectionate as mothers now present. But they felt an awful sense of sin and believed that this would please God and put away sin. Therefore doing violence to all that was affectionate and tender within their nature, they gave the fruit of their body for the sins of their soul. And what a thought it is that when they had performed this hideous self-denial and made themselves wretched for life, desolating their family hearth by giving up their dearest ones to die—still no sin had been put away even then, not one! The spot remained indelible though washed with the blood of their own child. No, my Hearer, sin is not easily put away.

It may impress our minds if we remember further that holy living does not put away past sin. If from this day forth we should live after the commandments of the Law blamelessly, and walk before the Lord with all devotion, and before men with all uprightness, yet it would not put away past sin. And the proof of this is to be found in the fact that those men who have lived after the best fashion, undoubtedly the best men in the world, have declared that their consciences were not satisfied with themselves, and that until they looked away from themselves they did not experience anything like satisfaction.

More memorable, still is the fact that *death* does not put away sin. Death puts away a great deal. A man dies, and if he has no estate his debts die with him. And many a hard thought that we had of our fellow man we bury in his tomb. But death never kills a single sin. Sin is immortal until the immortal Christ comes to deal with it. Sin stands like the everlasting hills and will not move from its place till He that made Heaven and earth casts the mountain into the sea of His Atonement. No, the rich man died and was buried, but no sin of his was buried, for in Hell he lifted up his eyes, and his sins were there to torture and to condemn him.

Another thought is equally solemn—namely, that Hell itself cannot put away sin. There are the devil and his angels for whom Hell was made, for whom the fire was first kindled, and its pit first dug. But they are as great sinners after these six thousand years as they were when first they were cast down from Heaven. And so those lost ones whose spirits have been in Hell since the time of Noah's flood—they are still sinners—and after all the ages of suffering they have endured not a sin less is upon them now than there was at first. Ah, dreadful thought! If you and I are ever cast into Hell, though ages on ages may lapse and the wrath of God is poured out upon us to the uttermost, there will never be the destruction of a single sin or particle of a sin by it all.

Sin cannot be put away until the penalty is borne to the end, and that can never be by finite man. What a work was here, then, for the only begotten Son of God to do! Speak of the labors of Hercules! They were nothing compared with the labors of Emmanuel. Speak of miracles! To tread

the sea, to hush the billows, to heal the sick, to raise the dead—these are all bright stars—but their light is hid when compared with this miracle of miracles—when the Sun of Christ’s righteousness arises with healing beneath His wings, and thick clouds of sin are put away by Him. Think of the difficulty, then, and adore the Christ who accomplished the task.

Before I leave this point I beseech each one here to consider the difficulty of putting away sin in his own case. In any case difficult enough, in mine, in yours, my Brethren, how peculiarly so! Our sins trail their horrid length from side to side for many years. Our sins are aggravated, they are piled-up sins. Ours are sins against light and knowledge, against conscience, against vows and resolution. Our sins are sins repeated after we had tasted of their bitterness—foul sins, sins it may be of the sort which bring the blush to the cheek—sins that made us toss on our beds as we remembered them with dread, and yet sins that we returned to as the dog returns to its vomit. Oh, our monster sins! Our horrible sins! Our damnable sins! There was a difficulty, indeed, in putting these away. May you feel this deeply in your hearts, and you will be the more heartily ready to appreciate our next doctrine.

II. The second great Truth is one that is full of joy, namely, that Christ HAS PUT AWAY THE SIN OF ALL HIS PEOPLE. You notice that the word “sin” is in the singular, and for that reason, standing as it does, alone, without a qualifying word, it is the more comprehensive. Sin is regarded as one great evil, and Christ has put it away. When the Lord Jesus Christ appeared at the end of the world, all the sins of His people were made to meet in one tremendous mass. Jesus Christ suffered all this to be imputed to Him. “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity”—as if it were but one—“the iniquity of us all.”

There it was, and He was accounted as if He had committed it all. In Gethsemane, and on the Cross He endured the penalty due for all the sin of His people, or rather the death which God had stipulated should stand as an equivalent for the sufferings of all the guilty ones for whom He stood. He suffered all that—and by that suffering He put away the sin, the whole mass, the whole mountainous mass of the sin of all those for whom He stood as a Substitute—and for whom He suffered the penalty. Sin was completely put away, everlastingly put away, when Jesus gave up the ghost, rose from the dead, and entered into His Glory.

I beg you to notice the expression used by our translators. The expression in the Greek is more forcible, and I will deal with that directly. He has “put away” sin. This phrase in the English version is used in reference to an unfaithful wife when she was “put away.” Her husband gave her a bill of divorcement, and she was no longer his. Until that deed of divorcement was made she was his lawful wife, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, and under the Law they were regarded as one—their property and estate one. But as soon as ever a lawful divorce was given, she had no relation to him any more than any other woman. She was utterly disowned, she had no further claim on him whatever. The separation was complete.

Now, sin before Christ comes, is, as it were, married to us. The foul thing pollutes us. For its filthiness we are responsible, we have committed it. It is linked with us so as to be, as it were, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. But, oh, the blessedness of the fact! Christ has proclaimed an everlasting divorce between our souls and our sins! He has put our sins

away so that we are no longer knit to them, and their dread responsibility lies no longer upon us. He stands to bear the responsibility of our sin on our behalf, and our personal liabilities cease.

Be they what they may, they are not charged on us. "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity." He had iniquity, but it is no longer imputed to him. His sins are now no longer his, any more than a man's wife when lawfully divorced is any longer his. There is a total separation between the Believer and all his old sins, a legal separation too, fully justified and complete.

"Putting away" is used in another sense. Jacob commanded his sons to put away the false gods that were among them. We find Josiah putting away Baal and all the false gods of Israel. Now you know how they acted when they put away false gods. There was a search throughout all the house to find out every teraphim, and every image, and every symbol that had been an object of reverence. I think I see Jacob if he had found a teraphim, throwing it out of the tent door with indignation. And if he saw it lying at a distance, for fear lest any of his sons or his servants should take it up and reverence it again, the Patriarch would go and spurn it with his foot.

Or perhaps he would take it up, and finding his hammer, dash it in pieces, and throw the very dust of it away, as Moses ground the golden calf to pieces and threw the fragments in the water. Or as the young Josias did, who, not content with breaking down the altars, broke the images, themselves—utterly destroyed them. Now in this way has Christ put away His people's sins. He has utterly demolished them, made a clean sweep of them all, thrown them right away, broken them, destroyed them, and so put them away.

"Putting away" may be illustrated in yet another manner. The Israelites were commanded on the feast of the Passover to put away all leaven out of their houses, and to this day they are very scrupulous about the fulfillment of that command at the time of that great festival. The house is very carefully swept lest a crumb of common leavened bread should remain. The cupboards are ransacked, drawers emptied carefully and swept with a little brush. And then the master of the house will go through every department of the house to see that no trace of leaven should remain. All leaven must be put away that they may keep the feast with unleavened bread.

Now Jesus Christ, in this same way, has put away sin. There might have been a sin left in some secret region of my heart, or soul, or conscience, or memory—hidden in a dark department of my nature—and that little sin would have ruined me. But Jesus put it all away—every crumb and particle of the horrible leaven Christ has swept right out. He altogether and utterly put away sin by His once appearing. If you are a Believer in Christ, my dear Friend, the putting away of sin for you does not consist in the forgiveness of here and there a great sin—in the plunging into the Red Sea of His blood of here and there a monster iniquity. But *all* your sins—every size, shape, form, hue, degree, or fashion—are altogether gone.

Crimson sins, black sins, crying sins, every sort of iniquity from your childhood until now, and right on till you enter into the rest of the Beloved—they were all taken and laid upon Christ. He made an end of them

all when He offered up His great expiatory Sacrifice. He has put away sin as a whole for His chosen. This is a glorious Truth! If we know that it belongs to us and that our sin was put away—it is enough to make us anticipate the joy of Heaven, and sing the new song—“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever.”

The Greek word, however, is more expressive than the English. I believe it is only used in one other place in the New Testament. And as far as Greek works extant are concerned, it is never used in any other volume. It is a word coined by the Apostle, a perfectly regular word, but still made by himself to suit his theme. Though the Greek was a copious language, yet when the Holy Spirit was in the Apostle there were not sufficient words extant to express all His meaning. This word is used in another place, in Hebrews 7:18, and is there translated “disannulling,” to signify an abrogation, a total abolition, an annihilation. That word will do. Christ was revealed in the end of the world to abrogate, to annihilate, utterly to abolish sin.

Now we all know what it is to have a thing abrogated. Certain laws have held good up to the first of January of this year with regard to the hiring of public carriages. But now we are under a new law. Suppose a driver complies with the new Law, gets his license, puts up his flag, gives the passenger his card of prices, and afterwards the passenger summons him before the magistrate for asking a fare not authorized by the old law? The magistrate would say, “You are out of court, there is no such law. You cannot bring the man here, he has not broken the old law, for he is not under it. He has complied with the requisition of the new law, by which he declares himself no longer under the old rules, and I have no power over him.”

So he that believes in Christ Jesus may be summoned by conscience when misinformed before the bar of God, but the answer of peace to his conscience is, “You are not under the Law, but under Grace.” “Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes.” “All that believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses.” In this way Christ has abrogated the sin of his people. By what image shall I set forth the abolishing of sin? I do not know what metaphor to use about it, but one suggests itself which is far from complete, but may help somewhat.

When Pompey was killed, Julius Caesar obtained possession of a large casket which contained a vast amount of correspondence which had been carried on with Pompey. There is no doubt whatever, that in that casket were many letters from certain of Caesar’s followers making overtures to Pompey, and had Caesar read those letters it is probable that he would have been so angry with many of his friends that he would have put them to death for playing him false. Fearing this, he magnanimously took the casket and destroyed it without reading a single line.

What a splendid way of putting away and annihilating all their offenses against him! Why, he did not even know them! He could not be angry, for he did not know that they had offended. He consumed all their offenses and destroyed their iniquities, so that he could treat them all as if they were innocent and faithful. The Lord Jesus Christ has made just such an

end of your sins and mine. Does not the Lord know our sins, then? Yes, in a certain sense, and yet the Lord declares, "their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." In a certain sense, God cannot forget, but in another sense, He Himself declares that He remembers not the sins of His people, but has cast them behind His back.

"The iniquities of Israel," says He, "shall be sought for, and there shall be none. And the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." An accusing spirit might have said to Caesar, "Do you not know that Caius and Florius were deeply involved with your enemy, Pompey?" "No," he replies, "I know nothing against them." "But in that casket there is evidence." "Ah," rejoins the hero, "there remains no casket, I have utterly destroyed it!" The metaphor fails because it does not set forth the perfectly legal way in which Jesus has made an end of sin by suffering its penalty. Justice has been satisfied, punishment has been meted out for every sin of mine and yours if we are Believers. And the whole matter has been accomplished, not by an *evasion* of Law, but by a fulfillment of it, meeting justice face to face and satisfying vengeance and putting away sin.

Take another illustration, common enough, but quite to the point. A debt is annihilated when it is paid, so the debts that we owed to justice were abrogated, annihilated and ceased to be because Jesus Christ, to the utmost farthing, paid whatever His people owed. Now, child of God, I want you to turn this Truth over and over in your mind. Jesus Christ has put away your sin, all of it, all of it, in all respects. Before God you are accepted as if you were innocent. You are even regarded as if you were something more than innocent, namely, actively *righteous*. Your sin is so put away that now you are deprived of nothing that sin deprived you of. You have the access which sin once prohibited. You enjoy the favor of God, and nearness to God, and relationship to God, even as if you had never fallen.

When sin was put away, all the effects of sin, in detriment and loss to us before God, were virtually put away from the pardoned one. Think of that and rejoice. Moreover, your sin is put away *forever*. Do not fall into the idea it ever can return. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance," that is to say, on His part. The eternal God never says and un-says, never plays fast and loose with a soul. If you are pardoned, then you are so pardoned that none ever can condemn you in time or in eternity. "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." Oh, what bliss is this! Do not so much listen to me as let your heart suck out the sweetness of this Truth.

If it is indeed so, what peace you ought to have! Are you tried and afflicted? Remember how Luther said, "Lord, strike, for I am forgiven," as if he thought it mattered little what he suffered now that his sin was gone. Nothing ought to make you suspend your song of praise, O pardoned Sinner! You can never go down into the pit. God can never be so wrath with you as to forsake you utterly. You are saved! You have an entailed estate beyond the river—there is a crown in the King's palace which no head but yours can ever wear. And a harp that your fingers must strike with seraphic joy. O you banished ones, in the midst of your exile still sing the songs of Zion in anticipation of the time when you shall sing them without groans to mar their melody!

III. We shall open up to you, dear Friends, with very much brevity, HOW SIN WAS PUT AWAY. The text tells us that our Lord put it away by a Sacrifice. It is that cardinal doctrine of the Christian religion that sin is pardoned through a Sacrifice. Substitution is the very essence and marrow of the Revelation of God. The Lord Jesus Christ stood in the place of the sinner and was made a bloody Sacrifice for sin. Even as the sacrificed lamb poured out its life-blood, so did He give up His life to redeem our lives.

Now, dear Friends, you who are seeking peace today, remember that the place where you will find light for your darkness is where Christ made Himself a Sacrifice for sin. Your comfort will not arise from studying His most pure and admirable *life*, but by considering His painful substitutionary *death*. He was made sin for you, though He knew no sin, that you might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He was made to die a death of pain, ignominy, and anguish, and to pour out His blood that you might not feel the sword of vengeance on account of your sins. Notice that the text tells us what His sacrifice was—it was Himself. Sin was not put away by the offering of His living *works*, nor by the incense of His *prayer*, nor by the oblation of His *tears*—nor even by the presentation of His pains and groans before God—but by the sacrifice of HIMSELF.

The Lord Christ gave up for you His human Body and Soul and Spirit—all that constituted “Himself” was given up freely to the death—that the punishment due to our sin might be borne. Dwell on this thought—the sacrifice of Himself. This leads you to remember who He was. He was God over all, blessed forever. The Maker of all worlds, but He gave Himself. See the majesty of His sacrifice! He gave *Himself*! And then behold the infinite merit that there must be in that Sacrifice. Had He been a mere man—the death of one innocent man for another may be supposed to have been an atonement for *one man*. But because He was infinite in His nature, there was *infinite* merit in His sufferings.

Doubts, however black they may be, ought to subside when we perceive that the Atonement made must have been infinitely meritorious, because it was not an Atonement of mere tears and blood and works, but an Atonement made by the Lord’s giving up Himself, His very Self, that He might put away sin. Ah, my Brethren, I can trust an infinite Savior to put away my sin. If I were told that there was this and that to be done by some human priest to put away my sin, I should be afraid that perhaps their efforts would not answer the designed end. But if my sin is put away because God Himself dwelt among men, and suffered in human flesh in my place, I can believe, and will believe, and rest in peace—

**“My soul can on this doctrine live,
Can on this doctrine die.”**

Here is solid ground work for the most guilty, heavy-laden sinner to build a cheerful hope for eternity!

Note well that there is not a word here or anywhere else in Scripture about any renewed and *repeated* sacrifice. The Roman Catholic church tells us that they continue to present the sacrifice of Christ in the unbloody sacrifice of the “mass.” But this is a mere invention of their priests! Our Lord *once* appeared to put away sin, and thereby perfected forever them that are sanctified. What are you doing, you pretenders to His name? Would you add to what is perfect? Do you put sin away again after

the great High Priest has put it away once and for all? Away, you sons of Antichrist!

Observe, also, that nothing is said about sins ever coming back again. He has put sin away, there is no hint given that it will ever want putting away a second time. He has appeared and put it away finally, totally, eternally. Where, then, is the sin of His people? It is so put away that it is not possible to find it, even if it is searched for, nor can it ever return. Moreover, not a syllable is uttered concerning anyone helping the Lord Jesus to put away sin. He came to put away sin, but it is not added that others joined in the work—neither is it said that it is done if the sinner's tears should flow, or if he should feel deeply, or if he should act worthily, or if he should be obedient. Not at all! It is nakedly and boldly declared that He has put it away.

Now, on the Cross, my dear Hearer, Christ either put all your sins away, or He did not. If He did not, you will live and die in unbelief—if He did—nothing of yours is needed to make the Atonement perfect. All you have to do is to ascertain your part and lot in the great Atonement. “And,” says one, “How can I ascertain my portion in it?” You may know by this one thing—Do you believe in Jesus? Do you trust Him? This is the evidence that your sin has ceased to be, and that before you were born, Christ put it away forever. If so, you need not this day be bowed down about it, or go mourning and troubled as though it even now condemned you.

If you believe, rest assured that God loved you from before the foundations of the world. You are viewed in Christ Jesus as clear before the Law. In the Person of the Only Begotten you are accepted in the Beloved. The love of God looked on you in Christ ages ago, before you could look on it or understand it, and in the fullness of time your sins were foreseen, and their penalty endured by your Redeemer. Methinks I hear, then, this enquiry put, How may I share in this blessed result of the putting away of sin? The answer is, Brethren, the way for us to enjoy a share in it must evidently be one in which we do not, even by implication, seem to claim a part in the putting away of sin.

If you think you can get a part in this gracious result by your own feelings or doings, you dishonor the perfect work of Christ, and so you make a gulf between you and Christ. The only test as to whether Christ put your sin away is this—Have you done with all idea of putting the sin away yourself? Are you willing that He should have the whole, sole, and entire glory of putting it away? Will you now trust Him with your whole heart to put your sin away? Well, Soul, there never was a man yet who gave up confidence in everything but Christ, and relied completely and heartily upon Christ, but who had, in that fact an assurance that Jesus loved him, and gave Himself for him!

“Oh,” says one, “I have done that, then, years ago.” Rejoice, then! Be glad, and out of love to Jesus go and perform works of holiness to honor Him by Whom you are saved. Rejoice all your days, and praise the name of Him that has washed you. Do not, O you pardoned ones, kneel down every Sunday morning and night, and wail out the cry that you are “miserable sinners”! You ought *not* to be miserable sinners, now that you are forgiven, justified, adopted, and made one with Christ! You are sinners, but why miserable? To those Believers who call themselves “miserable

sinner,” the Lord might well reply, “You do not, then, believe Me. Have I not pardoned you, and declared that there is no condemnation for you? Is this your only gratitude? Is there no joyful thankfulness? Nothing but sullen misery?”

Blessed be God, such a form of service is little suitable for Believers in Jesus, though very fitting for those who trust their baptismal regeneration! Our gladsome lips have learned—

***“Oh, how sweet to view the flowing
Of our Savior’s precious blood,
With Divine assurance knowing
He has made our peace with God.”***

Sin is gone, gone forever! Go, Believer, and rejoice! But do I hear another say, “O that I could know assuredly that my sin was put away. I gladly would trust the Savior, but the question is, may I trust Him?” That, my Friend, need not be a question. He *commands* you to trust Him. “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. But he that believes not shall be damned.”

You are threatened if you do not believe, therefore take courage, Man, and trust Christ now. “What? And having lived a sinful life up till now, if I, indeed trust Him, will that sinful life be blotted out? Must I not at least go home and begin to read my Bible and spend a month in preparation?” Delay not! Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart. Trust Him now! Saul of Tarsus was struck down at once, in the midst of sin, and saved. The dying thief had not to be taken down from the Cross and laid up in hospital till he passed through a probation. He prayed the prayer, “Lord, remember me!” And he received the answer, “Today shall you be with Me in Paradise.” The pardon of sin is instantaneous. It is not a matter of even minutes or seconds.

“There is life in a look at the Crucified One.”

One glance of your soul’s eye at a crucified Savior and the simple reliance of your spirit upon Him, and you are saved beyond all risk. The Lord grant you, by His Holy Spirit’s aid, to do this today, and I know you will go away to be among the dearest lovers of my Master, and among the most careful of His servants, for you will love Him too well to disobey Him. And it will be your joy from this time forth, even forever, to honor Him.

Methinks I hear you say, “I who was the chief of sinners was met with when I least expected it by my gracious Savior, while listening to the Gospel. And I was forgiven in a moment through a simple act of faith. And now here I am, my Lord’s servant, to live and to die for Him if He will but give me Grace to do so.” The Lord grant it, for His name’s sake! Amen.

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A PERSONAL APPLICATION

NO. 962

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 16, 1870,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“But now once in the end of the world has He appeared to
put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”
Hebrews 9:26.***

IN those good old times when preachers did not grow weary, though they discoursed for three hours at a stretch. And when congregations were not given to slumber, even under such long discourses, the preacher had ample time not only to dilate upon the doctrine of his text, but to speak, also, upon what was then called “the improvement of the subject,” namely, the practical and experimental application of the Truths of God taught to the cases of his hearers. Nowadays when we are restricted to three-quarters of an hour—not altogether to our loss or yours—there are occasions on which we feel our course so wide, and our time so narrow, that having found a good sea to sail upon, and objects of surpassing interest to attract our attention in the morning, we venture to resume the current of thought and follow up with the application in the *evening*.

Those of you who were present this morning, (See No. 911, “*The Putting Away of Sin*”), will not have forgotten the fullness of the text. It seemed as though every word were on fire, for we were warmed and comforted by each word as it broke on our ears and appealed to our hearts. I am sure that God the Holy Spirit spoke to some of us. If we never heard Him before, we certainly did then feel the power of His Presence in our souls. “Did not our hearts burn within us” while we meditated upon the precious Truth contained in this passage of Holy Scripture? We saw very clearly God’s way of putting away sin. We knew that sin was the great obstacle which kept us from God, and we perceived how Jesus Christ, by making Himself a Sacrifice, had completely cast down and cleared off the separating wall, so that now we have access with boldness to this Grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God! By His offering of Himself upon the tree, He put away sin once and for all on the behalf of those who trust in Him.

The application, then, which I proceed to take in hand is twofold—first, to some of you who are not converted, a few earnest, faithful, affectionate words. And, secondly, to you who have received Christ, and have also obtained power to become sons of God, a little tender counsel.

I. First, A FEW WORDS TO THE UNCONVERTED. You perceive it is stated in the text that the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in human form,

and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Now, it will strike your reason that God would not have come upon earth, would not have left the royalties of Heaven if there had been some other way of putting away sin. Surely the eternal Father would never have put His Only Begotten and Well-Beloved Son to such terrible pains and griefs if there had been any other door of salvation for the lost sons of men. When Jesus said, "If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me," you may depend upon it that it would have passed if it had been possible for us to be saved by any other method. But, inasmuch as Jesus Christ bowed His head to the stroke of His Father's sword, and poured out His soul unto death for us, we may rest assured that there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved.

Clearly then, my dear Hearers, it is your wisdom to give up every other confidence! What are you resting in at the present moment? Have you been saying in your soul, "I am the child of gracious parents. I have never gone into profanity or open sin. It must be all right with me"? Or, have you said in your heart, "I was christened in my infancy. I have been confirmed. I have paid due attention to the ceremonials of my Church, and therefore I am saved"? Or, have you said, "I have kept the Commandments from my youth up. I have neither wronged man nor blasphemed God"? I tell you solemnly that these grounds of confidence are utterly worthless!

If you could have been saved by your Baptism, do you think Christ would have died? If your good works could have opened the gates of Heaven for you, do you think that the Christ of God Himself would have bled for sinners? If it had been possible for your godly ancestry to have lifted you to the skies, do you suppose that Jesus Christ would have been obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross? All other confidence which begins, proceeds, and ends with anything else save the Person and the work of Jesus will deceive you in the hour of death, and at the Day of Judgment. Therefore I say unto you—do not for a moment entertain it—away with it! Away with it, confide in it no longer!

If I saw you trusting yourself upon a bridge which I knew would snap in the center when your weight came fairly upon it, I should not be unkind—I should but follow the instincts of humanity in warning you not to trust to it. And I do so warn you now that other refuge there is none, save in Jesus Christ. And if you seek another refuge you insult God, you do despite to Jesus Christ, you cast yourself into a tenfold jeopardy—for he that believes not in Jesus Christ must be lost. Though you may have a zeal towards God, and go about industriously to establish your own righteousness, yet you must be a castaway, because you have not submitted yourself to the righteousness which is of God by faith.

I beseech you, then, dear Hearer, whoever you may be, whether you are a stranger among us or one who constantly frequents this assembly, shake off your false confidences, as Paul shook the viper from his hand

into the fire, or else they will poison you. They will destroy you forever and forever! But come, O come, Sinners, as you are, to the Fountain filled with blood, and rest, all helpless as you are, rest on the Foundation which God has laid in Zion, a tried Stone, a precious Cornerstone, and he that builds upon it shall never be ashamed.

That seems to flow naturally as an inference from the doctrine of the Atonement. But then, secondly—if Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in order to put away sin, must die a death so ignominious and painful, then depend upon it, sin is not so easy a thing to get rid of, nor is the penalty so easy to endure, as some would have us imagine. Sinner, when God laid our sins upon Christ, He did not spare Him. “He spared not His own Son.” There was no point of the shame, the desertion, the darkness, the terror of dire foreboding, or the weight of full punishment for sin which was withheld from the sufferings of Christ. Rather it seems as if the Father, in vindication of un pitying Justice, heaped on our blessed Savior the full weight of all our transgressions, and exacted of Him the utmost chastisement and the uttermost retribution.

Ponder this and consider the question, Did God smite His Son, and shall He spare you? Did the curse fall on Christ, though He was holy in His Nature, perfect in His Character, guileless in His Heart, and innocent in His Life—upon Him who had no sin but our sin upon Him? And shall God allow *you*, depraved, impenitent, willful, and graceless as you are, to go unpunished? God has shown His hatred of sin in the Cross of Jesus. Not Sodom on a blaze, nor the old world drowned with the flood, nor Pharaoh lost in the Red Sea, nor any one of the judgments of Heaven which appall us in their history, displays so much His horror against sin as the death of the Only Begotten.

There you see how, though sin entrenched itself in the Blessed and Beloved Body of Jesus Christ, yet the sword of vengeance would find it out and smite it down. And shall your crimes evade notice or pass away like shadows that leave no trace behind? What? Can the avenging angel detect no spots on your hands, no blood on your skirts, no chain of evidence to convict you? Knowing, as you all do from observation, if not from experience, that the levity with which men defy the laws of Nature does not mitigate the pain that surely follows, that every vice reaps its own retribution, and that the end of a dissolute life is most commonly a desperate death, I marvel that any of you should despise your own mercies and court your own miseries!

But if any sin could be lightly passed over, how should your sin escape, when you add to it this *sin of sins*, by way of aggravation—that you make God a liar by not believing on His Son? Ah, my Hearer, let no ill deceive you. God’s Word is true—*every* transgression shall receive its just recompense of reward. He will by no means spare the guilty. Do not hope to die

with the words upon your lips, "God is merciful." I know He is, but He is also just, and to those who reject His Son there is no mercy—

***"How they deserve the deepest Hell,
That leave the joys above!
What claims of vengeance must they feel
Who slight the bands of love!"***

You shall find it so. Either Christ must bear your sins for you, and you must see your sin punished in the wounds of Immanuel, or you must feel them punished in yourself forever! O Soul, which shall it be? May God make the election for you, and may you be saved in Jesus Christ our Lord.

I wish I could speak so as to get to your heart, but the Lord alone can do that. I can only reach the ears. Will you, however, please notice the particular object for which Christ appeared? Perhaps that may touch your conscience. It was to put away sin. Can you so think of this as to apprehend the breadth of purpose it involves? Is not such an undertaking beyond the grasp of your minds? But try to spell it out. Does it not occur to you that there must have been a gathering together of all kinds of sin, and a concentration of all the forces of sin at that tremendous crisis? I think you have only to look at the pictures as they are drawn by the four Evangelists to perceive the dark shadows of every species of human guilt.

Were not the vices that defile the heart of man, and the atrocities that distract society—those vile prejudices and bad passions which issue in the foulest crimes—all represented in the conspiracy to crucify Jesus of Nazareth? Tell me, if pride and infamy, jealousy and covetousness, treason and treachery, ribald mockery, and brutal cruelty, with a legion of other wicked spirits, did not make common cause against the Lord's Anointed? The mask of religion was worn by some, and the guise of patriotism was assumed by others. To what intent was this? Why, it is told in one short sentence. When He came to put away sin, then sin was up in arms directly, and counsel and clamor from all grades of society made their voices heard, and their influence felt, to put Him away.

Ah, you say, that only happened once. True, so far as the work of redemption is concerned. But how often is it *repeated* in the experience of men who reject the Savior? The like concurrence of all sorts and forms of sin is found in the case of every one of you who deliberately or wantonly hardens his heart against that great Sin-Bearer, that great Sin-Destroyer, our most glorious Christ! Every evil disposition you harbor, every evil habit you indulge, every wicked practice you follow, leads, no, irresistibly *drives* you on to this goal—"Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him, crucify Him"—is the cry to which your heart consents, to which your life gives sanction. I do but interpret the meaning of your unbelief. It must be so. For you are bent on upholding sin while Christ is bent on putting away sin—thus you set yourselves in opposition to Him.

And it is so. For it is the ordinary testimony of every converted man. Those of us who have the best opportunity of judging can bear witness that in the repentance which accompanies faith, the sense of guilt is felt much as though all sins were rolled into one in the aggravated sin of unbelief. And it ought to be so—for our Lord Himself said, “When He (the Spirit of God) is come, He will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on Me.” Give heed, then, to this, my Hearer, whosoever you may be that now declines to yield to my Master. If ever you are born of the Spirit, you will plead guilty to this charge. Or if, God forbid, you die in your sins, the indictment framed against you, the verdict given, and the sentence passed will be according to this judgment. You will be condemned because you believed *not* on the Son of God. The reason why at this moment you love darkness rather than light is because your deeds are evil.

Let me remind every unconverted person here of the responsibility which presses upon him with regard to the great fact that Christ is preached to him according to the manner in which he has been revealed to put away sin. That fact must affect you for woe, if not for weal. Whatever may be its relation to those Hottentots and barbarians who have never heard the Gospel, it must affect you, because you *have* heard it, and the rule is that the ministry of the Cross of Christ, when addressed to your understanding, must either prove a savor of life unto life or of death unto death.

Make no mistake about this. You never pass under the heart-searching ordeal of listening to a Gospel sermon without some moral consequence. There is some result produced. You are either blessed by it, or hardened by it. Possibly you may think it is a most proper thing to come to a place of worship, and you feel relieved by having attended. Yes, but if your conscience were awake you would understand the words of the Apostle, “See that you refuse not Him that speaks.” “Turn not away from Him that speaks from Heaven.” “He that despised Moses’ Law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment suppose you, shall he be thought worthy, who has trod under foot the Son of God?” “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?”

If I live and die knowing the Gospel, and yet rejecting it, what can I say at God’s bar? What excuse can I make for myself? I cannot plead *ignorance*. I must confess willful hardness of heart, which went so far that I preferred to risk damnation rather than accept salvation on God’s terms. I had rather perish as God’s enemy, so my unbelief says, than I would submit myself and become God’s friend. Oh, this is iniquity reaching to its highest altitude! I beseech you—ungodly Man, ungodly Woman—look such iniquity in the face, and think of its terrible issues!

Our text tells us that Christ has appeared once to put away sin, but remember, He is to come a second time! Unconverted Man, Woman, have

you thought of that? You would not look at Christ when He came the first time, despised and rejected of men, but you shall look at Him when at His second advent—

***“The Lord shall come! A dreadful form,
With rainbow wreath, and robes of storm;
On cherub wings, and wings of wind,
Appointed Judge of all mankind.”***

You said it was nothing to you the first time, and you passed by. But you will find it something to you the second time. When the trumpet sounds exceedingly loud and long. When the cerements of the grave are rent asunder. When the dead shall rise from land and sea. When the Great White Throne shall be set, and all nations shall be gathered before it, and the Shepherd-King shall divide them as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats—you will find, then, that from that Throne you cannot escape! The Throne of Mercy you may despise—but the Throne of Judgment you will not be able to set at nothing!

Suppose the destined hour should transpire *now*—and it is but a little while before it shall overtake this giddy, thoughtless world. Overleap that brief interval for a moment. Let your imaginations transport you to—

***“That tremendous day
Whose coming none can tell,”***

although with silent, sure, and rapid steps it is approaching us now. Think that you are standing in the crowd, and the books are opened, and the eyes of fire have flashed upon you, and your life unveiled, with all your actions and their hidden springs, is being published to angels and to men—and your sentence is about to be pronounced.

No escape is possible! The rocks cannot hide you! The mountains cannot cover you! The eyes of Him who once wept will flash with lightning, and the tongue that said, “Come unto Me, you weary,” shall say, “Depart, you cursed,” and the Face that was once so full of pity, shall suddenly be red with holy anger as He shall say, “I know you not! Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity!” And shall that be your portion?—

***“Prevent, prevent it by Your Grace;
Be You, O God, my hiding place,
In this the accepted hour!”***

My Hearer, shall this be *your* portion? Shall it be the portion of any man or woman now sitting in this House of Prayer? May God avert it by His eternal mercy! But I see not how it is to be avoided except you are led to fly to Christ. And the only opportunity you may ever have is this present opportunity, for, “Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” May you be led by the Spirit at this moment to come to Jesus, and so shall you find eternal salvation in Him.

II. Turning now to another part of the congregation, let me spend a little time in ADDRESSING MYSELF TO THE MANY OF YOU who have believed that Jesus *is* the Christ, to the saving of your souls. Beloved in the

Lord, our sins are pardoned! We are accepted in the Beloved. We have passed from the realm of fear into the kingdom of safety. We are no longer in the wilderness. We are come to Canaan, to Mount Zion, to the general assembly and Church of the First-born. We hear no rumblings of Sinai's thunders, but the soft voice which speaks better things than the blood of Abel.

What shall we say as we see evidently set before us this great and unspeakable sacrifice, by which our Lord Jesus Christ put away sin? I think our first exclamation should be, "Be gone, accursed Sin, that could have needed such a Sacrifice! That could have made it necessary for the Savior thus to suffer!" Repentance is always the companion of faith. They go hand in hand. Let no man speak evil of repentance. I have been grieved within my heart when I have heard some revivalists, by innuendo at least, speak against repentance.

You will never enter Heaven without repentance. And if your faith does not lead you to hate sin, and do a great deal more than merely change your mind—as these modern fanatics say—you will find it is a faith which will never estrange you from the corruptions of the flesh, enamor you of the holiness of the Spirit, and conduct you to the Heaven of God's Presence. You must *hate* sin. You must perceive the *evil* of it. And you must turn from it and live, according to the instincts of the Divine Life communicated, as well as according to the ordinances of the Divine Rule made known unto you—or else you are no child of God.

But where is true repentance to be had? It is never experienced by a man, except as he, by God's Grace, receives the cleansing, sanctifying power of the Savior's precious blood. To repent of sin because I know it has ruined me, or it will ruin me, is *legal* repentance, and needs to be repented of. But to be able to sing, as one of our hymn writers expresses it—

***"My sins, my sins, my Savior!
Their guilt I never knew,
Till with You in the desert,
I near Your passion drew.
I know they are forgiven,
But still their pain to me,
Is all the grief and anguish
They laid, my Lord, on You."***

That is repentance. To hate sin because it caused the brow of Christ to be girt with the crown of thorns, and the face of Christ to be dishonored with the spittle, and the hands of Christ to be pierced with the nails—this is repentance—not because I am afraid of Hell! Not because sin brings pains and penalties with it, but because it made Jesus Christ to suffer for me such pangs unutterable.

My Brothers and Sisters, standing here by faith at the foot of the Cross, do we not feel more than ever the evil of sin? If we do not, let this be our prayer, "Lord, help me this night as I come to Your table, to feel the bit-

terness of my sin, which was so bitter to You. Let me see its deadly character in Your death. Let me see its shame in Your shame. Let me perceive the nakedness which it brought upon me in Your nakedness. Let me discern the misery which it would have caused me forever in Your misery. And let me now declare revenge against my sin. And however dear any one sin may have been to me, let this be my solemn resolve, in the strength of the Holy Spirit—

***“Whatever that idol is,
At once I’ll tear it from its throne,
And worship only You.”***

Deep repentance will be a sweet help in coming to the Supper. The bitter herbs always made the Paschal lamb the sweeter, and the pensive sadness of repentance will give zest and stimulant to the faith with which we feed upon the crucified Redeemer.

Still further, Beloved, what emotions of gratitude should this Truth of God inspire in your breasts! Ought it not to fill your entire life with the fragrant incense of praise? “Your testimonies,” we might well say with the Psalmist, “have I taken as a heritage forever. For they are the rejoicing of my heart.” O that the flame of gratitude might kindle and glow in all your musings! O that it might find constant expression in the deep humility and the sweet gentleness of all your works and ways! Say, “What homage can I offer You, my Lord, at this good hour? Little can I render unto You for all Your benefits, but much do I owe You for Your love that passes knowledge. Your Word shall be my lamp. Your Precepts shall be my choice. Your Statutes shall be my songs.

“I will delight myself in Your Commandments. All who trespass against me, I will forgive for Your sake. Your saints I will love. Your lambs I will feed. I will bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please myself. I will pray without ceasing. I will give thanks for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ‘So will I’—did I say? Let me rather say, ‘So would I.’ Though the vows of God are upon me, I have not strength of myself to perform one vow. Yet You know, for You search all hearts, and this You know, for You know all things—I sincerely desire and earnestly covet the Spirit of holiness to consecrate myself unreservedly unto You.”

There is yet another point to which I wish to have your particular attention, O you that believe in Jesus! We are told in the text that once in the end of the world Christ appeared to put away sin. Now what is your conviction upon the subject? Did He put away sin or not? I anticipate the answer of every Believer here—“Of course He did! By His one offering He put away sin forever.” Beloved, why is it that some of you tonight are troubled about your sin? Now look back during the past week. Has there not been a great deal in your life that you have to mourn over? Do you live a single day in which you went to your rest contented with the review of your

character or your conduct? I must acknowledge I never spent such a day, and I am afraid I never shall till I get Home to Heaven.

Sins and sorrows multiplied pollute the days to my shame and my horror. But when I come to look to Jesus Christ my Lord, and trust in Him, shall I feel dismayed on account of my sins? No! They are all forgiven! They are all forgiven! Yes, that particular sin—you know what it is—the one which has caused you so much trouble this week, is forgiven. There is no sin that you have fallen into, as a believer in Jesus, which can be laid to your charge. That bold speech of the Apostle makes a wide sweep—“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” Observe, he does not say, “Any great things,” but “anything”—any little things, anything, anything of any kind. Do you not know that though you have erred and strayed many times, and made yourself to be ashamed, yet still, when you come to the—

**“Fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,”**

this Truth is sure—that “the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin”?

Then every Believer here tonight is as clean in the sight of God as the snow which falls from Heaven. Come, then, let us shake off these fears. He who knows that his debt is paid would be foolish to be troubled about the debt. And he who knows his sins are forgiven, may have, *should* have, *ought* to have, peace with God through Jesus Christ his Lord! My dear Brethren, God will help me, I hope, to live more and more in the atmosphere of peace with God. I do believe the devil often worries us when there is no cause whatever for our being troubled. Sin is always to be hateful to us. We are always to loathe it. But when washed in the precious blood of Jesus we are to endeavor to realize that through His blood we are clean, and that, with His spotless vesture on, we are holy as the Holy One.

Notwithstanding the depravity of our old Nature, and the workings of the flesh against which we strive, yet we are accepted in the Beloved. We are justified by faith which is in Christ Jesus. Come, then, children of God, take your harps down from the willows and tune them to a rapturous strain! Magnify the Lord your Righteousness. This is the name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness—Jehovah Tsidkenu. His name shall be rapturous on our lips, and glorious in our ears from this time forth even forever and ever. He has appeared to put away sin, and it is put away! Let us, then, enjoy our rest.

I want the further attention of every Believer here to another particular. Beloved, we read in this text that Jesus Christ, in order to put away sin, has made a sacrifice of *Himself*. When that word “sacrifice” is used with such grand significance in reference to *Christ*, it looks almost like a disparagement of its high import to apply it in any reference to *ourselves*. Yet we have the mind of the Spirit in the words of the Apostle Paul, who has

said, "I beseech you, therefore, Brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Ought we not, if Christ has made a sacrifice of Himself for us, to make a sacrifice of ourselves for Him?

He sacrificed Himself. I told you this morning that it was more than His wealth, more than His honor which He offered. It was HIMSELF. Every Christian should offer *himself* as sacrifice to Christ. They did so in the martyr age. They did so in the first young hour of the Church's enthusiasm when Apostolic zeal was fervent. But do we do so now? Talk of giving to the cause of God—why, very few of us give enough to sensibly impoverish ourselves by our giving. We are afraid of making a sacrifice of ourselves. In the service of God we generally take care not to injure ourselves by excessive exertions. Indeed, our friends are always very careful to warn us against any risk of this kind! Men in business may work as many hours as they like, and as hard as they will to get money, and very seldom does any sagacious, prudent mentor shake his head and tell the young merchant that he is laying out his strength too recklessly, and devoting his energies too vigorously in getting gain or acquiring a fortune.

Oh, no! They would rather tell him to spread all his canvas and ply every sinew, especially when wind and tide are in his favor. But the minister of God—the *servant of Christ*—often has that judicious advice tendered to him, "Do yourself no harm. Be sure and not work too hard." "It was never intended," they say, "that anyone should risk his health, consume his spirits, or deny himself innocent recreation with an enthusiasm that far exceeds the line of duty," as if there were such a line, or it were possible to define it. Ah, well, if the love of his Master is in him, as a constraining power, then kindling with the noble passion and laboring with a fiery zeal, he will resent such expostulations as Christ did that of Peter, when, replying to his pitiful rebuke, "Pity yourself, Lord"—He said, "Get you behind Me, Satan! You are an offense unto Me: for you savor not the things that are of God, but those that are of men."

We are *bound* to sacrifice ourselves, yielding up the members of our bodies as instruments of righteousness unto God, and devoting the faculties of our renewed minds that we may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. O my Brothers and Sisters! I have already said that I scarcely like this word, "sacrifice," because it involves nothing more than a reasonable service. If we gave up all that we had and became beggars for Christ, it would display no such chivalrous spirit or magnanimous conduct after all! We should be gainers by the surrender.

With Christ in our hearts, the Light of Life and the Hope of Glory, we should be rich to all the intents of bliss. We cannot stoop as He stooped. We cannot be poor with such poverty as He knew, neither can we renounce such riches as He once possessed. But, at any rate, let us not be stingy in our consecration. Let us yield ourselves wholly and heartily to

Jesus Christ's work. Let us feel it to be our pleasure, our principle, our point of honor not to shrink from labor nor to shun sacrifice! Let us, rather, court labor and invite opportunities of suffering and occasions for the giving of ourselves and of our substance to His cause. He was sacrificed for us, let us be a living sacrifice unto Him.

Did you notice that word "once"? The text says He *once* offered Himself a sacrifice—only ONCE—once and for all. Ah, well, Brethren, we may take that word and apply it to ourselves. We can only be sacrificed for Christ *once*. In this world, alone, shall we have the opportunity of washing the saints' feet, of feeding the poor, of looking after the helpless and the ignorant. There is one thing for which Heaven itself might envy the poor sons of earth—that there are works to be done here which "Perfect saints above, and holy angels cannot do."

We might almost wish ourselves back from Heaven if we could go there with any of our life's work undone. No! No. We would not seek untimely rest, if there is another soul to win. If there is another dram of bitter shame for us to drink. If there is another part of the sufferings of Christ for us to fulfill, we would wait until it is all done, and we can say, "I have fought the good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith." It is only once! It is only once! If you could only serve a friend once, you would like to do it well that time. You have only one life on earth, and oh, how short that may be! Waste not an hour! Spend none of its moments in wantonness or in selfishness, but let the whole of your strength, during the few years of your pilgrimage, be given up to your Lord. Once was He a Sacrifice—only once—but that once thoroughly. Let us imitate Him.

This morning I also dwelt upon that word "appeared." Christ was not ashamed to appear as a Sacrifice for us in public, albeit deep dishonor was heaped upon His holy name. And, therefore, I say to Believers here, let them not be ashamed to be publicly made sacrifices for Christ, though some should wag their heads in rude contempt, and others shoot out the tongue with bitter jibes at them. Do I speak to any timid Believer here, any Nicodemus who has slunk away, and will not dare to come with an open profession to the Table of the Lord tonight? O my dear Friend, Christ did not treat you so badly, and at the last, you hope, He will own your name among His followers. Do you own His name now?

"Oh," you say, "God's Church is so imperfect." And what are you? Are you better than they? Are you afraid that you would not live up to your profession. Don't you know there is One who says, "My strength is sufficient for you"? The path of *duty* is the path of *safety*. Be not ashamed to own your Lord, I pray you. Oh, it will come to pass one day that the highest honor will be given to that man who never blushed to stand at the pillory, side by side with Christ—when He, who was once crucified, shall be crowned with glory and honor—and they shall be crowned with Him who were willing to bear the shame with Him!

“These are they,” says He, “who were with Me in My humiliation in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Stand back, angels! Make way, seraphs! You have never been spit upon and scoffed at for Me as these have been. They shall be honored as princes of the Blood. They shall sit upon My Throne, even as I have overcome, and am sitting down upon My Father’s Throne.” O Knights of the Cross, let shame never trouble you! Or if the crimson blush should rise to your face, be ashamed that you are ashamed! Be jealous of yourselves that you are not more bold to confess your Master’s name! Christ once appeared and put away sin by making a sacrifice of Himself—let us take care, then, constantly, to emulate the example of Him whom we cannot too worthily admire.

I shall not detain you longer. I have said too little unless God has blessed it. I have said enough if He shall apply it. I beseech you, Brothers and Sisters, when you come to the Table, do not be satisfied with these outward signs. Think it nothing to eat the bread or to drink the wine. In fact, it is less than nothing and vanity, unless there is something more. The great thing is for that bread to help you to think of the broken Body of your Lord, and for that cup to show you the agonies of His soul when He was exceeding sorrowful even unto death. Come here with the subject of this morning’s sermon fresh upon your hearts.

Come with the thoughts which it suggests this evening burning for fuller expressions in your lives. And as you sit before the Lord in the fellowship of His people, let this be your desire, “Lord, as You have given Yourself for me, let me know experimentally all the blessings which Your blood has purchased. Bring me unto communion with Yourself. Permit me to put my fingers into the prints of the nails, and thrust my hand into Your side tonight. Give me the cleansing, the purification, the sanctification which Your blood can bestow, and help me from this day to be Yours, and Yours alone, till death shall take me to dwell with You where You are, and till Your second coming shall make me to be like You, when I shall see You as You are. May God bless these words to us for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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BETWEEN THE TWO APPEARINGS

NO. 2194

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 15, 1891,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Now once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”
Hebrews 9:26-28.

The two great links between earth and Heaven are the two advents of our Lord, or, rather, He is the great bond of union, by these two appearings. When the world had revolted and God had been defied by His own creatures, a great gulf was opened between God and man. The First Coming of Christ was like a bridge which crossed the chasm and made a way of access from God to man—and then, from man to God. Our Lord's Second Advent will make that bridge far broader, until Heaven shall come down to earth and, ultimately, earth shall go up to Heaven. At these two points a sinful world is drawn into closest contact with a gracious God. Jesus herein is seen as opening the door which none can shut, by means of which the Lord is beheld as truly Emmanuel, “God with us.”

Here, too, is the place for us to build a grand suspension bridge by which, through faith, we, ourselves, may cross from this side to the other of the stormy river of time. The Cross, at whose feet we stand, is the massive column which supports the structure on this side. And, as we look forward to the Glory, the Second Advent of our Lord is the solid support on the other side of the deep gulf of time. By faith we first look *to* Jesus and then *for* Jesus—and herein is the life of our spirits. We dwell between these two boundaries—Christ on the Cross of shame and Christ on the Throne of Glory—these are our Dan and Beersheba and all between is holy ground! As for our Lord's First Coming, there lies our rest—the once-offered Sacrifice has put away our sin and made our peace with God. As for His Second Coming, there lies our hope, our joy, for we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is. The glories of His sacred Royalty shall be repeated in all the saints, for He has made us unto our God kings and priests—and we shall reign with Him forever and ever.

At His First Advent we adore Him with gratitude rejoicing in “God with us,” as making Himself to be our near kinsman. We gather with grateful boldness around the Infant in the manger and behold our God! But in the

Second Advent we are struck with a solemn reverence, a trembling awe. We are not less grateful, but we are more prostrate as we bow before the Majesty of the triumphant Christ! Jesus in His Glory is an overpowering vision! John, the Beloved Apostle, writes, "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead." We could have kissed His feet till He left us on Olivet, but at the sight of the returning Lord, when Heaven and earth shall flee away, we bow in lowliest adoration! His first appearing has given us that life and holy confidence with which we press forward to His glorious appearing, which is the crown of all.

I want, at this time, to bring before you those two appearings of our Lord. The text says, "He has appeared." And again, "He shall appear." The 26th verse speaks of His unique manifestation already accomplished. The 28th verse promises the glorious second outshining, as it promises, "He shall appear." Between these two lights—"He has appeared" and, "He shall appear"—we shall sail safely if the Holy Spirit will direct our way.

My first head is this, *once, and no second*. And my other division of discourse will make a kind of paradox, but not a contradiction—*yet a second*.

I. Our first theme is, ONCE, AND NO SECOND. Now once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself." This He has done, once, and He will never repeat it. Let us dwell on the subject in detail.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has once appeared and though He will appear again, it will not be for the same purpose. On His first appearing, fix your thoughts, for the like of it will never be seen again. In the bosom of the Father He lay concealed as God. As the Second Person of the Divine Trinity in Unity He could not be seen, for "no man has seen God at any time." It is true that, "without Him was not anything made that was made," and thus His hand was seen in His works but, as to Himself, He was still hidden—revealed in type and prophecy—but yet, in fact, *concealed*. Jesus was not manifest to the sons of men until one midnight an angel hastened from the skies and bade the shepherds know that unto them was born in Bethlehem a Savior, that is Christ the Lord! Then the rest of the angelic host, discovering that one of their number had gone before them on so wonderful an errand, were swift to overtake him and, in one mass of glittering glory, they filled the midnight skies with heavenly harmony as they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Well might they sing, for the Son of God now appeared! In the manger He might be seen with the eyes and looked upon, and handled—for there the Word was made flesh—and God was Incarnate! He whom the ages could not contain, the Glorious One who dwelt with the Father, forever unseen, now *appeared* within the bounds of time and space—and humble shepherds saw Him and adored! By Gentiles He was seen, for wise men from the East beheld and worshipped Him whose star had led them. As He grew up, the children of Nazareth beheld Him as a Child, obedient to His parents and, by-and-by, He was made manifest to men by the witness of John and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him at His Baptism. God

bore Him witness as He went up and down the hills of Palestine preaching the Kingdom and proclaiming salvation to the sons of men. Men saw Him, for He spoke among them openly, and walked in their midst. His was not the seclusion of dignity, but the manifestation of sympathy! "He went about doing good."

He was seen of angels, for they came and ministered to Him—and He was seen of devils, for they trembled at His word. He dwelt among us and we beheld His Glory—He was the Revelation of God to men, so that He could say, "He that has seen Me has seen the Father." He was made still more manifest by His death, for in His Crucifixion He was lifted up from the earth that all might behold Him. He was exalted upon the Cross, even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness on purpose, that whoever looked to it might live. Then and there He opened those four conspicuous fountains of cleansing blood which were made to flow by the nails. See how it flows from hands and feet! There, too, He laid bare His side and set His heart open for dying men and forthwith there flowed forth blood and water! Thus we may look into His inmost heart.

High on the Cross the Savior hung, without veil or curtain to conceal Him. "Once in the end of the world has He appeared." I know of no appearance that could have been more complete, more unreserved. He moved in the midst of crowds, He spoke to men and women one by one. He was on the mountain and by the sea. He was in the desert and by the river. He was both in house and in Temple. He was accessible everywhere. In the fullest sense, "once in the end of the world has He appeared." Oh, the glory of this gracious epiphany! This is the greatest event in history—the invisible God has appeared in human form!

The text tells us very precisely that in this First Coming of our Lord *He appeared to put away sin*. Notice that fact. By His coming and Sacrifice, He accomplished many things, but His first end and object was "to put away sin." You know what the modern babblers say—they declare that He appeared to reveal to us the goodness and love of God. This is true, but it is only the fringe of the whole Truth of God. The fact is that He revealed God's love in the provision of a Sacrifice to put away sin. Then, they say that He appeared to exhibit perfect manhood and to let us see what our nature ought to be. This, also, is a truth, but it is only part of the sacred design. He appeared, they say, to manifest self-sacrifice and to set us an example of love to others. By His self-denial He trampled on the selfish passions of man. We deny none of these things and yet we are indignant at the way in which the less is made to hide the greater. To put the secondary ends into the place of the grand objective is to turn the Truth of God into a lie! It is easy to distort truth by exaggerating one portion of it and diminishing another—just as the drawing of the most beautiful face may soon be made a caricature rather than a portrait by neglect of proportion. You must observe proportion if you would take a truthful view of things and, in reference to the appearing of our Lord, His first and chief purpose is, "to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

The great objective of our Lord's coming here was not to live, but to die! He has appeared, not so much to subdue sin by His teaching, as to *put it away by the Sacrifice of Himself*. The master purpose which dominated all that our Lord did was not to manifest goodness, nor to perfect an example, but to put away sin by Sacrifice! That which the moderns would thrust into the background, our Lord placed in the forefront! He came to take away our sins, even as the scapegoat typically carried away the sin of Israel into the wilderness that the people might be clean before the living God. The Lord Jesus has come here as a Priest to remove sin from His people—"You know that He was manifested to take away our sins." Do not let us think of Jesus without remembering the design of His coming! I pray you, Brothers and Sisters, know not Christ without His Cross as some pretend to know Him. We preach Christ—so do a great many more—but, "we preach Christ *Crucified*." And so do *not* many more. We preach concerning our Lord, His Cross, His blood, His death. And upon the blood of His Cross we lay great stress, extolling much, "the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." We know no past appearing of God in human flesh except that appearing which ended with a Sacrifice to put away sin! For this our Savior came, even to save sinners by putting away their sin. We will not deny, nor conceal, nor depreciate His master purpose, lest we be found guilty of trampling upon His blood and treating it as an unholy thing. The putting away of sin was a God-like purpose and it is a wellspring of hope to us, that for this reason Jesus appeared among men.

Let us go a step further with our text— *only once does the Lord appear for the purpose of putting away sin*. He came once to do it and He has done it so well that there is no need for Him to offer any further sacrifice! "This Man, after that He had offered one Sacrifice for sins forever, sat down." He will never appear a second time for the putting away of sin. It was His purpose, once, but He has so fulfilled it that it will never be His purpose again. The High Priest, as you know, came every year with blood for the putting away of sin. He has slain the victim this year, but next year he must come in the same manner—and the next, and the next, and the next—because the sacrifice had not really removed the guilt. But our Lord has come *once* for this Divine purpose and He has so achieved that purpose that He could truly cry, "It is finished," for the work is done once and for all. He has so perfectly put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself that He will never need to offer a second sacrifice! That our Lord should ever come a second time as He came the first time is inconceivable by those who love Him! He *will* come a second time, but in a very different style, and for a very different purpose—not as a Sacrifice for sins—but as King and Judge.

And here learn yet further, that *only once is sin put away*. Jesus died to finish transgression and make an end of sin. Our Lord made Atonement for sin when He died, the Just for the unjust—He made peace for us when the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. When the Lord had laid upon Him the iniquity of us all, Divine wrath fell upon Him on account of our sins until He cried, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Then sin was put away. And there, but never anywhere else, was full Atonement presented and iniquity was blotted out! There is no other place of expiation for sin but the place of our Lord's Sacrifice of Himself. Believing in Him that died on the Cross, our sins are put away—but without faith in Him there is no remission of sin. Beyond our Lord's, other sacrifice there is none—other sacrifice there will never be.

If any of you, here, are entertaining some "larger hope," I would say to you—hope what you please, but remember, that hope without the Truth of God at the bottom of it is an anchor without a holdfast. A groundless hope is a mere delusion! Wish what you will, but wishes without promises from God to back them are vain imaginings. Why should you imagine or wish for another method of salvation? Rest assured that the Lord God thinks so highly of the one Sacrifice for sin, that for you to desire another is evil in His sight! If you reject the one Sacrifice of the Son of God, there remains no hope for you—nor ought there to be. Our Lord's way of putting away sin is so just to God, so honoring to the Law of God and so safe for you, that if you reject it, your blood must be on your own head. By once offering up Himself to God, our Lord has done what myriads of years of repentance and suffering could never have done. Blessed be the name of the Lord, the sin of the world—which kept God from dealing with men at all—was put away by our Lord's death!

John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world." God has been able to deal with the world of sinners in a way of Grace because Jesus died. I thank our Lord even more because the actual sins of His own chosen—even of all those who believe on Him in every age—have been put away. These sins were laid on Him and, in Him, God visited man for them. "He His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree"—and so put them away forever—and they are cast into the depths of the sea. The putting away of my guilt as a Believer was really, effectually, and eternally accomplished by the death of our great Substitute upon the bloody tree! This is the ground of our everlasting consolation and good hope through Divine Grace. Jesus did it alone. He did not only *seem* to do it, but He actually achieved the putting away of sin! He blotted out the handwriting that was against us. He finished transgression and made an end of sin—and brought in everlasting righteousness when, once and for all, He died upon the Cross.

Beloved, there is a further note here—observe that *only once has He made a Sacrifice of Himself*. "Now once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." The very best way to describe the death of our Lord is to call it, "the Sacrifice of Himself." It may be well rightly to divide the Sacrifice, as the priest cut up the bullock or the ram. You may speak of our Lord's bodily sufferings, His mental griefs and His spiritual anguish, but, for the most part, we are not able to go far in this detailed appreciation of the wondrous Sacrifice. We are such poor folk in spiritual things, that instead of bringing a bullock which could be anatomized and its vital organs all laid bare, we are content to bring a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons—and these were not

carefully divided asunder, but burned upon the altar! The most of us have to take our Lord Jesus Christ as a whole, since, from lack of understanding, we cannot go into detail. What did He offer to God? He made a sacrifice of *Himself*. Truly He sacrificed His crown, His rest, His honor, His reputation and His life—but the essence of the Sacrifice was *Himself*—He, Himself, took our iniquity and bore our sorrows. “He His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.”

Your sacrifice, O Christ, is not to be measured unless we could compute the infinity of Your Godhead. It was not only Your labor, Your pain, Your shame, Your death—Your Sacrifice was *Yourself*—what more could even *You* offer? There, on the altar, the Son of God did place Himself, and there He bled and died that He might be the Victim of punitive justice, the Substitute for guilty men! There was He unto God a sweet-smelling savor because He vindicated the Law and made it possible for the Lawgiver to be justly merciful. This, according to our text, was done once, and only once, and it never will be repeated, so that the whole business of our Lord’s appearing to put away sin by the Sacrifice of Himself, is confined to one appearing and one offering. I want that word, “ONE,” to ring in your ears. “By one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified.” I would have the adverb, “once,” go through every ear, and abide in every heart. “By His own blood He entered in *once* into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” Peter says, “Christ also has *once* suffered for sins.”

Once it is, and not more often. To suppose the contrary would be, first, to break away from the analogy of human things. Read the 27th verse—“As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” A man dies once and after that everything is fixed and settled—and He answers for His doings at the judgment. One life, one death—then everything is weighed and the result declared—“after this the judgment.” So Christ comes and dies once. And after this, for Him, also, the result of what He has done, namely, the salvation of those who look for Him! He dies once and then reaps the fixed result according to the analogy of the human race, of which He became a member and Representative. Men come not back here to die twice—men die once and then the matter is decided—and there comes the judgment. So Christ dies. He does not come back here to die again, but He receives the result of His death—that is, the salvation of His own people. “He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.” “You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood.” The Christ is so completely Man that He follows the analogies of manhood as the Apostle, here, observes, and we must not break away from them.

To suppose a second death for our Lord would be to forget what He came to do. The punishment of sin was, “In the day that you eat, thereof, you shall surely die.” One death was the sentence. It is true that we have to speak of that one death as divided into the first and the second death, but it is judicially one sentence of death which is pronounced on man. When Christ comes, therefore, He bears the one sentence of death. He laid down His life for us. The penalty due to sin was death—“In the day that

you eat, thereof, you shall surely die.” Christ, therefore, must die, and die He did—“By the Grace of God He tasted death for every man.” But it was not said, “You shall die twice.” No, and Christ does not die twice. “Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more—death has no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He lives, He lives unto God.” He has borne the full sentence which was pronounced on sin and thus He has put away the sin which involved us under the penalty.

To suppose that our Lord should be made a Sacrifice, again, is a supposition full of horror. When you study deeply the death of your Lord, unless your heart is like an adamant stone, you must be bowed down with grief. The visage of Him who was Heaven’s Glory was more marred than that of any man, and His form more than the sons of men. He whose brow was from the beginning surrounded with majesty, had His forehead and temples torn with a coronet of thorns! Those blessed cheeks that are as beds of spices were distained with spit from the lips of menials. His face, which is the joy of Heaven, was buffeted and bruised by mockers. His blessed shoulders, which bear up the world, they scourged with knotted whips until the blood ran down in crimson rivers as the plowers made deep furrows.

How could they treat Him so? Was it possible that my Beloved should be scorned and slandered, spit upon and condemned as a felon? Did they lay the shameful Cross upon His blessed back and lead Him through the streets amid the ribald mob? He who knew no sin was numbered with the transgressors! Found guilty of nothing save excess of love to man, He was led away to be *crucified*. They hurried Him off to die at the common place of the gallows. The rough soldiers nailed Him to the Cross and lifted up the rough tree for all to gaze upon. I wonder the angels stood it! It seems extraordinary that they could look on while men were taking their Lord and Master and driving bolts through His hands and feet and lifting His sacred body upon the cruel tree! But they did stand it and the Christ hung on the tree of doom in a burning heat, through the fierce sun and the inflammation of His wounds and inward fever. He was so parched that His tongue was dried up like a potsherd and was made to cleave to the roof of His mouth.

There He hung amid derision, His bones all dislocated and His very flesh dissolved with faintness as though it were turning back to its native dust. Meanwhile His soul was “exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death,” and the Father’s face, which has sustained thousands of martyrs, was turned away from Him until He cried, “Lama Sabachthani!” And is there heart so brutal as to suggest a repetition of this Divine agony? Repeat this!? Repeat this? O Sirs, we rise at once, as one man, in mutiny against an idea so revolting! One Calvary is glorious, for it has accomplished the grand deed of our redemption—but *two* Calvaries would mean double shame and no glory! Shall the Son of God, after all that He has done, come down on earth to be, a second time, “despised and rejected of men”? Shall He, a second time, be dragged through mire and blood? It must not,

cannot be! God forbid! He has trod the winepress once and for all. No more shall He stain His garments with His own blood!

To suppose a repetition of the Sacrifice is to cast suspicion upon the work and efficacy of the great offering of Himself. Was not that Sacrifice infinite in value? It must have been, for it was the Sacrifice of God, Himself! Why, then, present it *again*? Unless the first was altogether or measurably a failure, why repeat it? The repetition of the Cross would destroy the Cross! O Man, you have taken away from the death of the Lord all its virtue if you would dream of His dying yet again! As to that invention of the Church of Rome—the continual offering of the unbloody sacrifice of the “Mass”—it is a dead thing, for, the “blood is the life thereof,” and it is as gross an insult to the one great Sacrifice as could well have been devised by His worst enemies. He has forever put away the sin of His people by His one offering, and now there remains no more sacrifice for sin!

My Brothers and Sisters, the idea that our Lord Jesus did not effectually perform the work of taking away sin removes the foundation of our faith! If by one offering He did not put away sin, shall it be repeated? Suppose, for a moment, that He died twice—why not *three* times? Why not *four* times? Why not 50 times? Why not *forever* the rehearsal of Calvary, forever the doleful cry, forever the tomb of Joseph and the dead body wrapped in linen? And yet, even after a *thousand* repetitions, how could we know that we were saved? How could we be sure that the Sacrifice sufficed and that sin was really put away? If the one offering of Himself did not satisfy justice, what would or could do it? Then are we without hope and, of all men, most miserable, for a golden dream of the putting away of sin has come to us and, lo, it has melted away. *Once* yonder tree! *Once* yonder tomb! *Once* the broken seal and the frightened watch—on that ONE Sacrifice and Justification we securely rest—and we need no repetition of the work. It was enough, for Jesus said, “It is finished!” It was enough, for God has raised Him from the dead!

I do not need, I hope, to linger here to warn you that it is of no use to expect that God will put away sin in any other way than that which at so great a cost He has provided. If sin could have been removed in any other way than by the death of His dear Son, Jesus would not have died. If there had been within the range of supposition any method of pardon except by the Sacrifice of Himself, depend upon it, Jesus would never have bowed His head to death. The great Father would never have inflicted death upon the Perfect One if it had been possible that the cup should pass from Him. He could never have inflicted upon His Beloved a superfluous pain. His death was necessary, but, blessed be God, having been once endured, it has, once and for all, put away sin and, therefore, it will never be endured again.

II. We come, now, to look at the rest of the text. Once, and no second AND YET A SECOND. “He shall appear a second time.” Yes, Christ Jesus shall appear a second time, but not a second time for the same purpose as before.

He will appear. The appearing will be of the most open character. He will not be visible in some quiet place where two or three are met, but He will appear as the lightning is seen in the heavens. At His first appearing He was truly seen—wherever He went, He could be looked at and gazed upon—and touched and handled. He will appear quite as plainly, by-and-by, among the sons of men. The observation of Him will be far more general than at His First Advent, for, “every eye shall see Him.” Every eye did not see Him here when He came the first time, for He did not travel out of Palestine, save only when, as an Infant all unknown, He was carried down into Egypt. But when He comes a second time, all the nations of the world shall behold Him! They that are dead shall rise to see Him, both saints and sinners—and they that are alive and remain when He shall come shall be absorbed in this greatest of spectacles. Then Balaam shall find it true, “I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not near.” Though they cry, “Hide us from the face of Him that sits on the Throne,” they shall cry in vain, for before His Judgement Seat they must all appear!

His second appearing will be without sin. That is to say, He will bring no sin-offering with Him and will not, Himself, be a Sacrifice for sin. What need that it should be so? We have seen that He once offered Himself without spot to God and, therefore, when He comes a second time, His relation to human guilt will finally cease. He will then have nothing further to do with that sin which was laid upon Him. Our sin, which He took to Himself by imputation, He has borne and discharged. Not only is the sinner free, but the sinner’s Surety is also free, for He has paid our debt to the utmost farthing. Jesus is no longer under obligation on our account. When He comes a second time, He will have no connection of any sort with the sin which once He bore. He will come, moreover, without those sicknesses and infirmities which arise out of sin. At His First Advent, He came in suffering flesh and He came to hunger and to thirst, to be without a place where to lay His head. He came to have His heart broken with reproach and His soul grieved with the hardness of men’s hearts. He was compassed with infirmity. He came unto His God with strong crying and tears. He agonized even unto bloody sweat and so He journeyed on with all the insignia of sin hanging about Him. But when He comes a second time it will be without the weakness, pain, poverty and shame which accompany sin! There will then be no marred visage nor bleeding brow! He will have re-assumed His ancient Glory. It will be His *glorious* appearing!

When our Lord comes to the fullest in His Glory, there will remain no sin upon His people. He will present His bride unto Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. The day of His appearing will be the manifestation of a perfect body as well as a perfect Head. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun when their Lord’s Countenance is as the sun shining in his strength. As He will be “without sin,” so will they be “without sin.” Oh, what a glorious appearing is this! A true appearing and yet the very opposite of the first! Then the text adds—“He shall appear without sin *unto salvation.*” What does that mean? It means that He will then *display* the perfect salvation of all those who put

their trust in Him! He will come to celebrate the great victory of mercy over sin. At His coming He will set His foot upon the dragon's head and bruise Satan under our feet. He will come to have all His enemies put under His feet. Today we fight and He fights in us. We groan and He groans in us, for the dread conflict is raging. When He comes again, the battle will be ended—He shall divide the spoil of vanquished evil and celebrate the victory of righteousness!

But the *Resurrection* is the salvation principally intended here. Alas, what evil sin has done! How many of our best beloved lie rotting beneath the clay! The worms are feeding on those whose voices were the music of our lives! The scythe of death has cut them down like grass—they lie together in rows in yonder cemetery. Who slew all these? The sting of death is sin! But when our Lord comes, who is the Resurrection and the Life—from beds of dust and silent clay our dead men shall rise—they shall leap up into immortality! “Your brother shall rise again.” Your children shall come again from the land of their captivity. Not a bone, nor a piece of a bone of a saint shall be left as a trophy in the hand of the enemy! When our Lord brought forth Peter from the prison, He did not let him leave his old shoes behind him, but the angel said, “Gird yourself, and bind on your sandals, and follow me.” And when the Lord Jesus shall come and open wide the door of the sepulcher, He will bid us come forth in the entirety of our nature and leave nothing behind. Salvation shall mean to us the perfection of our manhood in the likeness of our Lord! No aching hands and weary brows, then, but we shall be raised in power! Our vile body shall be changed and made like His glorious body! Though sown in corruption, our body shall be raised in incorruption and this mortal shall put on immortality! What a glorious prospect lies before us in connection with the day of His appearing a second time unto salvation!

Now notice that this appearing and this salvation will *chiefly belong to those who look for Him*. Will you bear with me patiently a minute or two here? I wonder how many there are in the Tabernacle who are looking for Him? The text says, “Unto them that look for Him shall He appear a second time without sin unto salvation.” Beloved, I will put the question again—How many here are looking for our Lord's Second Coming? I am afraid if conscience has her perfect work, many will have to say, “I am afraid I am not among the number.” I will tell you what it is to look for that Second Appearing. It is to love the Lord Jesus, to love Him so that you long for Him as a bride longs for her husband. Why are His chariots so long in coming? Come quickly, Lord Jesus! Strong love hates separation—it pines for union. It cries, “Come, Lord! Come, Lord!” Longing follows on the heels of loving. To look for His coming is to prepare for Him. If I were asked to visit you tomorrow evening, I am sure you would make some preparations for my call—even for one so commonplace as myself. You would prepare because you would welcome me. If you expected the Queen to call, how excited you would be! What preparation good housewives would make for a royal visitor!

When we expect our Lord to come, we shall be concerned to have everything ready for Him. I sometimes see the great gates open in front of the larger houses in the suburbs—and it means that they are expecting company. Keep the great gates of your soul always open, expecting your Lord to come! It is idle to talk about looking for His coming if we never set our house in order and never put ourselves in readiness for His reception. Looking for Him means that you stand in a waiting attitude, as a servant who expects his master to soon be at the door. Do not say, “The Lord will not yet come and, therefore, I shall make my plans irrespective of Him for the next 20 or 30 years.” You may not be here in the next 20 or 30 *minutes*, or, if you are, your Lord may be also here!

He comes! He is on the road! He started long ago and He sent on a herald before Him to cry, “Behold, I come quickly.” He has been coming quickly over the mountains of division ever since—and He will be here soon. If you look for His appearing, you will be found in an attitude of one who waits and watches, that when his Lord comes he may meet Him with joy. Christ is coming, I must not sin. Christ is coming, I must not be rooted to the world. Are you thus expecting Him? I am afraid I shall only be speaking the truth if I say that very few Christians are, in the highest sense, *waiting* for the appearing of the Lord. My friend, Mr. Govett, in his commentary on my text, reminds us of the story of Moses, when God told him to take 70 men up the hill with him. We read of these honored men, that, “they saw God, and did eat and drink.” What a privilege! They were all the Lord’s guests! As Moses went up to God into the thick darkness, he said to them, “Tarry you here until we come again unto you.”

Moses was gone for 40 days—how many of the 70 waited for him? I do not know when they began to slip down from the hill, or whether they went, one by one, or in groups. but when Moses returned, not a soul of them was left, save Joshua, whom Moses had taken up with him to still higher ground. The 70 had gone down among the people and probably spread that unbelief among them which led to the making of the golden calf. None can do so much mischief as those who have been with God, but cannot wait for the glorious appearing! You tell me Moses was gone a long time—well-near six weeks! Yes, and that is why many cannot wait for the Lord, now, because the delay is so long—it is nearly 1,900 years since He went away. True, 4,000 years rolled away before He came the first time, but 2,000 quite wear out the watchers for His Second Coming. Men cannot wait and, therefore, go down to the world and help to fashion its idols. Only here and there do we see a Joshua who will abide in his place till his leader appears.

As to *watching*, this is rarer than waiting. The fact is, even the better sort of Believers who wait for His coming, as all the 10 virgins did, nevertheless do not *watch*. Even the best sort of the waiters slumbered and slept. You are waiting, but you are sleeping! This is a mournful business. A man who is asleep cannot be said to *look* and yet it is, “unto them that look for Him” that the Lord comes with salvation. We must be wide-awake to look! We ought to go up to the watch-tower every morning and look to-

ward the rising sun to see whether He is coming. Surely our last act at night should be to look out for His star and say, "Is He coming?" It ought to be a daily disappointment when our Lord does not come—instead of being, as I fear it is, a kind of foregone conclusion that He will not come just yet. How pleased we are if some daring fellow will tell us when He will come, for then we can get ready near the time and need not perpetually watch!

We would not go to a gypsy in a red cloak and let her tell our fortune—but we will let a man in a black coat tell us the fortune of our Lord. What folly! Of that day and of that hour knows no man, nor even the angels of God! This time of the Advent is a secret and purposely so, that we may always be on tiptoe of expectation, always looking out—because our Lord is surely coming, but we are not sure when He comes. "And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Many professing Christians forget Christ's Second Coming altogether. Others drop a smile when we speak about it, as though it belonged only to fanatics and dreamers.

But you, Beloved, I trust are not of that kind! As you really believe in the First Coming and the one great Sacrifice, so really believe in the Second Coming without a sin-offering unto the climax of your salvation! Standing between the Cross and the crown, between the cloud that received Him out of our sight, and the clouds with which He will come with ten thousands of His saints to judge the quick and the dead, let us live as men who are not of this world, strangers in this age which darkly lies between two bright appearings, happy beings saved by an accomplished mystery, and soon to be glorified by another mystery which is hastening on! Let us, like her in the Revelation, have the moon under our feet, keeping all sublunary things in their proper place. May we even now be made to sit together with Christ in the heavenlies!

Now all this must be strange talk to some of you. I wish it would alarm those of you who once made a profession of true religion, but have gone back to the world's lies. How will you face Him, you Backsliders, in that day when He shall appear and all else shall vanish in the blaze of His light, as stars when the sun shines out? What will you do when your treachery shall be made clear to your consciences by His appearing? What will you do, who have sold your Master and given up your Lord, who was and is your only hope for the putting away of your sins? Oh, I pray you, as you love yourselves, go to Him as He appears in His First Coming and then, washed in His blood, go forward to meet Him in His Second Coming for salvation.

God bless you and, by His Son and Spirit, make you ready for that great day which comes on apace!

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:1-18; Matthew 25:1-13.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN-BOOK—361, 289, 356.

TWO ADVENTS OF CHRIST

NO. 430

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 22, 1861,
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***“And as is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”
Hebrews 9:27, 28.***

We must begin by noticing the parallel which the Apostle here draws. The words “as” and “so” suggest a comparison between two Truths of God, the correspondence of which he designed to set forth. The one a fact generally allowed, the other a fact he was anxious to inculcate. Now you will note that he says, “It is appointed unto men *once* to die,” and only once. This is a truism. The rule is universal. The exceptions are inconsiderable. One or two persons may have died twice. As, for instance, Lazarus, and those others who were raised from the dead by Christ. These, we cannot doubt, after living for a little while, returned again to the tomb.

But for the most part, speaking of the race, “It is appointed unto men once to die.” The greatest affairs of life can only be performed once. We are once born *naturally*—are once born *spiritually*. There are not two natural births, neither are there two spiritual births. We live on earth but once. We die but once. We shall be judged but once. We shall receive the final sentence but once, and then we shall once be received into the joy of our Lord forever, or once be driven from His Presence never to return.

Now, a part of the Apostle’s parallel lies here. As men die but once, so Christ has died but once. As the Law required but one death, so Jesus Christ, having offered that one death as the ransom for His people, achieved His task. “In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die,” was the penalty. “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,” was the payment. “By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin.” That is the first *fact*. “But now once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” This is the second *fact*.

But you have not got the full weight of the comparison yet. After man’s spirit has been once on earth, has lived its time, and the body has died, the soul is to revisit this earth again, for “after this the judgment.” Every

man will have two advents—the advent which he now enjoys or which he now misuses upon earth—and the advent which lies beyond the present course of probation. After he has descended to the tomb, he shall come here again. His bones shall come together, bone to his bone. The flesh shall come upon the skeleton and the spirit shall return, either *from the Heaven* where it rejoices, or *from the Hell* where it howls, to inhabit the body once again, and to stand upon the earth.

We must all come here again—even though the place that now knows us shall know us no more forever. Yet, somewhere upon this earth we shall stand, even though we should be unable to recognize any likeness between that and the place in which we lived, and unable to recognize any likeness between us and what we were. Regardless, here we must return to receive our appointed doom.

Now, so is it with Christ. He has once died and He is to come a second time. A second time is His body to be on earth. After death, the judgment! Only when we speak of Christ, He shall come, not to be judged but to be the Judge. After death comes the reward with us—after death the reward with Him. After our death comes our resurrection. That has passed already upon Christ. As a resurrection shall come to saint and sinner, the final audit and pronouncement of the sentence—so Christ shall come to the final gathering together of His elect and the final overthrow of all His enemies, to the final crowning of His head—when He shall have put all things under His feet and reign forever and ever.

Having thus, I think, brought out the parallel of the text, I will leave it for you to think over. As it is appointed unto men to die once and after this the judgment, so it was appointed unto Christ to die but once. That is achieved. The sequel is now pointed out. To them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation. We will spend our time tonight, and God grant that we may spend it profitably, by observing, first, *the likeness between the two advents of Christ*. Secondly, the dissimilarity between them, which is a far more extensive subject. And then we shall make a few remarks *concerning our personal interest in both advents*.

I. The text asserts very plainly that as we are here twice—once in a life of probation and a second time in the Day of Judgment—so Christ shall be here twice—once in His life of suffering and then again in His hour of triumph,

THE TWO COMINGS OF CHRIST HAVE SOME DEGREE OF LIKENESS. First, they are like each other in the fact *that they are both of them Personal comings*. Christ came the first time, not as a spirit, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as He had. He was One who could be pressed to a woman's bosom, One who could be borne in a father's arms. He was One

who could afterwards walk in His own Person to the temple—One who could bear our sins in His own body on the tree.

We have done once and for all with the foolish ideas of certain of the early heretics, that Christ's appearance upon earth was but a phantom. We know that He was really, personally, and physically here on earth. But it is not quite so clear to some persons that He is to come really, personally and literally, the second time. I know there are some who are laboring to get rid of the fact of a personal reign, but as I take it, the coming and the reign are so connected, that we must have a spiritual coming if we are to have a spiritual reign.

Now we believe and hold that Christ shall come a second time, suddenly, to raise His saints at the first resurrection. This shall be the commencement of the grand judgment and they shall reign with Him afterwards. The rest of the dead live not till after the thousand years are finished. Then shall they rise from their tombs at the sounding of the trumpet and their judgment shall come and they shall receive the deeds which they have done in their bodies.

Now, we believe that the Christ who shall sit on the Throne of His father David, and whose feet shall stand upon Mount Olivet, is as much a personal Christ as the Christ who came to Bethlehem and wept in the manger. We do believe that the very Christ whose body did hang upon the tree shall sit upon the Throne. That the very hands that felt the nails shall grasp the scepter. That the very feet that were fastened to the Cross shall tread upon the necks of His foes. We look for the personal advent, the personal reign, the personal session and court of Christ.

Nor less shall the advents be like each other in the fact *that they shall both be according to promise*. The promise of the first coming of Christ was that which made glad the early Believers. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, he saw it and was glad." The epitaph inscribed upon the slab which covers the sepulcher of the early saints has written upon it, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off." And today we believe that Christ is to come according to promise.

We think we have abundant evidence in the Words that were uttered by the lips of inspired Prophets and Seers, and more especially from the enraptured pen of John in Patmos. Do they not testify that Christ shall surely come? We now, like Abraham of old, do see His day. Our eyes catch the coming splendor. Our soul is overwhelmed with the approaching glory. Did the Jew look for Messiah, the Prince? So do we. Did he expect Him to reign? So do we. In fact, the very Prince for whom Israel now looks in all her hardness of heart, is He whom we expect.

They doubt Messiah's first advent and they look for Him to come as the fairest among ten thousand, the Prince of the Kings of the earth. Hail, Israel! In this your Gentile sister is agreed. She looks for Him to come in the same form and fashion. And when His coming shall have removed the scales from the blind eyes of Israel's tribes, then the fullness of the Gentiles shall, with Abraham's seed, praise and magnify the Lamb once slain, who comes the second time as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. In both cases we think the advent of Christ fully promised.

But we must remark in the next place, that the second advent of Christ will be like the first *in its being unexpected by the mass of people*. When He came before, there were only a few looking for Him. Simeon and Anna and some humble souls of the sort knew that He was about to come. The others knew that the Patriarchs and Prophets of their nation had foretold His birth. But the vanity of their thoughts, and the conduct of their lives were at such entire variance with the creed to which they were trained, they cared nothing for Him.

The Magi might come from the distant East, and the shepherds from the adjacent plains—but how little sensation did they make in the streets of busy Jerusalem, in the halls of kings, or in the homes of business? The kingdom of God came not with observation. In such an hour as they thought not, the Son of Man came. And now, though we have the Words of Scripture to assure us that He will come quickly and that His reward is with Him and His work before Him—yet how few expect Him!

The coming of some foreign Prince, the approach of some great event, is looked for and anticipated from the hour that the purpose is promulgated among the people. But Your coming, Jesus, Your glorious advent—where are they that strain their eyes to catch the first beams of the Sun rising? There are a few of Your followers who wait for Your appearing. We meet with a few men who walk as those who know that time is short and that the Master may come at cockcrowing, or at midnight, or at the day watch.

We know a few beloved disciples who, with longing hearts, beguile the weary hours, while they prepare songs to greet You, O Immanuel!—

***“Strangers on earth, we wait for You;
O leave the Father's Throne,
Come with a shout of victory,
Lord, And claim us as Your own.
No resting place we seek on earth,
No loveliness we see,
Our eye is on the royal Throne,
Prepared for us and You.”***

Lord, increase the number of those who look for You, and desire You, and pray and wait for You, and watch through the dreary hours of the night for the morning which Your coming shall usher in!

Yet, mark, when He shall come, there will be this to say about it, that *He will come to bless those who do wait for Him just as He did at the first.* Blessed were the eyes that saw Him! Blessed were the hearts that loved Him! Blessed were the ears that heard Him! Blessed were the lips that kissed Him! Blessed were the hands that broke the tributary alabaster box upon His glorious head—and blessed shall they be who are counted worthy of the resurrection and of the kingdom which He has prepared!

Blessed are they who, having been born of the Spirit, can see the kingdom of God. But doubly blessed are they who, having been born of water as well as of the Spirit, shall *enter into* the kingdom of God! For unto *all* this is *not* given. There are some who will not see the kingdom and others who cannot enter because they will not obey the ordinances which makes them Christ's disciples. Thrice blessed shall they be who, with loins girt about, being obedient servants, and having done His will, shall hear Him say, "Come you blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world." He comes to bless His people.

But then there is this further likeness and with the mention of it, I close this first point—He comes, not only to bless His people but *to be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to them that believe not upon Him.* When He came the first time, He was like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. As the refiner's fire burns up the dross, so did He consume the Pharisees and Sadducees—and as the fuller's soap cleanses away the filth, so did He unto that generation when He condemned it, even as Jonah the Prophet did unto the men of Nineveh and thereby condemned the men of Jerusalem because they repented not.

Thus too, when He shall come the second time, while He shall bless His people, His fan will be in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor and they who know Him not, and love Him not, shall be driven away like the chaff into unquenchable fire. Long not for Christ's coming if you love Him not, for the Day of the Lord will be unto you darkness, and not light. Ask not for the world's end—say not, "Come quickly," for His coming will be your destruction—His advent will be the coming of your eternal horror. God grant us Divine Grace to love the Savior and put our trust in Him. Then, but not till then, we may say, "Come quickly, come quickly, Lord Jesus!"

II. Now we shall turn to the second part of our subject, THE UNLIKE-NESS BETWEEN THE TWO ADVENTS.

In the prophecy of *His coming* the first and the second time there was disparity as well as correspondence. It is true in both cases He will come attended by angels and the song shall be, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill towards men." It is true in both cases, shepherds who keep watch over their flocks, even by night, shall be among the first

to hail Him with their sleepless eyes—blessed shepherds who watch Christ's folds, and therefore shall see the Great Shepherd when He comes.

Still, how different, I say, will be His coming. At first He came as an Infant of a span long. Now He shall come—

“In rainbow wreath and clouds of storm,”

the Glorious One. Then He entered into a manger, now He shall ascend His Throne. Then He sat upon a woman's knees and did hang upon a woman's breast. Now earth shall be at His feet and the whole universe shall hang upon His everlasting shoulders. Then He appeared the Infant, now the Infinite. Then He was born to trouble as the sparks fly upward, now He comes to glory as the lightning from one end of Heaven to the other.

A stable received Him then. Now the high arches of earth and Heaven shall be too little for Him. Horned oxen were then His companions, but now the chariots of God which are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels, shall be at His right hand. Then in poverty His parents were too glad to receive the offerings of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But now in splendor, King of kings, and Lord of lords, all nations shall bow before Him—and kings and princes shall pay homage at His feet.

Still He shall need nothing at their hands, for He will be able to say, “If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the cattle are Mine upon a thousand hills.” “You have put all things under His feet. All sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field.” “The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.”

Nor will there merely be a difference in His coming. There will be a most distinct and apparent difference *in His Person*. He will be the same, so that we shall be able to recognize Him as the Man of Nazareth, but O, how changed! Where now the carpenter's smock? Royalty has now assumed its purple. Where now the toil-worn feet that needed to be washed after their long journeys of mercy? They are sandaled with light, they “are like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace.” Where now the cry, “Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests but I, the Son of Man, have not where to lay My head”?

Heaven is His Throne. Earth is His footstool. Methinks in the night visions I behold the day dawning. And to the Son of Man there is given “dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should serve Him.” Ah, who would think to recognize in the weary Man and full of woes, the King eternal, immortal, invisible? Who would think that the humble Man, despised and rejected, was the seed corn out of which there should grow that full corn in the ear, Christ All-Glorious, before whom the angels veil their faces and cry, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth”?

He is the same but yet how changed! You that despised Him, will you despise Him now? Imagine the Judgment Day has come and let this vast audience represent the gathering of the last dreadful morning. Now you who despised His Cross, come forward and insult His Throne! Now you who said He was a mere man, come near and resist Him, while He proves Himself to be your Creator! Now, you who said, "We will not have this *man* to reign over us," say it now if you dare—repeat now, if you dare, your bold presumptuous defiance!

What? Are you silent? Do you turn your backs and flee? Verily, verily, so was it said of you of old. They that hate Him shall flee before Him. His enemies shall lick the dust. They shall cry to the rocks to cover them and to the hills to hide them from His face. How changed, I say, will He be in the appearance of His Person.

But the difference will be more apparent *in the treatment which He will then receive*. Alas, my Lord, Your reception on earth the first time was not such as would tempt You here again. "All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn. They thrust out the lip. They say, He trusted in God that He would deliver Him, let Him deliver Him if He delights in Him. I am become a reproach, the song of the drunkard, a byword and a proverb." "When we shall see Him, there is no beauty in Him that we should desire Him."

This was the world's opinion of God's Anointed. So they did salute Jehovah's Christ when He came the first time. Blind World, open your eyes while the thunderclaps of judgment make you start up in terror and amazement and look about you. This is the Man in whom you could see no beauty—dare you say the same of Him now? His eyes are like flames of fire and out of His mouth goes a two-edged sword. His head and His hair are white like wool, as white as snow, and His feet like much fine gold. How glorious now! How different, now, the world's opinion of Him!

Bad men weep and wail because of Him. Good men cry, "All hail! All hail! All hail!" They clap their hands and bow their heads and leap for joy. Around Him an innumerable company of angels wait—cherubim and seraphim with glowing wheels attend at His feet and ever unto Him they continually, continually, continually cry—Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts." Let us suppose again that the Judgment Day has come and let us challenge the world to treat the Savior as it did before.

Now, then, Crowds, come and drag Him down, to hurl Him from the hill, headlong! Step forward, you Pharisees, and tempt Him and try to entangle Him in His words. Herodians, have you no penny now, that you may ask Him a difficult question to entrap Him? What? Sadducees, have you no riddles left? Aha! Aha! Laugh at the Scribes and at the wise men—see how the wise Man of Nazareth has confounded them all! See how the Sufferer has put to nothing the persecutors! Come Judas, arch-traitor,

sell Him for thirty pieces of silver! Come and give Him another kiss and play the traitor over again!

Pilate, come forward and wash your hands in innocence and say, "I am clear of the blood of this just Person!" See to it, you fathers of the Sanhedrin, wake from your long slumbers, and say again, if you dare, "This man blasphemes." Smite Him on the cheek you soldiers, buffet Him again you praetorians. Set Him once more in the chair and spit in His face. Weave your crown of thorns and put it on His head and put the reed into His right hand. What? Have you not an old cloak to cast about His shoulders again? What? Have you no songs, no ribald jests, and is there not a man among you that dares, now, to pluck his hair?

No, see them, how they flee! Their loins are loosed. The shields of the mighty have been cast to the winds. Their courage has failed them. The brave Romans have turned cowards and the haughty bulls of Bashan have hastened away from their pastures. And now, you Jews, cry, "Away with Him," now let His blood be on you and on your children! Now come forward, you ribald crew and mock Him as you did upon the Cross. Point to His wounds, jeer at His nakedness—mock His thirst, revile His prayer—stand and thrust out your tongues and insult His agonies if you dare. You did it once! It is the same Person! Do it again!

But, no. They throw themselves upon their faces and there goes up from the assembled mass a wail such as earth never heard before—not even in the day when Mizraim's children felt the angel's sword and, weeping worse than it was ever known in Bochim. Hotter tears than Rachel shed when she would not be comforted for her children. Weep on! It is too late for your sorrow now. Oh, if there had been the tear of penitence before, there had not been the weeping of remorse, now. Oh, if there had been the glancing of the eye of faith, there had not been the blasting and the scorching of your eyes with horrors that shall utterly consume you. Christ comes, I say, to be treated very differently from the treatment He received before.

The difference appears once more in this. He *will come again for a very different purpose*. He came the first time with, "I delight to do Your will O God." He comes a second time to claim the reward and to divide the spoil with the strong. He came the first time with a sin-offering. That offering having been once made, there is no more sacrifice for sin. He comes the second time to administer righteousness. He was righteous at His first coming, but it was the righteousness of allegiance. He shall be righteous at His second coming with the righteousness of supremacy. He *came* to endure the penalty, He *comes* to procure the reward. He *came* to serve, He *comes* to rule.

He came to open wide the door of Divine Grace, He comes to shut the door. He comes not to redeem but to *judge*. Not to save but to pronounce the sentence. Not to weep while He invites, but to smile while He rewards. Not to tremble in heart while He proclaims Grace but to make others tremble while He proclaims their doom. Oh Jesus! How great the difference between Your first and Your second Advent!

III. I must now spend the few minutes that remain in ASKING A FEW QUESTIONS.

What has this to do with us? It has something to do with everyone of us, from the oldest bald-head here, down to that rosy child who is listening with eyes of wonder to the thought that Christ shall come and every eye shall see Him. There are many spectacles which only a few among the children of men can see but every eye shall see *Him*. Many of us may be gone from this earth before the next great display shall be seen in London, but every eye shall see Him. There may be some grand sights which you feel no interest in. You would not see them if you might, but you shall see Him.

You would not go to a place of worship to hear Him but you shall see Him. Perhaps you went up to the House of God sometimes, and when there, vowed you would never go again. Ah, but you will be there then, without a question as to your choice. And you will have to remain till the close, too, till He pronounces either the benediction or the malediction upon your heads. For every eye shall see Him. There is not one of us that will be absent on the day of Christ's appearing. We have all, then, an interest in it. Alas, it is a sorrowful thought that many will see Him to weep and to wail!

Will you be among that number? No, do not look around to your neighbor—will *you* be among that number? Alas for you! You will, if you never weep for sin on earth. If you do not weep for sin on earth you shall weep for it there. And, mark, if you do not fly to Christ and trust in Him *now*, you shall be obliged to fly *from* Him and be accursed of Him *then*. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha"—accursed with a curse!

Paul said that. In the name of the Church, by its most loving and tender Apostle, the soul is cursed that loves not Christ! Heaven on that day shall solemnly ratify the curse with an "Amen." And the Day of Judgment brings its thunders to roll in dreadful chorus the sound, "Amen. Let him be accursed if he loves not Christ." But there will be some there who, when Christ shall come, shall greatly rejoice to see Him. Will you be among *that* number? Will there be a crown for you? Will you share in that magnificent triumph? Will you make one of that royal court which shall delight to "see the King in His beauty" in "the land that is very far off"?

Sister, will you be among the daughters of Jerusalem who shall go forth to meet King Solomon with the crown his mother crowned Him in the day of His espousal? Brother, will you be among those who shall go forth to meet the King when He comes with, “Hosanna, blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord”? “I hope so,” says one. I hope so, too, but are you sure? “Well, I hope so.” Do not be content with having a *hope* unless you know it is a good hope through Divine Grace.

What do you say tonight—have you been born again? Have you passed from death to life? Are you a new creature in Christ Jesus? Has the Spirit of God had dealings with you? Have you been led to see the fallacy of all human trust? Have you been led to see that no good works of yours can ever fit you to reign with Christ? Have you been led to discard your righteousness as filthy rags? Soul, can you say tonight—

***“My faith does lay her hand
On that dear head of Yours.
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin”?***

Humbly, feebly, but still earnestly, can you say, “Christ is my All. He is all I desire on earth. He is all I need for Heaven”? If so, long for His appearing, for you shall see Him, and shall be glorified in Him. But beware if you cannot say that!

We are getting near to the end of the year. This is the last time I shall have the pleasure of addressing you this year. Oh that God may bring in more in the last week of the year than in all the weeks that have gone! It is possible. Nothing is too hard for God. It will certainly be so if God shall stir up your hearts, Brothers and Sisters, to pray for it. Are there not young men here who are not yet the followers of the Lamb? Oh, that tonight, even tonight, the Spirit of God may say in your heart, “Turn you! Turn you! Why will you die?” And oh, may you be made so uneasy that tonight you will not be able to give sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids till you have put your trust in Christ and He is yours!

Tomorrow probably you will hear the guns betokening the time when the ashes of the Prince are put into their resting place. May every gun be a sermon to you, and as you hear them booming, let this be its message—

***“Come to judgment,
Come to judgment, come away.”***

And may you be able to answer as you hear it,

***“Yes, blessed be God, I am
Not afraid to come to judgment, for
Bold shall I stand in that great day!
For who anything to my charge shall lay?
While, through Your blood, absolved I am,
From sin’s tremendous curse and shame?”***

Remember, salvation is by Christ. Not of works, nor of the will of man, nor of blood, nor birth. And this is the message which Christ bids us deliver, "Whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Oh, may you be led to call on His name by prayer and humble faith and you shall be saved. "Whosoever believes on Him is not condemned." Oh, may you believe on Him tonight if you never have done so before. Touch the hem of His garment, you with the bloody issue. Say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

You with the blind eye, say, "Lord save me, or I perish!" You who are ready to sink, cry out to Jesus! And the ready ears of Jesus and the ready hands of the Savior shall now hear and bless if the heart is ready, and if the soul is asking mercy. May God grant you the richest blessings of His Grace for Christ Jesus' sake. Amen.

Perhaps it would be improper in the pulpit to wish you "the compliments of the season," but I do wish you the blessing of God at all seasons, in season and out of season, and that is my blessing upon you tonight—that you may have the blessing of God living and His blessing dying—His blessing in His advent and His blessing at the Judgment. The Lord bless you more and more! May He give you a blessed Christmas and the happiest of New Years, and to Him shall be all the praise and the honor. Amen.

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“LO, I COME”—EXPOSITION

NO. 2202

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING. APRIL 26, 1891,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, My ears have You opened:
burnt offering and sin offering have You not required. Then said I,
Lo, I have come—in the volume of the Book it is written of Me—I
delight to do Your will, O My God: yes, Your Law is within My heart.”
Psalm 40:6-8.*

Explained to us by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 10:5-7—

*“Therefore when He came into the world, He said, Sacrifice
and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared
for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.
Then I said, Lo, I come—in the volume of the Book
it is written of Me—To do your will, O God.”*

WE have, in the use made of the passage by the inspired Apostle, sufficient authority for applying the quotation from the 40th Psalm to our Divine Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. With such a commentary, we are sure of our way and our whereabouts. We might have been perplexed as to its meaning had it not have been for this, although I think, even without the guidance of the New Testament passage, those who are familiar with Holy Writ would have felt that the words could not be fulfilled in David, but must belong to a greater than he, even to the Divine Messiah, who, in the fullness of time, would come into the world. We rejoice that the Lord Jesus, Himself, here speaks of Himself. Who but He can declare His own generation? Here He is both the subject of the Words and the Speaker. The Word is from Himself and of Himself and so we have double reason for devout attention. He tells us what He said long ago. He declares, “Then I said, Lo, I come.” Because He has come to us, we gladly come to Him, and now we reverently wait upon Him to hear what our Lord shall speak, for, doubtless, He will speak peace to us, and will cause us to learn, through His Spirit, the meaning of His Words. O Savior, say to each of our hearts, “Lo, I come”!

I. Without further preface, I call upon you to notice, first, THE SWEEPING AWAY OF THE SHADOW. “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire.. . burnt offering and sin offering have You not required.”

When the Son of God is born into the world, there is an end of all types by which He was formerly prefigured. The symbols end when the Truth, itself, is made fully manifest. The sacrifices of the Law had their times and place, their teaching and their influence. Blessed were those in Israel

whose spiritual minds saw beneath the outward sign and discerned the inward Truth of God! To them the sacrifices of the holy place were a standing means of fellowship with God. Day after day they saw the Great Propitiation as they beheld the morning and the evening lamb—so often as they looked upon a sacrifice, they beheld the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world! In the Paschal supper they were instructed, by the slaying of the unblemished victim, the roasting with fire, the sprinkling of the blood upon the door outside and the feasting upon the sacrifice within.

Spiritual men could have found in the rites and ceremonies of the old Law a very library of Gospel literature! But, alas, the people were carnal, sensual and unbelieving and, therefore, they often forgot, even, to celebrate the appointed sacrifices. The Passover, itself, ceased for long periods and when the festivals were maintained, there was no life or reality in them. After they had been chastened for their neglect and made to wander in exile because of the wandering of their hearts after their idols, they were restored from captivity and were led to keep the Ceremonial Law, but they did it as a heartless, meaningless formality—and thus missed all *spiritual* benefit—with the unlighted candle in their hand they blindly groped in the dark. They slew the sacrifices and presented their peace offerings, but the soul had gone out of the service and, at last, their God grew weary of their formal worship and said, “Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me.”

We read, “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? says the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When you come to appear before Me, who has required this at your hand, to tread my courts?” When once the life is gone out of the best symbolism, the Lord abhors the carcass and even a Divinely-ordained ritual becomes a species of idolatry! When the heart is gone out of the externals of worship, they are as shells without the kernel. Habitations without living tenants soon become desolations—and so do forms and ceremonies without their spiritual meaning. Toward the time of our Lord’s coming, the outward worship of Judaism became more and more dead—it was time that it was buried. It had decayed and waxed old and was ready to vanish away—and vanish away it did—for our Lord set aside the first, or old, that He might establish the second, or new. The stars were no longer seen with their twinkling, for the sun had risen!

The removal of these things was wholesale. We have four sorts of sacrifice mentioned here, but I need not go into details. Sacrifices in which blood was shed were abolished when the Son of God offered Himself without spot unto God. Bloodless offerings, such as fine flour, wine, oil, sweet cane bought with money and precious incense—which were tokens of gratitude and consecration—these, also, were no longer laid upon the altar. Both sacrifice and offering were not desired. And burnt offerings, which signified the delight of God in the great Sacrifice, were ended by the Lord’s actual acceptance of that Sacrifice, itself! Even the sin offering, which was burned outside the camp as a thing accursed, ceased altogether. It

represented sin laid upon the victim and the victim's being made a curse on that account. It might have seemed always useful as a reminder, for they were always sinning and always needing a sin offering, but even this was not required.

Nothing of the old Ceremonial Law was spared. Now we have no Ark of the Covenant, with its Shekinah light between the wings of the cherubim. Now we have no bronze laver, no table of showbread, no bronze altar and no sacred veil—the Holy of Holies, itself, is gone! Tabernacle and Temple are both removed. “Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall men worship the Father.” But the time is come when “they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” A clean sweep has been made of all the ancient rites, from circumcision up to the garment with its fringe of blue. These were for the childhood of the Church, the pictures of her first schoolbooks! But we are no longer minors and we have Divine Grace given us to read with opened eyes that everlasting classic of “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Now has the brightness of the former dispensation been quite eclipsed by the Glory which excels.

As these outward things vanish, they go away with God's mark of non-esteem upon them—*they are such things as He did not desire*. “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire.” The Lord God had no desire for matters so trivial and unsatisfactory. They were good for the people, to instruct them—if they had been willing to learn—but they fulfilled no desire of the heart of God. He says, “Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?” By the Prophet Micah, He asks, “Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil.” These furnish no delight for the Great Spirit and give no pleasure to the thrice holy Jehovah! The formal worshipper supposed that his offerings were, in and of themselves, pleasing to God and, therefore, brought his “burnt offerings, with calves of a year old.” So far as they believingly understood the meaning of a sacrifice and presented it in faith, their offerings were acceptable, but in themselves considered, these were far from being what the Lord desired.

He that fills Heaven and earth says, “I will not reprove you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings, to have been continually before Me. I will take no bullock out of your house, nor he-goats out of your folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you: for the world is Mine, and the fullness thereof.” The spiritual, the infinite, the almighty Jehovah could not desire merely outward ritual, however it might appear glorious to men! The sweetest music is not for His ears, nor the most splendid roses of priests for His eyes. He desired something infinitely more precious than these—and He puts them away with this note of dissatisfaction.

And more, these sacrifices passed away with the mark upon them that *they were not what God required*. “Burnt offering and sin offering have You not required.” What did God require of man? Obedience. He said by Samuel, “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.” He says in another place, “He has showed you, O man, what is

good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” The requirement of the Law was love to God and love to men. This has always been God’s great requirement. He seeks spiritual worship, obedient thought, holy living, grateful praise, devout prayer—these are the requirements of the Creator and Benefactor of men. Ritualistic matters were so far required as they might minister to the good of the people and, while they stood, they could not neglect them without loss. But they were not the grand requirement of a just and holy God and, therefore, men might fulfill these without stint or omission, and yet God would not have of them what He required. “Yes,” He asks, “who has required this at your hand, to tread My courts?” To see His Law magnified, His justice vindicated, His sovereignty acknowledged and His holiness imitated, is more to His mind! Absolute conformity to the standard of moral and spiritual rectitude which He has set up is His demand—and He can be content with nothing less. These things are not found in sacrifice and offering, neither do they always go therewith and, therefore, the outward sacrifice was not what God required.

They were so to be put away as never to be followed by the same kind of things. Shadows are not replaced by other shadows! The ceremonials of Aaron are not to be followed by another set of carnal ordinances! There are some who seem to think that they are to be so. Instead of Aaron, whom God ordained, we have a so-called priesthood among us at this day, claiming an Apostolic succession, which is impossible if they are priests, since no Apostle was a priest! Instead of rites which God has ordained, we have rites of man’s invention! The blessed ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, such as Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, have been prostituted from their instructive and memorial intent into a kind of witchcraft, so that by what is called, “baptism,” children are said to be born again and made members of Christ and children of God! While in the second, or what they call, “Holy Communion,” the sacrifice of Christ is profanely said to be repeated or continued, even in the unbloody sacrifice of the “mass.”

Ah, Friends! Our Lord did not put away that grand, magnificent system of Mosaic rites to introduce the masquerade in which Rome delights, which certain Anglicans would set up among us! No, no! We have done with the symbolic system and have now but the two outward ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which are meant only for Believers who know what it is to be buried with Christ and to feed on Him. You have no right to bring in your own forms and ceremonies and place them in the Church of Christ. Beyond what God has ordained, we may not dare to go—and even in those things we may not rest as though there were anything in them of their own operation apart from their sacred teaching! These are instructive to you if you have a mind to be instructed—and if you know the Truths of God which they set forth. But do not imagine that men have come under another kind of ceremonialism, another system of ritual and rubric, for it is not so. The rites appropriate to priests are abolished with the Aaronic priesthood and can never be restored—“He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.” When He comes into the world, these carnal ordinances must go out of the world! Sacrifice and

offering, burnt offering and sin offering and all other patterns of heavenly things are swept away when the heavenly things, themselves, appear!

II. Thus much upon the shadows being swept away. And now, secondly, let us view THE REVELATION OF THE SUBSTANCE. We find the Son of God, Himself, appearing. We read here and we hear Him say—“My ears have you opened.” The Lord Himself comes, even He who is all that these things foreshadowed!

When He comes, He has a prepared ear. The margin has it, “My ears have you digged.” Our ears often need digging, for they are blocked up by sin. The passage to the heart seems to be sealed in the case of fallen man. But when the Savior came, His ears were not as ours, but were attentive to the Divine voice. He says, “He wakens My ears to hear as they that are taught. The Lord God has opened My ears, and I was not rebellious.” Our Lord was quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord. He knew what the will of the Lord was and He could say, “I do always the thing that pleases Him.” As Man, He had a Divine instinct of holiness which made Him to know and love the Father’s will—and caused Him always to translate that will into His own life.

You see He came with opened ears and some think that we have here an allusion to the boring of the ear in the case of the servant who had a right to liberty, but refused to quit his servitude because he loved his master and wished to remain with him forever. It is not certain that there is any such reference, but it is certain that our Lord was bound forever to the service which He had undertaken for His Father—and that He would not go back from it. He pledged Himself to redeem us and He set His face like a flint to do it. He loved His Father and He loved His chosen so much that He vowed to execute the Father’s work, even to what I might call, “the bitter end,” if I did not know that it was a sweet and blessed end to Him. His ears were prepared for His service!

But *our Lord came also with a prepared body.* Therefore the Apostle Paul, when He quoted this passage, probably taking the words from the Septuagint translation, writes, “A body have You prepared Me.” You will wonder how, in one passage, it should speak of the ears and the next should speak of the body, and yet there is small difference in the sense. We do not think of an ear without a body—that would be a sorry business. The reading in the Hebrews is involved in the text as it stands in the Psalm. If the ear is there, a body is there—you cannot even dream of an ear hearing if separate from the rest of the body! The Apostle gives us the sense of the text rather than the words and, at the same time, dealing as He was with Jews by whom the Septuagint was prized, He quoted from the version which they would be sure to acknowledge—and very properly and wisely so—because that version was perfectly accurate as to the meaning of the Hebrew. Regardless, he was inspired to read it—“A body have You prepared Me.” There was fashioned by the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the blessed Virgin, a body fit to embody the Son of God. Worked mysteriously, by means into which we must not inquire—for what God has veiled must remain covered—that body was suited to set forth the great mystery, “God manifest in the flesh.”

The whole body of Christ was prepared for Him and for His great work. To begin with, it was a sinless body, without taint of original sin, otherwise God could not have dwelt in it. It was a body made highly vital and sensitive, probably far beyond what ours are, for sin has a blunting and hardening effect even upon flesh, and His flesh, though it was in the “likeness of sinful flesh,” was not sinful flesh, but flesh which yielded prompt obedience to His spirit, even as His whole human Nature was obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. His body was capable of great endurance, so as to know the griefs and agonies and unspeakable sorrows of a delicate, holy and tender kind which it was necessary for Him to bear. “A body have You prepared Me.” In the fullness of time He came into that body, which was admirably adapted to enshrine the Godhead. Wondrous mystery, that the Infant of Bethlehem should be linked with the Infinite! And that the weary Man by the shores of Galilee should be very God of very God, revealed in a body prepared for Him! “A body have You prepared Me”—He had prepared ears and a prepared body.

He who assumed that body was existent before that body was prepared. He says, “A body have You prepared Me. Lo, I come.” He from old eternity dwelt with God—the Word was in the beginning with God—and the Word was God. We could not, any one of us, have said that a body was prepared for us and, therefore, we would come to it, for we had had no existence before our bodies were fashioned! From everlasting to everlasting our Lord is God and He comes out of eternity into time—the Father bringing Him into the world. He was before all worlds and was before He came into the world to dwell in His prepared body!

Beloved, *the human Nature of Christ was taken on Him in order that He might be able to do for us that which God desired and required.* God desired to see an obedient man, a man who would keep His Law to the fullest—and He sees Him in Christ. God desired to see One who would vindicate the eternal justice and show that sin is no trifle. And, behold, our Lord, the eternal Son of God, entering into that prepared body, was ready to do all this mighty work by rendering to the Law a full recompense for our dishonor of it! An absolutely perfect righteousness He renders unto God—as the second Adam, He presents it for all whom He represents. He bows His head, a victim beneath Jehovah’s sword, that the Truth, justice and honor of God might suffer no detriment. His body was prepared to this end. Incarnation is a means to Atonement. Only a man could vindicate the Law and, therefore, the Son of God became a Man. This is a wonderful Being, this God in our nature. “Emmanuel” is a glorious word! Surely, for the Incarnation and the Atonement, the world was made from the first!

Was this the reason why the morning stars sang together when they saw the cornerstone of the world, because they had an inkling that here, God would be manifest as nowhere else, and the Creator would be wedded to the creature? That God might be manifested in the Christ, it may even be that sin was permitted. Assuredly, there could have been no Sacrifice on Calvary if there had not, first of all, been sin in Eden. The whole scheme—the whole of God’s decrees and acts—worked up to an atoning

Savior! Of the pyramid of creation and of Providence, Christ is the apex—He is the flower of all that God has made! His Divine Nature in strange union with humanity constitutes a peerless Person, such as never was before, and can never be again! God in our nature, one Being, and yet wearing two Natures, is altogether unique. He says, “A body have You prepared Me. Lo, I come.” Think of this—it is a Truth of God more fit for meditation than for sermonizing. The Lord give us to know it well by faith!

III. But now, thirdly, I call your attention to THE DECLARATION OF THE CHRIST made in the text—“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire. Then said I, Lo, I come.” Observe *when* He says this. *It is in the time of failure.* All the sacrifices had failed. The candle flickered and was dying out. And then the great Light of God arose, even the Eternal Light and, like a trumpet, the words rung out, “Lo, I come.” All this has been of no avail; now I come. It is in the time of failure that Christ always appears. The last of man is the first of God and when we have come to the end of all our power and hope, then the Eternal Power and Godhead appears with its, “Lo, I come.”

When our Lord comes, *it is with the view of filling up the vacuum* which had now been sorrowfully seen. God does not desire these things. God does not require these things, but He does desire and He does require something better, and lo, the Christ has come to bring that something! That awful gap which was seen in human hope when Moses had passed away and the Aaronic priesthood and all the ordinances of it were gone, Christ was born to fill! It looked as if the light of ages had been quenched, and God’s glorious revelation had been forever withdrawn. And then, in the dark hour, Jesus cries, “Lo, I come!” He fills the blank abyss! He gives to man in reality what he had lost in the shadow!

When He appears, it is as the personal Lord. Lay the stress upon the pronoun, “Lo, I come.” The infinite *Ego* appears. “Lo, I come.” No mere man could talk thus, and be sane! No servant or Prophet of God would ever say, “Lo, I come.” Saintly men talk not so. God’s Prophets and Apostles have a modest sense of their true position—they never magnify themselves, though they magnify their office. It is for God to say, “Lo, I come.” He who says it takes the body prepared for Him and comes in His own proper personality as the I AM. “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” He comes forth from the ivory palaces to inhabit the tents of manhood! He takes upon Himself the body prepared for Him of the Lord God and He stands forth in His matchless personality ready to do the will of God! “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” Everything is stored up in His blessed Person and we are complete in Him.

Observe the joyful avowal that He makes—“Lo, I come.” This is no dirge—I think I hear a silver trumpet ring out—“Lo, I come.” Here is a joyful alacrity and intense eagerness! The coming of the Savior was to Him a thing of exceeding willingness. “For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame.”

He comes with a word calling attention to it, for He is not ashamed to be made partaker of our flesh. “Lo,” He says, “I come. Behold, behold, I come.” This is no clandestine union. He bids Heaven behold Him come in-

to our Nature! Earth is bid to gaze upon it. O you sinners, listen to this inviting, “Lo!” Others have cried to you, “Lo, here!” And, “Lo, there.” But Jesus looks on you and cries, “Lo, I come.” Look here—turn all your thoughts this way and behold your God in your Nature ready to save you! Verily, the Incarnate God is a subject meet for the loftiest thoughts of sages and for the lowliest thoughts of children. Blessed are the children of Grace who can sit at the feet of the Incarnate God and look up, forgetting all the wisdom of the Greeks and all the sign-seeking of the Jews in the satisfaction which they find in Jesus!

I think, too, *I hear in this declaration of the coming One, a note of finality.* He takes away the sacrifice from Aaron’s altar, but He says, “Lo, I come.” There is the end of it. “Lo, I come.” Is there anything after this? Can anything supersede this—“Lo, I come”? “Lo, I come” has been the perpetual music of the ages! Read it, “Lo, I am come”—for it is in the present tense and how sweet the sound! Christ is come and joy with Him! Read it, as well, in the future, if you will, “Lo, I come,” for He comes “the second time without sin unto salvation”—here is our chief hope! “Lo, I come.” He, Himself, is the last Word of God. “In the beginning was the Word” and so He was God’s first Word. But He is the end as well as the beginning—God’s last Word to man—Christ is God’s ultimatum! Look for no new Revelation—“Lo, I am come,” shines on forever. Do not ask, “Are You He that should come, or do we look for another?” He has come! Look for no other! Behold, He came to give what God desires, what God requires—what more would you have? Let Him be all your salvation and all your desire. Let Him be “the desire of all nations.” He is the fulfillment of all the requirements of the human race as well as the full amount of what God requires.

IV. Next, I beg you to note THE REFERENCE TO PRECEDING WRITINGS. He says, “Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me.” If I preached from the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, I might fairly declare that in *the whole volume of Holy Scripture* much is written of our Lord and prescribed for Him as Messiah. The pages of Inspiration are fragrant with the name of Jesus. He is the top line of the entire volume and in the Greek Word I see a half allusion to this. He is the headline of contents to every chapter of Scripture. He is, of all Scripture, the Sum. “In the beginning was the Word.” Everything speaks of Him. The Pentateuch and the books of the Prophets, the Psalms, and the Gospels and the Epistles all speak of Him. “In the volume of the Book it is written of Me.”

Preaching as I am from the Psalms, I cannot take so long a range. I must look back and find what was written in David’s day and *certainly within the Pentateuch.* And where do I find it written concerning His coming? The Pentateuch drips with prophecies of Christ as a honeycomb overflowing with its honey. Chiefly is He to be found in the head and front of the book—as early as the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis, when Adam and Eve had sinned and we were lost—behold, He is spoken of in the volume of the Book in these terms. “The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” So, early was it written that the Redeemer would be born in our nature to vanquish our foe.

But I confess I do not feel shut out from another interpretation. I conceive that our Lord, here, refers to another Book, *the Book of the Divine purposes*, the volume of the Eternal Covenant. There was a time before all time, when there was no day but the Ancient of Days—when all that existed was the Lord, who is All in All—then the sacred Three entered into Covenant, in mutual agreement, for a sublime end. Man sinning, the Son of God shall be the Surety. Christ shall bear the result of man’s offense. He shall vindicate the Law of God and make Jehovah’s name more glorious than ever it has been! The Second Person of the Divine Unity was pledged to come and take up the nature of men, and so become the First-Born among many Brothers and Sisters to lift up a fallen race, and to save a number that no man can number, elect of God the Father, and given to the Son to be His heritage, His portion, His bride.

Then did the Well-Beloved strike hands with the Eternal God and enter into Covenant engagements on our behalf— “In the volume of the Book it is written.” That sealed Book, upon whose secrets no angel’s eyes have looked, a Book written by the finger of God long before He wrote the Book of the Law upon tables of stone! That Book of God may be spoken of in the Psalm, “And in Your Book all My members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” Our Lord came to carry out all His suretyship engagements—His work is the exact fulfillment of His engagements recorded in the Everlasting Covenant, “ordered in all things and sure.” He acts out every mysterious line and syllable, even to the fullest. Then He said, “A body have You prepared Me. Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me.” It is always a pleasing study to see our Lord, both in the written Word, and in the Everlasting Covenant of Grace.

V. I must close with the fifth point, THE DELIGHT OF HIM THAT COMES. He said, “Lo, I come.” As I have already told you, there is wonderful delight in that exclamation—“Lo, I come.” But lest we should mistake our Lord, He adds, “I delight to do Your will, O My God: yes, Your Law is within My heart.” There can be no denial of His joy in His service!

Note well that *He came in compete subservience to His Father, God.* “I delight to do”—what? “Your will.” His own will was absorbed in the Divine will! His pleasure it was to say, “Not as I will, but as You will.” It was His meat and His drink to do the will of Him that sent Him and to finish His work. Though He was Lord and God, He became a lowly servant for our sakes! Though high as the highest, He stooped low as the lowest! The King of Kings was the Servant of Servants, that He might save His people! He took upon Him the form of a Servant, girded Himself and stood obediently at His Father’s call.

He had a prospective delight as to His work. Before He came, He delighted in the thought of His Incarnation. The Supreme Wisdom says, “My delights were with the sons of men.” Happy in His Father’s courts, He yet looked forward to an access of happiness in becoming Man. “Can that be?” asks one. Could the Son of God be happier than He was? As God, He was infinitely blessed, but He knew nothing by experience of the life of man—and into that sphere He desired to enter. To the Godhead there can

be no enlargement, for it is infinite, but still, there can be an addition—our Lord was to add the nature of man to that of God! He would live as Man, suffer as Man, and triumph as Man—and yet remain God! And to this He looked forward with a strange delight, inexplicable except upon the knowledge of the great love He bore to us. He had given His heart so entirely to His dear bride, whom He saw in the glass of predestination, that for her He would endure all things—

**“Yes, says the Lord, for her I’ll go
Through all the depths of care and woe,
And on the Cross will even dare
The bitter pangs of death to bear.”**

It was wondrous love! Our Lord’s love surpasses all language and even thought. I am talking prodigies and miracles at every word I utter. It was delightful to our Lord to come here!

“What did He delight in?” asks one. Evidently He delighted in God’s *Law*. “Your Law is within My heart.” He resolved that the beauties of the Law of the Lord should be displayed by being embodied in His own life and that its claims should be vindicated by His own death. To achieve this, He delighted to come and keep it and honor it by an obedience both active and passive. He also delighted in God’s will and that is somewhat more, for law is the expression of will and this may be altered. But the will of the great King never changes. Our Lord delighted to carry out all the purposes and desires of the Most High God. He so delighted in the will of God that He came to do it and to bear it, “by which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

He delighted also in *God*. He took an intense delight in glorifying the Father. He came to reveal the Father and make Him to be beloved of men. He did all things to please God. Moreover, He took a delight in *us* and here, though the object of His love is less, the love, itself, is heightened by the conspicuous condescension. The Lord Jesus took a deep delight in His people, whose names were written on His heart and engraved on the palms of His hands. His heart was fixed on their redemption and, therefore, He would present Himself as a Sacrifice on their behalf. The people whom the Father gave Him from before the foundation of the world lay on His very soul—for them He had a baptism to be baptized with, and He was straitened till it was accomplished. He gave Himself no rest till He had left both joy and rest to ransom His own.

May I go a step further and say that *He had an actual delight in His coming among men?* “I delight to do Your will, O My God”—not merely to *think* of doing it. When our Lord was here, He was the most blessed of men! Are you amazed? Do you remind me that He was “a Man of Sorrows”? I grant you that none was more afflicted, but I still stand to it, that within Him dwelt a joy of the highest order. To Him it was joy to be in sorrow—and honor to be put to shame. Do you think that lightens our estimate of His self-denial and disinterestedness? No, it adds weight to it! Some people fancy that there is no credit in doing a thing unless you are miserable in doing it. No, Brothers and Sisters, that is the very reverse! Obedience which is unwillingly offered and causes no joy in the soul is not acceptable. We must serve God with our *heart*, or we do not serve Him.

Obedience rendered without delight in rendering it is only half obedience! You shall say what you will about the greatness of my Lord’s agonies. You shall never go too far in your estimate of His unfathomable grief, but going with you to the fullest in it all, I shall still take liberty to say that He had within Himself a fountain of joy which enabled Him to endure the Cross and even to despise the shame! Blessed among men was He, even when He was made a curse for us! With delight He gave Himself for us and made a cheerful surrender of Himself, that He might be the Ransom for many. The text is express upon that fact.

And all this because *our Lord came with such intense heartiness*. He says, “Yes, Your Law is within My heart.” Our Lord is most thorough in all that He does. His work is never slovenly, nor in a half-hearted way. He does not even sit on the well and talk to a poor woman, but what His heart is there. He does not go into a fisherman’s hut, but what His heart is there and He heals the sick one. He does not sit down to supper with His followers, but what His heart is there and He reveals His love. I wish we were always at home when the Lord calls for us! Sometimes we are all abroad and our heart is away from the service of our Father—but He loved the Lord with all His heart, mind and strength. For us He gave His whole being, rejoicing to redeem us! He was always intense. Whether He preached or practiced, Jesus was all there and always there. Hence His delight, for what a man does with his heart he delights to do. These two sentences are melodious of joy to my ears! “I delight to do Your will, O My God: yes, Your Law is within My heart.”

Hear this one other word. It is all done *now*. Jesus has fulfilled the Father’s will in the salvation in the midst of His ransomed ones. And shall I tell you, *need* I tell you, what must be the delight, *the heavenly Joy of our Lord, now that the work is finished?* He is now the focus, the center, the source of bliss! What must be His own delight? We often say of the angels that they rejoice over one sinner that repents. I doubt not that they do, but the Bible does not say so. The Bible says, “There is joy in the *presence* of the angels of God over one sinner that repents.” What does it mean, “the presence of the angels”? Why, that the angels *see the joy of Christ* when sinners repent! Hear them say to one another, “Behold the Father’s face! How He rejoices! Gaze on the Countenance of the Son! What a Heaven of delight shines in those eyes of His! Jesus wept for these sinners, but now He rejoices over them! How resplendent are the nail-prints today, for the redeemed of the Lord’s death are believing and repenting! That blessed Countenance which is always as a sun, shines in the fullness of its strength now that He sees of the travail of His soul.” He who suffered feels a joy unsearchable—

***“The first-born sons of light
Desire in vain its depths to see:
They cannot read the mystery—
The length, the breadth, the height.”***

Oh, the joy of triumphant love! The joy of the Crucified, whose prepared body is the body of His Glory as once it was the body of His humiliation! In that Manhood He still rejoices and delights to do the will of the Father.

My time has fled and yet I am expected to say something about missions. What shall I say? My Brothers, Sisters—all of you—do you know anything about the Truths of God I have spoken? Then go and tell the heathen that the Lord is come! Here is a message worth the telling! Mary Magdalene and the other Marys hasten to tell the disciples that the Lord had risen—will you not go and tell them that He has come down to save? “Lo, I come,” He says. Will you not take up His Words and go to the people who have never heard of Him and say, “Lo, He has come”? Tell the Ethiopians, the Chinese, the Hindus and all the islands of the sea, that God has come here to save men and has taken a prepared body, that He might give to God all He required and all that He desired, that sinful men might be accepted in the Beloved, with whom God the Father is well pleased!

Go, and take to the heathen this sacred Book. “In the volume of the Book it is written of Him.” Do not begin to doubt the Book, yourself. Why should you send missionaries to teach them about a Book in which you do not, yourself, believe? Tell the nations that, “In the volume of the Book it is written of Him.” Believe this Book and spread it! Help Bible Societies and all such efforts. And aid Missionary Societies which carry the Book and proclaim the Savior! The men of the Book of God are the men of God such as the world needs. Bid such men go and open the Book of God and teach the nations its blessed news!

Go, dear Friends, and assure the heathen that there is happiness in obedience to God. So the Savior found it. He delighted in God’s will, even to the death! And they will also know delight, as in their measures they bow before the authority of the Word and the will of the one living and true God, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. Jehovah, the I AM, must be worshipped, for beside Him there is none else. Give glory unto God, whom our Lord Jesus has come to glorify. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 40.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—383, 271, 229.**

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

THE FIRST AND THE SECOND

NO. 2698

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, OCTOBER 28, 1900.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 9, 1881.

“He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.”
Hebrews 10:9.

THE way of God with men is to go from good to better and from better to best. In the creation, “the evening and the morning were the first day.” “And the evening and the morning were the second day.” And so on to the sixth day. God often gives us darkness before He gives us light and He gives us some measure of light in the rising sun before He gives us the full glory of noontide. And this, I suppose, is not because God needs any such rule for Himself. He can give the best, first, if He so chooses, but I imagine that this arrangement is necessary because of our infirmity. It would never do for weak eyes to have the full light of the sun pouring down upon them. Often, when men are faint, and nearly dying of hunger, they would be killed outright if strong meat were at once set before them—they must be gently fed as they are able to bear it. So God, knowing the feebleness of His creatures and especially the feebleness of His sinful creatures, is pleased to bestow His mercies with great wisdom and prudence. Little by little, first a very little, it may be, and then rather more, and then still more, and then much more, and then most of all until He does exceedingly abound in mercy towards us according to the riches of His Grace.

It often happens that the lesser blessing is a sort of preparatory school before the greater favor. The Law of Moses acted as an education for men to prepare them to receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The types and shadows of the twilight of the tabernacle and temple services helped men, by-and-by, to appreciate the substance when the True Light began to shine among the sons of men. We have need to be continually educated and trained for that which lies before us. We are not fit to enter even Heaven, itself, until we have learned something of the heavenly things here below. There is a first in order that there be a second—and the first has to be taken away, when it has fulfilled its design, in order that we then may enter upon the second. Some lower good precedes the higher and when the lower good has educated us for the higher, then it is removed, and the greater blessing fills its place, even as it says in our text, “He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.” I am

going to sever these two sentences from their connection, just for the time being, because they seem to me to contain a valuable general principle which may be used for comfort and instruction in many ways.

I. I shall ask you to notice, first, THE GRAND INSTANCE of this rule given in the chapter from which our text is taken, the instance which was the occasion of the utterance of the rule. "He takes away the first," that is, the sacrifices and offerings of the Ceremonial Law. "He takes away the first," that is, the blood of bulls and of goats—"that He may establish the second," which second is Christ, Himself, the one effectual Propitiation for sin, the great Burnt-Offering which the Lord accepts and by which He is reconciled to all who trust in it.

The taking away of "the first" involved *the removal of instructive and consoling ordinances*. Let us never forget that "the first" was given for the wisest possible purposes and was, itself, exceedingly useful. God forbid that we should ever find fault with the first dispensation, for it was the means of great comfort and of much instruction to the people of God who lived under it. Though it was, in itself, little better than a piece of glass, yet the Old Testament Believers saw much through it. Those of them who had clear vision saw the same Christ through it whom we, by faith, see at this day. So that window was to them a very precious thing because of the future Glory which they were able to see through it. I can understand how David enjoyed the ceremonies of the holy place in his day and how, when he was obliged to be absent, he longed once more to stand within the tabernacles of God and envied the very sparrows and swallows that could fly or build their nests around the courts of the Lord's House! I can realize how earnestly he desired to stand again and see the priests presenting the holy offerings before the shrine of the Most High. And I can easily comprehend that to tell him that all these observances were to be put away, would give him some cause for disquietude—but when he understood that they were to be removed in order that a second, and a better dispensation should be established in their place, then his disquietude would altogether cease!

Brothers and Sisters, we ought, this day, to be far more happy than the Jews ever were when God had accepted their richest sacrifices, for what, after all, were holocausts of bullocks, what were thousands upon thousands of lambs compared with the only-begotten Son of God who has sacrificed Himself on our behalf? Of what use were all the rivers of blood that were shed and the seas of oil that were poured out? What comfort could they bring to Jewish Believers compared with that which we derive from the flowing wounds of the Christ of Calvary and from the fact that He who suffered on the Cross, that He who was dead and buried, has risen again, and gone back into Glory and is there pleading, on our behalf, the merit of His one finished, perfect Sacrifice? Yes, Beloved, let "the first" go! We need not drop a single tear over its departure, seeing that "the second," which is established in its place, is so infinitely superior to it!

Many Jewish Believers tried, as long as they could, to keep some relic of the old dispensation. For many a year they sought at least to teach that converts to Christianity must be circumcised. But they gradually learned that with the coming of Christ—rather, through His death—the old dispensation was all taken away. Every fragment of it is gone and, if we are wise, we shall say, “Let it go. Why should we seek to preserve it? Why should we keep that which is dead, now that the ever-living One has come and dwells among us? So, let ‘the first’ go, and let ‘the second’ be established.”

I want, dear Friends, to urge all of you to come to this decision very emphatically. I beseech you never to try to bring back “the first.” I do not suppose you will ever literally imitate the Jews and offer the sacrifices enjoined under the Ceremonial Law, but there is, in certain quarters, an attempt to bring back portions of it—ill-formed, broken bones of that which has long since been dead. For instance, when men insist that such an unscriptural ceremony as *infant sprinkling* is necessary to salvation, and that another man-made rite must be performed or else Grace will not come to us—if we yield to their pretensions for a single moment, we shall be putting ourselves under the bondage of a ceremonial law which has not even the authority which the Law given by Moses had! The two ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper which Christ has left us are blessed means of instruction and comfort to living men and living women, but they are *not* saving ordinances! And he who tries to make them so, in any measure whatever, is to that extent seeking to bring back “the first” dispensation, which God has forever abolished! He is also endeavoring to disestablish “the second” dispensation. As far as he can, he is overthrowing it. But Christ will not share with rites and ceremonies, the glory of our salvation. We are either saved by Grace through faith, or else by the works and ceremonies of the Law—there can be no mingling of the two, for they are diametrically opposed to each other! There must be a clean taking away of “the first” that there may be an establishing of “the second.”

Then I want you, next, to take care that you regard “the second” as being really established, that is to say that there has been offered one great Sacrifice for sin, and that Christ’s Sacrifice has put away sin and has put it away once and for all. This is *the establishment of the real, perfect, everlasting Atonement*. Now, Christian people, you do believe this as a matter of doctrine, but have you truly appropriated all the blessedness of it? Do you know that your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake? That an Atonement has been presented for you by which you are so effectually purged from guilt that you will never need to bring any other purgation, or to look for any other atonement? Do you really regard yourself as one who will never have to offer another sacrifice for sin because your conscience is already completely purged and you are clean every whit? I know that some professors do not like Kent’s verse, but I like it, for I quite agree with him when he says—

“Here’s pardon full for sin that’s past,

***It matters not how black its cast;
And, O my Soul, with wonder view,
For sins to come, here's pardon, too!"***

The Christ who died on Calvary's Cross will not have to die again for my new sins, or to offer a fresh Atonement for any transgressions that I may yet commit. No, but once and for all, gathering up the whole mass of His people's sins into one colossal burden, He took it upon His shoulders and flung the whole of it into the sepulcher wherein once He slept—and there it is buried, never to be raised again to bear witness against the redeemed anymore, forever. Regard Christ's Sacrifice, then, as firmly established and, having been once offered, never to be repeated—that one offering having completed the redemption of all the blood-bought throng—and so finishing the great work that nothing needs to be added to it!

II. Now, secondly, I want to give you SOME HISTORICAL INSTANCES in which the same rule has been carried out. I must speak very briefly upon each point, so try to catch the words as they fly.

First, *God took away the earthly paradise, but He has given us Christ and Heaven.* God gave to man, originally, perfect happiness. In the Garden of Eden there were all manner of delights. And under the Covenant made with our first father, all of these would have been ours if he had persevered in obedience. But Adam sinned and so the Covenant of Works was broken. He fell, and we fell in him and, therefore, paradise was taken away from him and from us. There is no hope of our ever going through the gate of that garden. Even if it had remained perfect and we could find it, we would see there the cherubim with a flaming sword turning every way to keep us out of the garden. Why have you taken away this paradise, Lord? The Apostle here gives us the answer to our question, "He takes away the first, that He may establish the second," for, now, as many as believe in Jesus are brought into another and a better Paradise. They are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation and there is prepared for them a place of joy and delight compared with which the bliss of Eden shall not even be mentioned—neither shall that earthly paradise be brought to mind or be spoken of anymore.

Next, *the first man has failed, but behold the second Man, the Lord from Heaven,* and see again the meaning of our text, "He takes away the first, that He may establish the second." There was a man in that first paradise—he was the first man, Adam, and you and I were representatively in him, for he was the federal head of the human race. But he fell and he was taken away. Do we regret this and mourn over it as though it were an irreparable calamity? By no means, for the Lord has taken away the first man, Adam, that He may establish the second Man, the Lord Jesus Christ! Concerning these two, the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second Man is the Lord from Heaven." The first man ruined us, but we now have the second Man, who heads up His people, having become their federal Representative—and in Him they are saved beyond all fear of falling.

“He takes away the first, that He may establish the second,” is illustrated again in the case of *Adam and Noah*. Adam was not only the federal head of the human race, but he was also its first father and founder. But, although God took away our first father, He gave the race a second father, even Noah, from whom we have all sprung as much as from the loins of Adam. Now Adam’s safety depended upon the perfection of a creature, the obedience of a human being—but Noah’s safety lay in a figurative death, burial and resurrection—he went into the ark and died to that old world in which he had lived so long. Inside that ark, as in a coffin, he was buried beneath the descending floods, and he was floated into a new world, to be the father of a race that should live through his death, burial and resurrection. As the Apostle Peter says, “The like figure whereunto even baptism does also now save us”—not that baptism saves us, but it is another figure of how we are saved by death, burial and resurrection, as Peter goes on to say, “not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ: who is gone into Heaven, and is at the right hand of God.” “He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.”

Father Adam was taken away, but Father Noah was given to be the new head of the race, and to him the Lord said, “This is the token of the Covenant which I make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a Covenant between Me and the earth.” That second Covenant, which God made with Noah, is infinitely more secure than the first Covenant which was broken by Adam.

Brothers and Sisters, there is another great historical instance of the rule mentioned in our text in the case of *the Covenants made with the literal and the spiritual Israel*. There was a first Covenant to which the Israelites gave their consent soon after they came out of Egypt. That was a Covenant of Works and when Moses rehearsed in the ears of the people the terms of that Covenant, “All the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord has spoken we will do.” Yet they soon forgot their solemn promise. You remember how the Commandments were “written with the finger of God” upon “two tablets of testimony, tablets of stone.” But when the people turned aside to worship the golden calf which Aaron had made, we read concerning Moses, “it came to pass, as soon as he came near unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses anger waxed hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands, and broke them beneath the mount.” In God’s great long-suffering, the Commandments were given a second time, though Moses, and not God, wrote on the second tablets of stone and they were put away for safety into the golden ark, above which was placed the Mercy Seat of pure gold. This was another symbolical illustration of our text—“He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.”

The Law in the hand of Moses is broken that we may have the Law of Christ in the heart hidden away under the sacred covering of Divine Mercy in the Holy Place of the tabernacle of the Most High. The first

Covenant of, “Do this, and you shall live,” is taken away, that God may establish the second, which is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” The first Covenant, because it waxed old, has passed away. And now God has established a second Covenant, the Covenant of Grace—“They shall be My people, and I will be their God: and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an Everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me.”

Thus I might keep on showing you how, all the way along in history, there has been a first, and then there has been a second, as there was in the case of the Temple at Jerusalem. Solomon built the first Temple, but God permitted that to be taken away that He might establish that second Temple into which Christ came, and so made the Glory of the latter house to be greater than that of the former one. All history seems to me to say, “This is God’s usual method of procedure—to give the dim twilight first, and then to follow it with the full glory of the noontide brightness.” We must, therefore, expect that it will be so in our time.

III. But, now, leaving history in general, I come to your own individual history, so as to give you SOME INSTANCES IN YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE of the working of this rule—“He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.”

First, this is true of our *own righteousness and Christ’s*. I shall speak of myself because, then, I shall be speaking of many of you, also. I once thought that I had a very fine righteousness of my own and, in looking back upon it, I am not at all sure whether it was not about as respectable as the righteousness which the most of my friends have possessed. Like the young man who came to our Lord, I could have said, concerning the Ten Commandments, “All these things have I kept from my youth up: what do I lack?” But I well remember the time when God’s Holy Spirit began to pull my righteousness away from me. Oh, how fiercely I fought to keep it! There was a terrible tugging between my pride and my conscience, for even my conscience joined with the Spirit of God and the Word of God, in telling me, that though outwardly righteous, yet I was inwardly wicked!

Still, for a long while, I could not understand and believe that I, the child of godly parents, who had never fallen asleep from the days of infancy without the repetition of the prayer my mother taught me, and who had never left my bedroom in the morning without having presented the petitions which I had learned as a child—I could not bring myself to think that I, who was so regular in attendance at the House of God, who read my Bible, who tried to understand theological books and so on—could not admit that I had a righteousness which was only like filthy rags, fit for nothing but to be burned! I tell you, dear Friends, I did not like that ugly truth and I fought very hard against it, but I bless God that He took away “the first” righteousness, that He might establish “the sec-

ond.” That second—“the righteousness which is of God by faith”—the righteousness which is imputed to everyone who believes in Jesus—is so much superior to “the first” that I can truly say with the Apostle Paul, “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

Is there anybody here who is having his righteousness tugged at as mine was? Is that beautiful but flimsy house of your own righteousness beginning to tumble around your ears? Did a big brickbat come down just now? Was there a slate or two blown off the roof, or did the chimney pots begin to fall? Thank God for it! Thank God for it! If you have a very fine robe of righteousness, all of your own weaving, I am not desirous that you should be unclothed and left naked to your shame—but I am anxious that you should be clothed with that spotless robe which was woven in Heaven—and I know that you will never wear that wondrous garment until your own dirty rags are pulled off! Christ never comes and puts His glorious robes over our poor, beggarly, leprous rags. No, they must come off before He will clothe us, so He takes away “the first” that He may give us “the second.” O poor Sinner, be wise enough to cry to Him, “Pull off my rags, Lord, if You will condescend to touch them. I do not want to keep one of them a moment longer.” As for you who are so good, respectable and righteous in your own esteem, I tell you plainly that those fine robes, of which you are so proud, are only rotten rags, whatever you may think of them. Off with them! They must come off if you are to be saved, so ask God to take them off, now, and to clothe you in that wondrous raiment which Christ has prepared for all who trust Him!

There is another first thing which God has taken away from us, and that is, *our false peace*. There are many of you who used to be perfectly happy although you were unsaved. You were full of peace and were not disturbed in mind at all. Why should you be? You used to say to yourselves, “Well, if it goes ill with me, I am sure it will be worse for my neighbors. If I am not all right, there are very few people who are.” Yes, you said to yourself, “Peace, peace,” when there was no peace! If, sometimes, your minister preached a sermon that came rather too closely home to you and troubled your conscience, you said to yourself, “Now, that is the kind of preaching that I do not like. I do not think I shall go to hear that man anymore, for, in my opinion, people ought not to be made so uncomfortable as I have been made.” There are some people who would never have been saved if the Holy Spirit had not broken down their refuges of lies.

There is another “first” that people do not like to lose—that is, *their fancied strength*. You thought, dear Friend, that you could repent and believe in Christ whenever you pleased, and you said to yourself, “There is

no hurry for me to decide to be a Christian. I can keep on attending the means of Grace and one of these days, when it is convenient, I will break my own heart, renew my own will, create myself a new creature in Christ Jesus." That was your meaning, though, possibly, you did not express it quite so plainly. Ah, I remember well when I first began to discover my own inability in spiritual things—it was a horrible discovery. I wanted to do good, but I found that evil was present with me. I longed to repent, but my heart was as hard as a stone. I earnestly desired to pray, but I could not pray a believing prayer—I could as easily have leaped over the moon as have prayed such a prayer by my own unaided efforts! I really wished to believe in Christ and though, now, it seems as plain and simple a thing as anything can be, yet, at that time, I could no more believe in Christ than I could make a new world. Oh, the horror of having one's strength all taken away! But what a blessed thing it is to lose all our first strength—to be reduced to utter weakness and to be quite incapable of any spiritual action, so that Christ says to us, "Without Me you can do nothing"—and all this in order that He may establish the second and better strength and enable us, each one, to say, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength."

The Lord Jesus Christ becomes a strength and a power to us when we have lost our own, but we shall never get His strength while we have our own, for He will never yoke His Omnipotence with our poor pretense of power. That cannot be! "He takes away the first." He brings you to a swooning state, He brings you to a fainting fit, He brings you to death's door, He brings you to the very grave of your own personal confidence and strength—and then He comes in and gives you life in Himself, and clothes you with power from on high. "He takes away the first, that He may establish the second."

Further on in the Christian life, it often happens that the same rule holds good, that the Lord takes away many first things to establish the second. After people are converted, it frequently happens that they have a great deal *too much confidence in their minister, or in some Christian friend*. At first it is very helpful to their infant footsteps to have a little go-cart to which they can hold lest they should tumble down, but, after a while, when God means to teach them something for themselves, and to make them exercise their own judgments, perhaps He takes away that minister, or He takes away from them the pleasure that they once had in hearing him. Sometimes, I have known men so much depended upon that God has left those good men to themselves for a while, that their hearers might see what poor souls they were and so might never depend upon them again as they had done in the past.

Why does the Lord take away that comfortable repose that His poor babes enjoy on the breasts of their teachers? Why, in order that they may find a better and sweeter repose on His breast! That they may get away from all confidence in men and come to full confidence in the Lord, their God and Savior. It is often a very hard lesson for some to learn, but it must be learned. As the Apostle Paul says, "Henceforth know we no man

after the flesh: yes, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.” There are some who seem to know Christ only by the teaching of other people, but it is far better to know Him by personal contact, by coming close to Him for yourself—and that blessing is often not realized except at a great expense of things once highly prized. In that sense, also, our text is true. “He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.”

So, too, there is *an early joy* that young Christians have. Oh, how full of delight they are! Some of them have a great deal more of flame than they have of real fire. Just as when a fire is first kindled, and the shavings, and the sticks are burning, there is not half the fire that there will be when the coals themselves are all aglow—there is not half the fire but there is more blaze and more crackle. So is it with many young people—they have no end of a blaze! Oh, they are so happy! They cannot tell how happy they are! But, after a while, that exuberance of joy goes and the quiet delight in the Lord which comes afterwards, instead of it, is much more solid and deep. They can give good reasons for their joy and though they are not so full of exhilaration as they were, their delight is really firmer, stronger and deeper than before. “He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.”

I have known many of God’s dear people to be very frightened by some of their first experiences. They thought they were going to be lost because their early joy had departed from them, yet there was no need for cherishing such fears. You know that children lose their first teeth—it is good that they should do so, because there is a better set coming. And, often, it is very much like that with the Christian. He has a wisdom tooth to cut that he did not cut in the first stages of his spiritual life, and the first milk teeth that he has will have to come out, some of them, with many a painful tug. But they will have to come out in order that he may grow to a spiritual manhood. “He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.”

Oh, how many things you and I still have to gain by losing! How much we are to be enriched by our losses! How we are to make progress by going backward! How we have yet to mount by sinking! How we have yet to rise by descending! Paradoxical as all this may seem, it is to be so, according to the rule laid down in our text—“He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.” There may be a lesson here, not only for young converts, but also for you who are experienced Christians. This passage may help you to understand some things which, perhaps, have seemed dark to you.

IV. Now I close by giving you some INSTANCES TO BE EXPECTED to which the rule of the text will apply. “He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.”

Let all who are of the family of Christ remember that *God will soon take away from us everything that we have here below*. He will take us away from it, which is the same thing as taking it away from us. But, as you anticipate this great change, do not look forward to it with sorrow!

Do not shed a single tear of regret at the thought of parting with anything that you now possess. Regret not the dear old home, notwithstanding all its happy associations. Mourn not that you must leave your beloved country, of which you say that, wherever you wander, it is still the joy of your heart! You will have to leave your native land and to leave your happy home—but you may be comforted by the assurance of the text, “He takes away the first, that He may establish the second,” for there is a better country, that is, the heavenly land! We, who believe in Jesus, are citizens of the New Jerusalem and, as all earthly cities and the fair prospects of the country shall melt away from our eyes, we shall look upon a fairer land and a more glorious city, where no fog or blight shall ever come, but where—

**“Rocks and hills, and brooks and vales,
With milk and honey flow.
All over those wide extended plains,
Shines one eternal day.
There God the Sun forever reigns,
And scatters night away.
No chilling winds, or poisonous breath,
Can reach that healthful shore—
Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more.”**

God will take away our home on earth, but in our Father’s House above there are many mansions. Therefore you may go, cheerful fireside! You may go, happy home! All that was loved, all that was delighted in may melt away, as I sing—

**“My Father’s House on high,
Home of my soul! How near,
At times, to faith’s foreseeing eyes,
Your golden gates appear!”**

If Moses, from the top of Pisgah, was glad to die with the earthly Canaan in sight, how much more may we be happy to die with the heavenly Canaan just before us, into which we are to enter! “He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.”

The Lord has been taking away from some of you *considerable portions of your family*. Some dear children, who were once nestling at your breast, are now with Him in Glory. Father has also gone, and mother. Husband or wife, brother or sister—some of these dear ones are gone Home. The members of your family have nearly all gone, now, and you are left alone. You begin to count the friends of your youth upon your fingers. God is evidently taking away “the first.” But do not forget how blessedly He is establishing the second! When you enter Heaven, you will be no stranger inside those pearly gates. There will be many there whom you knew and loved on earth, whom you will know and love above. They will meet you at the gates and they will joy and rejoice with you before the great Father’s Throne.

“Alas,” says one, “I have lost all my family, and I am left alone and desolate.” But if you are a child of God, remember what the Apostle once wrote, “I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of

whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named.” Though God has taken away that first family, He has established that second and far more numerous, and more glorious one! “Go, set the solitary in families.” That is what He has done for you—He has taken away your first family connections, your first bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood, in order that He may establish the second higher relationships! He has dissolved the ties of blood that you may find better *spiritual* relationships among such as Jesus spoke of when He said, “Whoever shall do the will of My Father which is in Heaven, the same is My brother, and sister and mother.” Even so we say of the saints on earth, and the saints before the Throne of God in Heaven, “These are sister, and brother, and father, and mother to us.” “He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.”

And, Brothers and Sisters, *this poor body of ours*, which is so full of aches and pains at times, will be taken away to make room for a more glorious one! This one is getting worn-out—some parts of it have already fallen away. It is like an old lath-and-plaster building and cannot last much longer! It very seldom stands to the end of the 99 years’ lease, but it soon crumbles away and, by-and-by, with all of us, the old house will fall to pieces and be done with. Shall we fret over it? Shall our soul cry, concerning the body, “Alas, my sister! Alas, my brother?” No! “He takes away the first, that He may establish the second” and as we have, in this body of our humiliation, borne the image of the earthy, we shall, in the second condition of this body, bear the image of the heavenly!

It shall be sown in dishonor, but it shall be raised in glory! It shall be sown in weakness, but it shall be raised in power! It shall be sown a natural body, but it shall be raised a spiritual body! “He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.” And, oh, what a glorious second that will be! Our resurrection body will know no pain, no weariness, no weakness, no taint of disease or sin, no possibility of corruption or death. Well may we sing—

“O glorious hour! O blest abode!”

when this poor body shall be made like unto the glorious body of Christ Jesus our Savior. “He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.” Let the first go, then, without a murmur or a sigh!

Once more, *this earth shall be taken away to make room for the new one*. In a little while there shall be heard the blast of the archangel’s trumpet. I know not when or how the various closing events will happen, so as to put them together in chronological order, but I do know that at God’s bidding, this fair earth shall suddenly be wrapped in flames. It is a beautiful world, say what you will about it. In many other parts besides Ceylon—

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

Wherever man squats down and raises up his long ranges of bricks and mortar, there everything is ugly. But out yonder, in God’s forests, and on God’s hills, and by God’s sea, everything is fair, and grand, and Godlike,

as if God Himself might come and sojourn there and not be ashamed of the world He has made, for it is still good. But in a moment, it will be wrapped in flames and it will be utterly consumed. Nothing of this present creation shall abide in its present condition!

The Apostle Peter says, “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” Yet weep not, Beloved, neither lament, for Peter also says, “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.” “He takes away the first, that He may establish the second” and, on a brighter morning than your eyes have ever seen, you shall wake up and see the new heavens and the new earth! And you, with all the spirits of just men made perfect, shall come there to sing sweeter songs than the morning stars chanted when the world was first created! There will be a second creation, a second world, for the Lord will have taken away the first, but He will have established the second! The work of destruction will have been accomplished, but the work of re-creation will also have been finished and, oh, what joy and bliss it will be for the redeemed from among men, and for the holy angels, too, when the New Jerusalem shall come down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, and the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He shall dwell among them! “He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.

I close by saying that it is my earnest prayer that some of you may, by God’s Grace, have, your “first” taken away from you this very hour, that you may have “the second” given to you. Salvation lies not in “the first.” That is all ruin and woe—the trail of the serpent is over it all. You will never go to Heaven if you remain in the same nature as you had when you were born. You must be born a second time! Or else, if there is not a second birth, you will have to endure the second death.

God give you the Grace to believe in Jesus and to find in Him that second, higher, better life that you may enter into the second and perfect world, for then you will give Him all the praise forever and ever! Amen.

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of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”
Hebrews 10:10.***

DEAR Friends, ever since the Lord has quickened us by His Grace we have begun to look into ourselves and to search our hearts to see our condition before God. Hence many things which once caused us no disquietude now create in us great anxiety. We thought that we were all right and felt it to be enough to be quite as good as others. We dreamed that if we were not quite as good as we should be, we would certainly grow better, though we did not stop to inquire how or why. We took stock of our condition and concluded that we were rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing. A change has come over the spirit of the scene—the Grace of God has made us thoughtful and careful. We dare not take things for granted. We test and prove things, for we are very anxious not to be deceived. We look upon eternal realities as being of the utmost consequence and we dare not take them for granted as being certain to be right.

We are afraid of being presumptuous and we long to be sincere. We hold an assize within our spirits and we are so afraid that we may be partial, as probably we shall be, that we ask the Lord to search us and try us, to see if there is any wicked way in us, that He may lead us out of such a way into the way everlasting. This is all very wise and very proper and I would not, for a moment, try to turn the people of God away from a proper measure of this state of heart. And yet let it never be forgotten that we are, in the sight of God, different, in some respects, than we shall ever see ourselves to be if we look through the glass of feeling and consciousness—there are other matters to be taken into consideration—matters which our anxiety may lead us to overlook and our inward search may cause us to forget.

Faith reveals to us another position for the people of God besides that which they occupy in themselves. Some call it an evangelical fiction and the like but, thank God, it is a blessed fact that sinners as we are in ourselves, yet Believers are saints in *God's* sight and that sinful as they feel themselves to be, yet they are washed, cleansed and sanctified in Jesus Christ! Notwithstanding all that we mourn over, the very fact that we do mourn over it becomes an evidence that we are no longer what we once were and do not stand, now, where we once stood. We have passed from death unto life! We have escaped from under the dominion of the Law into the kingdom of Divine Grace. We have come from under the curse and we dwell in the region of blessing!

We have believed on Him that justifies the ungodly and our faith is counted for righteousness (Rom. 4:5). There is, therefore, no condemnation for us, for we are in Christ Jesus our Lord and walk no longer after the flesh but after the Spirit. That your hearts may be gladdened, I want

yon to think of the noble position into which the Grace of God has lifted all Believers—the condition of sanctification which is spoken of in the text—for by the “will of God we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

We shall, first, speak of the eternal will. Secondly of the effectual Sacrifice by which that will has been carried out. And thirdly, of the everlasting result accomplished by that will through the Sacrifice of the body of Christ. May the Holy Spirit who has revealed the grand doctrine of Justification now enable us to understand it and to feel its comforting power.

I. First, then, THE ETERNAL WILL—“By that will we have been sanctified.” This will must, first of all, be viewed as the will ordained of old by the Father—the eternal decree of the Infinite Jehovah that a people whom He chose should be sanctified and set apart unto Himself. The will of Jehovah stands fast forever and ever and we know of it that it is altogether unchangeable and that it has no beginning. It is an *eternal* will, we have no vacillating Deity, no fickle God. He wills changes, but He never changes His will. “He is of one mind and who can turn Him? And what His soul desires, even that He does.”

The will of God is invincible as well as eternal. We are told in Ephesians that He works all things after the counsel of His own will. “Who can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What are You doing?” The good pleasure of His will is never defeated—there cannot be such a thing as a vanquished God. “His purpose shall stand and He will do all His pleasure.” In fact, the will of God is the motive force of all things. “He *spoke* and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast.” His Word is Omnipotent because His will is at the back of it and it puts force into it. He said, “Light be,” and there was light because He willed that there should be light! He bade creatures come forth, numerous as the drops of dew, to people the world that He had made and forth they came, flying, leaping, swimming in varied orders of life, because of His own will He did create them.

His will is the secret power which sustains the universe and threads the starry orbs and holds them like a necklace of light about the neck of Nature. His will is the Alpha and the Omega of all things. It was according to this eternal, invincible will of God that He chose, created and set apart a people that should show forth the glory and riches of His Grace—a people that would bear the image of His only-begotten Son, a people that should joyfully and willingly serve Him in His courts forever and ever—a people who should be His own sons and daughters, to whom He would say, “I will dwell in them and walk in them and they shall be My people and I will be their God.”

Thus stood the eternal will of old. “For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” But the people concerning whom this will was made were dead in sin, defiled with evil, polluted by transgression! The old serpent’s venom was in their veins. They were fit to be set apart for the *curse*, but not to be set apart for the service of the thrice holy God! And the question was, how then, should the will of the Immutable Invincible ever be carried out? How shall these rebels become absolved? How shall these fountains of filth become clear as crystal, pouring forth floods of living water and Divine praise? How shall these unsanctified and defiled ones become sanctified unto the service of God?

It must be—but how shall it be? Then came the priests, with smoking censers and with basins full of blood, steaming as it came fresh from the slaughtered victims and they sprinkled this blood upon the Book and upon the people, upon the altar and upon the Mercy Seat and upon all the hangings of the tabernacle and all the ground whereon the worshippers walked, for almost all things under the Law were sanctified by blood. Everywhere was this blood of bulls and of goats. Fresh every morning and renewed every evening. Still, God's will was not done, the chosen were not thus sanctified and we know they were not, because it is written, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire." His will was not fulfilled in them. It was not His will that they should sanctify the people. They were inefficacious to such an end for, as the Holy Spirit has said, it was "not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." And so, if these offerings had been all there was, centuries of the house of Aaron and of the priests of the tribe of Levi might have come and gone and yet the will decreed by the eternal Father would not have been an accomplished fact!

Thus we have landed at our second point, which is that this will by which we are sanctified was performed by the ever-blessed Son. It was the will of God the Father, but it was carried out by the Divine Son when He came into the world. A body was prepared for Him and into that body, in a mysterious manner which we will not attempt, even, to conceive of, He entered and there He was—the Incarnate God! This Incarnate God, by offering His own blood; by laying down His own life; by bearing in His own body the curse and in His own spirit enduring the wrath, was able to effect the purpose of the everlasting Father in the purging of His people, in the setting of His chosen apart and making them henceforth holiness unto the Lord.

Do you not see what the will of the Father was—that He should have a people that should be sanctified unto Himself? But that will could not be carried out by the blood of bulls and of goats! It must be achieved by the offering up of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Our Lord Jesus Christ has done whatever that will of the Father required for its perfect achievement. This is our satisfaction. We will not enter, at this time, into a detailed account of our Lord's active and passive obedience by which He magnified the Law and set apart His people. I pray you, however, never fall into the error of dividing the work of Christ as some do and say, "Here He made Atonement for sin and there He did not." In these modern times, certain brethren have invented refinements of statement of so trivial a character that they are not even worth the trouble of thinking over and yet, like babies with a new rattle, they make a noise with them all day long!

It is amusing how these wise professors make grave points out of mere hair-splitting distinctions and if we do not agree with them they give themselves mighty airs, pitying our ignorance and esteeming themselves as superior persons who have an insight into things which ordinary Christians cannot see! God save us from having eyes which are so sharp that we are able to spy out new occasions for difference and fresh reasons for making men offenders for mere words. I believe in the life of Christ as well as in His death and I believe that He stood for me before God as much when He walked the acres of Palestine as when He hung on the Cross at

Jerusalem. You cannot divide and split Him in sunder and say, "He is so far an *example* and so far an *Atonement*," but you must take the entire Christ and look at Him from the very first as the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.

"Oh, but," they say, "He made no Atonement except in His death," which is, let me tell you, an absurdity in language! Listen a minute. When does a man die? I cannot tell you. There is the minute in which the soul separates from the body, but all the time that a man may be described as dying he is alive, is he not? A man does not suffer when actually dead. What we call the pangs of death are truly and accurately pangs of *life*. Death does not suffer—it is the end of suffering! A man is in life while he suffers and if they say, "It is Christ's *death* that makes an Atonement and not His life," I reply that death, alone and by itself, makes no Atonement! Death in its natural sense and not in this modern non-natural severance from life, does make Atonement—but it cannot be viewed apart from life by any unsophisticated mind.

If they must have distinctions, we could make distinctions enough to worry them of such an unprofitable business, but we have nobler work to do! To us our Lord's death seems to be the consummation of His life, the finishing stroke of a work which His Father had given Him to do among the sons of men. We view Him as having come in a body prepared for Him to do the will of God *once*—and that "*once*" lasted throughout His one life on earth! We will not, however, dwell on any moot point, but unfeignedly rejoice that whatever was needed to make God's people wholly sanctified unto God, Christ has worked out! "By that will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." It is finished!

Does the Divine Law require, for our acceptance, perfect submission to the will of the Lord? Jesus has rendered it! Does it ask complete obedience to its precepts? He has presented the same! Does the fulfilled will of the Lord call for abject suffering, a sweat of blood, pangs unknown and death, itself? Christ has presented it all, whatever that "all" may be! As when God created, His Word effected all His will, so, when God *redeemed*, His blessed and Incarnate Word has done all His will! In every point, as God looked on each day's work and said, "It is good," so, as He looks upon each part of the work of His dear Son, He can say of it, "It is good." The Father joins in the verdict of His Son that it is finished—all the will of God for the sanctification of His people is accomplished!

Beloved, this work must be applied to us by the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who brings us to know that Jesus Christ has sanctified us, or set us apart and made us acceptable with God. It is the Holy Spirit who has given us the New Testament and shed a light upon the Old. It is the Holy Spirit who speaks to us through the ministers of Christ when He blesses them to our conversion. Especially is it the Holy Spirit who takes away from us all hope of being sanctified before God by any means of our own, brings us to see our need of cleansing and reconciliation and then takes of the things of Christ and reveals them to us.

Not without the going forth of His sacred power are we made to take the place of separation and dedication, to which the Lord of old ordained us. Thus it is by the will of the Father, carried out by the Son and applied by the Holy Spirit that the Church of God is regarded as sanctified before God and is acceptable unto Him. I do not tarry longer on any one point

because these great things are best spoken of with few words. They are subjects better fed upon by quiet thought than exhibited in speech.

II. I invite you, dear Friends, in the second place, to consider THE EFFECTUAL SACRIFICE by which the will of God with regard to the sanctity of His people has been carried out. "By that will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." This implies, first, His Incarnation, which of course includes His eternal Deity. We can never forget that Jesus Christ is God. The Church has given forth many a valiant confession to His Deity and woe be to her should she ever hesitate on that glorious Truth of God! Yet sometimes she has great need to earnestly insist upon His Humanity. As you bow before your glorious Lord and adore Him with all the sanctified, yet remember that He whom you worship was truly and really a Man.

The Gospel of His Incarnation is not a spiritual idea, nor a metaphor, nor a myth. In very deed and truth the God that made Heaven and earth came down to earth and hung upon a woman's breast as an Infant. That Child, as He grew in stature and wisdom, was as certainly God as He is at this moment in Glory! He was as surely God when He was here hungry and suffering, sleeping, eating, drinking as He was God when He hung up the morning stars and kindled the lamps of night, or as He shall be when sun and moon shall dim at the brightness of His coming! Jesus Christ, very God of very God, did certainly stoop to become such as we are and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. It is a Truth of God you all know, but I want you to grasp it and realize it. It will help you to trust Christ if you clearly perceive that, Divine as He is, He is bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh—your Kinsman, though the Son of God. All this is implied in the text, because it speaks of the offering of the *body* of Christ.

But why does it specially speak of the *body*? I think to show us the reality of that offering—His soul suffered and His soul's sufferings were the soul of His sufferings, but still, to make it palpable to us, to record it as a sure historical *fact*, the Holy Spirit mentions that there was an offering of the body of Christ. I take it, however, that the word means the whole of Christ—that there was an offering made of all of Christ, the body of Him, or that of which He was constituted. It is my solemn conviction that the Deity co-worked with His Humanity in the wondrous passion by which He has sanctified His elect.

I am told that Deity cannot suffer. I am expected to subscribe to that because *theologians* say so. Well, if it is true, then I shall content myself with believing that the Deity helped the Humanity by strengthening *it* to suffer more than it could otherwise have endured. But I believe that Deity *can* suffer, heterodox as that notion may seem to be. I cannot believe in an impassive God as my Father. If He pities and sympathizes, surely He must have some sensibilities! Is He a God of iron? If He wills it, He can do anything and, therefore, He can suffer if He pleases. It is not possible for God to be *made* to suffer—that would be a ridiculous supposition—yet if He *wills* to do so, He is certainly capable of doing that as well as anything else—for all things are possible to Him.

I look upon our Lord Jesus as in His very Godhead stooping down to bear the weight of human sin and human misery, sustaining it because He was Divine and able to bear what otherwise had been too great a load. Thus the *whole* of Christ was made a Sacrifice for sin. It was the offering,

not of the spirit of Christ, but of the very *body* of Christ—the essence, subsistence and most manifest reality and personality of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Most High! And this was wholly offered. I do not know how to bring out my own thoughts here, but to accomplish the will of God in sanctifying all His people, Christ must be the Offering and He must be wholly offered.

There *were* certain sacrifices which were only presented to God in part, so far as the consumption by fire was concerned. A part was eaten by the priest or by the offerer and so far it was not a whole burnt offering. In this there was much precious Truth set forth, of which we will not speak at this time, but as our Sin-Offering, making expiation for guilt, our blessed Lord and Master gave Himself *wholly* for us as an atoning Sacrifice and Offering for sin—and that, “Himself,” sums up all you can conceive it to be in and of the Christ of God! And the pangs and griefs which, like a fire went through Him, did consume Him, even to the uttermost of all that was in Him.

He bore all that could be borne! He stooped to the lowest to which humility could stoop! He descended to the utmost abyss to which a descent of self-denial could be made! He made Himself of no reputation! He emptied Himself of all honor and glory! He gave up Himself without reserve! He saved others, Himself He could not save—He spares us in our chastisements, but Himself He spared not! He says of Himself in the 22nd Psalm, “I am a worm and no man; a reproach of men and despised of the people.” You do not know, you cannot *imagine* how fully the Sacrifice was made by Christ! It was not only a Sacrifice of all of Himself, but a complete Sacrifice of every part of Himself for us! The blaze of eternal wrath for human sin was focused upon His head!

The anguish that must have been endured by Him who stood in the place of millions of sinners to be judged of God and smitten in their place is altogether inconceivable! Though Himself perfectly innocent, yet in His own Person to offer up such a Sacrifice as could honor the Divine Justice on account of myriads of sins of myriads of the sons of men was a work far beyond all human realization! You may give loose to your reason and your imagination and rise into the seventh Heaven of sublime conception as with eagle wings, but you can never reach the utmost height. Here is the sum of the matter—“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift,” for unspeakable, inconceivable it certainly is when we view the Lord Jesus as a Sacrifice for the sins of men!

This offering was made once and only once. The pith of the text lies in the finishing words of it, “through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Those words, “for all,” are very properly put in by the translators but you must not make a mistake as to their meaning. The text does not mean that Christ offered Himself up once for *all*—that is, for all mankind. That may be a doctrine of Scripture, or it may not be a doctrine of Scripture—but it is not the teaching here. The passage means “once for all” in the sense of—all at once, or only once. As a man might say, “I gave up my whole estate once and for all to my creditors and there was the end of the matter,” so here our Lord Jesus Christ is said to have offered Himself up as a Sacrifice once and for all—that is to say, only once and that was the end of the matter.

His Sacrifice on behalf of His people was for all the sins before He came. Think of what they all were! Ages had succeeded ages and there had been found among the various generations of men criminals of the blackest dye and crimes had been multiplied. The Prophet said in vision concerning Christ, as he looked on all the multitude, "All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." That was *before* He came. Reflect that there has been no second offering of Himself ever since and never will be—it was once and that *once* did the deed!

Now let your mind conceive of this—nearly 2,000 years have passed since the offering and if the Prophet were to stand here tonight and look back through those 1,800 years and more, he would still say, "All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Oh, it is a wonderful conception—the Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus was the reservoir into which all the sins of the human race ran, from this quarter and that and that and that and that! All the sins of His people rolled in a torrent unto Him and gathered as in a great lake! In Him was no sin and yet the Lord made Him to be sin for us. You may have seen a deep mountain lake which has been filled to the brim by innumerable streamlets from all the hillsides round about. Here comes a torrent gushing down and there trickles from the moss that has overgrown the rock a little drip, drip, drip, which falls perpetually—great and small tributaries all meet in the black lake which, after the rain, is full to the brim and ready to burst its banks!

That lone lake pictures Christ, the meeting place of the sins of His people! They were all laid on Him, that from Him the penalty might be exacted. At His hands the price must be demanded for the ransom of all this multitude of sins! And it is said that He did this once for all. I have no language with which to describe it—but I see before me the great load of sin, the huge, tremendous world of sin! No, no, it is greater than the world! Atlas might carry that, but this is a weight compared with which the world is but as a pin's head! Mountains upon mountains, alps on alps are nothing to the mighty mass of sin which I see before my mind's eyes! And lo, it all falls upon the Well-Beloved! He stands beneath it and bows under it till the bloody sweat starts from every pore and yet He does not yield to its weight so as to get away from the burden! It presses more heavily, it bows Him to the dust, it touches His very soul, it makes Him cry in anguish, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" and yet, at the last He lifts Himself up and flings it all away and cries, "It is finished!" And it is gone!

There is not a speck of it left! No, not an atom of it left! It is all gone at once and once and for all. He has borne the immeasurable weight and cast it off from His shoulders forever and, as it lies no more on Him, so also it lies no more on us! Sin shall never be mentioned against His people any more forever. Oh, wondrous deed of Deity! Oh, mighty feat of love accomplished once and for all! The Redeemer never offered Himself to death before. He never will do it again! Look at it this way, my Brothers and Sisters—the reason why it never will be done again is because there is no need for it! All the sin that was laid upon Jesus is gone—all the sin of His people is forever discharged. He has borne it—the debt is paid! The hand-

writing of ordinances against us is nailed to His Cross! The accuser's charge is answered forever.

What, then, shall we say of those who come forward and pretend that they *perpetually* present the body of Christ in the unbloody sacrifice of the "mass?" Why, no profane jest from the lips of Voltaire ever had even the slightest degree of God-defiant blasphemy in it compared with such a hideous insult as this horrible pretense! It is infernal! I will say no less. There can be nothing more intolerable than that notion, for our Lord Jesus Christ has offered Himself for sin once and once and for all! He who dares to think of offering Him again insults Him by acting as if that once were not enough. I cannot believe any language of abhorrence to be too strong if the performers and attendants at the "mass" really knew what is implied in their professed act and deed!

In the judgment of Christian charity we may earnestly pray, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Our words fail and our conceptions faint at the thought of the great Substitute with all the sins of His people condensed into one black draught and set before Him! How shall we think of Him as putting that cup to His lips and drinking, drinking, drinking all the wrath till He had drained the cup to the bottom and filled Himself with horror? Yet look, He has finished the death-drink and turned the cup upside down, crying, "It is finished!" At one tremendous draught the loving Lord has drained destruction dry for all His people and there is no dreg nor drop left for any one of them, for now is the will of God accomplished—"by that will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Glory be to God! And yet again, glory be to God!—

***"He bore on the tree the sentence for me,
And now both the Surety and sinner are free.
In the heavenly Lamb thrice happy I am
And my heart does rejoice at the sound of His name."***

III. Now I close with our third head and that is THE EVERLASTING RESULT. The everlasting result of this effectual carrying out of the will of God is that God now regards His people's sin as expiated and their persons as sanctified. Our sin is removed by expiation. Atonement has been offered and its efficacy abides forever. There is no need of any other expiation. Believers repent bitterly, but not in the way of expiation. There is no *penance* to be exacted of them by way of putting away guilt. Their guilt is gone—their transgression is forgiven! The Covenant is made with them and it runs thus—"Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more forever." Their sins have, in fact, been ended, blotted out and annihilated by the Redeemer's one Sacrifice.

Next, they are reconciled. There is no quarrel, now, between God and those who are in Christ Jesus. Peace is made between them forever. The middle wall that stood between them is taken away. Christ, by His one Sacrifice, has made peace for all His people and effectually established an amity which never shall be broken—

***"Lord Jesus, we believing
In You have peace with God,
Eternal life receiving
The purchase of Your blood.
Our curse and condemnation
You bore in our stead"***

**Secure is our salvation
In You, our risen Head."**

Moreover, they are not only accepted and reconciled, but they are purified—the taint that was upon them is taken away. In God's sight they are regarded no more as unclean. They are no longer shut outside the camp—they may come to the Throne of the heavenly Grace whenever they will. God can have communion with them! He regards them as fit to stand in His courts and to be His servants, for they are purified, reconciled, expiated through the one Offering of Christ! Their admission into the closest intimacy with God could never be allowed if He did not regard them as purged from all uncleanness and this has been effected not at all by themselves, but only by the great Sacrifice—

***"Your blood, not mine, O Christ,
Your blood so freely spilt,
Has blanched my blackest stains,
And purged away my guilt.
Your righteousness, O Christ,
Alone does cover me.
No righteousness avails
Save that which is in Thee."***

Now, what has come of it? That is the point. I want you, now, to let me leave the doctrine and try and bring out the experience arising from it. What Christ has done in the carrying out of the great will of God has effected salvation for all His chosen—but this is applied to them actually and experimentally by the Holy Spirit's dwelling in them—by which indwelling they know they are now God's people. The Israelites were God's people, after a fashion. The Levites were more peculiarly so and the priests were still more especially so—and all of these had to present perpetual sacrifices and offerings that God might be able to look upon them as His people—for they were a sinful people.

You and I are not typically, but truly and really His people. Through Jesus Christ's offering of Himself once and for all, we are really set apart to be the Lord's people from now on and forever and He says of us—I mean, of course, not of us all, but of as many as have believed in Jesus and to whom the Holy Spirit has revealed His finished work—"I will be their God and they shall be My people." You Believers are sanctified in this sense, that you are now the set-apart ones unto God and you belong wholly to Him. Will you think that over? "I am now not my own. I do not belong, now, to the common order of men, as all the rest of men do. I am set apart. I am called out. I am taken aside. I am one of the Lord's own. I am His treasure and His portion. He has, through Jesus Christ's death, made me one of those of whom He says—"They shall dwell alone, they shall not be numbered among the people."

I want you to feel it so that you may live under the power of that fact that you may feel, "My Lord has cleansed me. My Lord has made expiation for me. My Lord has reconciled me unto God and I am God's man, I am God's woman. I cannot live as others do. I cannot be one among you. I must come out. I must be separate. I cannot find my pleasure where you find yours. I cannot find my treasure where you find yours. I am God's and God is mine. That wondrous transaction on the Cross of which our minister has tried to speak, but of which he could not speak as he ought—that wondrous unspeakable deed upon the Cross—that wonderful

life and death of Jesus, has made me one of God's people, set apart unto Him and as such I must live."

When you realize that you are God's people, the next thing is to reflect that God, in sanctifying a people, set them apart for His service and He made them fit for His service. You, Beloved, through Christ's one great Offering of His body for you, are permitted, now, to be the servants of God! You know it is an awful thing for a man to try and serve God until God gives Him permission—there is a presumption about it. Suppose that one of the Queen's enemies, who has sought her life and has always spoken against her, were to say, "I mean to be one of her servants. I will go into her palace and I will serve her," having all the while in his heart a rebellious, proud spirit? His service could not be tolerated! It would be sheer impudence. Even so, "Unto the wicked God says, What have you to do to declare My statutes?" A wicked man, pretending to serve God, stands in the position of Korah, Dathan and Abiram trying to offer incense because he is not purified and not called to the work and has no fitness for it.

But now, Beloved, you that are in Christ are called to be His servants. You have permission and leave to serve Him. It ought to be your great joy to be accepted servants of the living God. If you are only the Lord's shoe-black, you have a greater privilege than if you were an emperor! If the highest thing you ever will be allowed to do should be to loosen the laces of your master's shoes or to wash his servants' feet—if that master is Christ you are favored above the mightiest of the mighty! Men of renown may envy you—their orders of the Garter or the Golden Fleece are nothing compared with the high dignity of being servitors of King Jesus! Look upon this as being the result of Christ's death upon the Cross, that such a poor, sinful creature as you are—once a slave of the devil—is now allowed to be the servant of God!

On the Cross my Master bought for me the privilege to preach to you at this time. And He bought for you, dear Mother, the privilege to go home and train your little child for the great Father in Heaven. In fact, He bought for us a sanctification which has made us the Lord's people and has enabled us to engage in His service. Do we not rejoice in this? Next to that we have this privilege that what we do can now be accepted. Because Jesus Christ, by the offering of His body once, has perfected the Father's will and has sanctified us, therefore what we do is now accepted with God! We might have done whatever we would, but God would not have accepted it from a sinner's hands—from the hands of those that were out of Christ.

Now He accepts anything of us. You dropped a penny into the box—it was all that you could give and the Lord accepted it! It dropped into His hand! You offered a little prayer in the middle of business this afternoon because you heard an ill word spoken—and your God accepted that prayer. You went down the street and spoke to a poor sick person. You did not say much, but you said all you could—the great God accepted it! Acceptance in the Beloved, not only for our persons, but for our prayers and our works, is one of the sweetest things I know of. We are accepted! That is the joy of it. Through that one great bloody Sacrifice, once and for all offered, God's people are forever accepted and what His people do for Him is accepted, too! And now we are privileged to the highest degree, being sanctified—that is to say, made into God's people, God's servants and God's accepted servants!

Every privilege which we could have had, if we had never sinned, is now ours and we are in Him as His children. We have more than would have come to us by the Covenant of Works and if we will but know it and live up to it, even the very privilege of *suffering* and the privilege of being tried—the privilege of being in need—should be looked upon as a great gift, for I think an angel spirit, seated high alone there, meditating and adoring, might say within himself, “I have served God. These swift wings have borne me through the ether on His errands, but I never *suffered* for Him. I was never despised for Him. Drunks never called me names. I was never misrepresented as God’s servant. After all, though I have served Him, it has been one perpetual joy. He has set a hedge about me and all that I have.”

If an angel could envy anybody, I think he would envy the martyr who had the privilege of burning to the death for Christ, or such as Job, who, when stripped of everything and covered with sores, could sit on a dung-hill and yet honor his God! Such as these achieved an unique service within itself which has sparkling diamonds of the first water glittering about it—but the same cannot be found in an unsuffering ministry—be it as complete as it may! You are favored sons of Adam, you who have become sons of God! You are favored beyond cherubim and seraphim in accomplishing a service for the manifestation of the riches of the Grace of God which unfallen spirits never could accomplish! Rejoice and be exceedingly glad that this one offering has put you there.

And now you are eternally secure. No sin can ever be laid to your door, for it is all put away and sin being removed, every other evil has lost its fang and sting. Now you are eternally beloved, for you are one with Him who can never be other than dear to the heart of Jehovah! That union never can be broken, for nothing can separate us from the love of God and, therefore, your security can never be imperiled. Now are you in some measure glorified for, “the spirit of glory and of Christ does rest upon you,” and our conversation is in Heaven, from where we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus, who has already raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies! Heaven is already ours in promise, in price and in principle and the preparation for it has also begun. I feel at this hour that—

***“All that remains for me
Is but to love and sing,
And wait until the angels come
To bear me to their King.”***

In such a spirit would I always live!

Brothers and Sisters, are you dispirited at this time? Have you a great trouble upon you? Are you alone in the world? Do others misjudge you, or does the iron of scandal pierce your very soul? Do fierce coals of juniper await those vicious tongues that wrong you? Do you feel bowed into the dust? Yet, why are you despairing? Child of God and heir of all things, why are you cast down? Joint heir with Christ, why are you groveling? Why do you lie among the pots when you have already angels’ wings about you? Up, Man, up! Your heritage is not here among the dragons and the owls. Up! You are one of God’s eagles, born for brighter light than earth could bear—light that would blind the weak-eyed sons of men if they were once to get a veiled glimpse of it! You, a twice-born man, one of the imperial

family, one that shall sit upon a throne with Christ as surely as Christ sits there—why are you moaning and groaning?

Wipe your eyes and smooth your brow and in the strength of the Eternal go to your life-battle. It will not be long. The trumpet of victory almost sounds in your ears. Will you now beat a retreat? No! Play the man and win the day! “Trust in the Lord and do good; so shall you dwell in the land and verily you shall be fed,” till He comes to catch you away where you shall see what Jesus did for you when He made His body once and for all a Sacrifice that He might fulfill the will of the eternal Father and sanctify you and all His people unto God forever and ever! May the best of blessings rest upon all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

STOCKWELL ORPHANAGE FOR GIRLS

The land being bought and paid for, Mr. Spurgeon is anxious to begin building, since large numbers of orphans are applying. The block, which will contain houses for 250 girls and the various schoolrooms, will cost about £8,000, of which £3,000 is promised. To raise the rest of the money will need the united liberality of many and the special bounty of the few who are wealthy. It is proposed that the first stone should be laid on Mr. Spurgeon’s birthday, June 19, should a sufficient sum be in hand to make it prudent to begin. Sympathizing readers can forward donations to Mr. Spurgeon, Nightingale Lane, Balham, and he will gratefully acknowledge the same.

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THE ONLY ATONING PRIEST

NO. 1034

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 4, 1872,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly
the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.
But this Man, after He had offered one Sacrifice
for sins forever, sat down at the right hand
of God, from that time waiting
till His enemies are made His footstool.
For by one offering He has perfected forever
those that are sanctified.”
Hebrews 10:11-14.*

WE shall have to repeat, this morning, a Truth of God which has sounded forth from this pulpit many hundreds of times. But we shall offer no apology for our repetitions, seeing that the Truth to be preached is one which cannot too often be proclaimed. If you lift up your eyes at night to the stars, what a wonderful variety of celestial scenery is there! The astronomer can turn his telescope first to one quarter of the heavens, and then to another, and find an endless change in the sublimities which meet his gaze. Such are the doctrines of the Gospel—they are full of variety and beauty and glory—but yet in the heavens one or two conspicuous constellations are more often regarded by the human eye than all the rest put together.

The mariner looks for the Great Bear, the pointers, and the pole star, or, if he should cross the equator, he gazes on the southern cross. Though these stars have been often looked upon, it is never thought to be superfluous that practical men should still observe them. Night by night they have their watchers, for by them ten thousands sails are steered. I should suppose that in those days, now happily past, when slavery reigned in the Southern States of America, the Negro, if he desired liberty for his boy would be sure, whatever else of the stars he did *not* teach him, to point out to him the star of liberty. “Know well, my Child, those friendly stars which point to the lone star of liberty. Follow that light till it leads you to a land. There fetters no longer clank on human limbs.”

Even so it seems to me that certain doctrines, and especially the doctrines of Atonement and Justification by faith, are like these guiding stars. We ought frequently to point them out and make sure that our children know them. And that all who listen to us, whatever else they may be mistaken about, are clear about these—the guides of men to the haven of freedom and eternal rest. I believe if I should preach to you the Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ every Lord's-Day and that twice, and nothing else, my ministry would not be unprofitable—perhaps it might be more profitable than it is!

So we are coming to the same Truth of God which we handled last Sunday evening. Many dishes are put upon the table at intervals, but bread and salt are always placed there—and so we will have the Atonement again, and again, and again—for this is the bread and salt of the Gospel feast. I purpose, this morning, to handle the text thus. First, we will read, mark, and learn it. And then, secondly, we will ask God's Grace that we may inwardly digest it.

I. Come, then, first of all, to THE READING, MARKING, AND LEARNING OF IT. You will observe that in it there are three things very clearly stated. The atoning sacrifice of Jesus, our great High Priest, is set forth, first, by way of contrast. Then its character is described, and then, thirdly, its consequences are mentioned. Briefly upon each. First, it is set forth by way of contrast—contrast with that ancient dispensation which was of Divine origin which conveyed much blessing to Israel, and which had the Divine approval resting upon it.

In that old dispensation the first point mentioned in the text is that there were many priests. "And every priest stands"—implying that there were several. There were many priests at the same time—the sacrifices of the Temple were too numerous to have been, all of them, performed by one man. All the descendants of Aaron were set apart to this work, and even then they required the aid of the Levites in certain inferior duties. And as there were many priests at one time, so there were many in succession. As a priest died, he was succeeded by his sons. By reason of infirmity they were not able to continue in their office even through the whole of their lifetime—there was a certain period at which they were commanded to surrender their office to younger men. By reason of mortality the priesthood was perpetually changing. One high priest died and was succeeded by another.

Now the reason for the existence of many priests was this, that no one priest had accomplished the work of expiation. The good man has gone to his fathers and offered up the last of the morning lambs—but the morning lambs must still be offered. The high priest is dead and there shall be no more opportunity for him to enter into that which is within the veil, but there must be a new high priest appointed, for the work is not finished. There were many priests and as one generation passed away, another inherited the miter. Now, herein is the Glory of Christ that He is but one, and to this our attention is called by the Apostle—that whereas there were many priests and the sacrifices were hereby proved to be incomplete, since others had to take up the work—here is but *one* Priest forever, and He has finished His work and therefore sits down at the right hand of God!

In farther contrast we observe that as there were many priests, so there were many sacrifices for sins. The sacrifice was offered once, but sin was not put away and therefore had to be offered again. The great day of Atonement came every year, wherein sin was afresh brought to remembrance. There was a day of Atonement last year, but the people are unforgiven, and there must be a day of Atonement this year. And when that day is over and the priest has come forth in his holy and beautiful

apparel with the breastplate gleaming in the light of God, Israel may rejoice for awhile, but there is one thought that will sadden her—there must be an Atonement day next year—for sin still remains upon Israel, notwithstanding all that the house of Aaron can do by all their sacrifices.

Yes, and moreover, remembrance of sin was of necessity made every day. There was the lamb for the morning—the innocent victim was slaughtered and burned. But the morning sacrifice did not put away the day's sin, for as the sun began to descend in the west another victim must be brought—and so on each morning and each night—victim, victim, victim, sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice because the expiation was always incomplete. But our blessed Lord, “the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world,” was sacrificed but *once*, and that one Sacrifice has completed His expiatory work. In very truth His was a sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than theirs.

Follow the contrast a little further and observe the Apostle's assertion that the repeated sacrifices of the Law could never take away sin. Those must have been strangely blind who thought they could. How could the blood of bulls and of goats put away sin? What conceivable connection can there be, except in symbol, between the death pangs of a beast and the sin of a man before God? The *principle* of substitution was by the legal sacrifices clearly set forth, but that was all—those offerings did not and could not provide the actual substitute.

The principle of vicarious sacrifice they plainly unfolded, but they provided no real sin-offering. How could they? Where but in the Christ of God could a propitiation be found? Where else is there one who could in our nature make recompense to the injured Law of God? You will observe, dear Brethren, that the words used in the text are these, “Can never take away sins.” The word is, “Can never strip off sin.” As if our sins were like filthy garments—the vestures of our disgrace—these could not be taken from us by the daily ministering of priests. There was no power in their sacrifices to remove the polluted coverings.

Yet the priests were very diligent, for “every priest stands” in the posture of activity, and they were persevering, too, for “every priest stands *daily*.” They were obedient, too, for they did not offer sacrifices according to their own devices, but, as the text says, “the same sacrifices”—that is to say, such as were ordained of God. The priests were both diligent, constant, and *obedient*—and the principle of the truth was in their offerings—the doctrine of Substitution. Yet sin still remained upon the consciences of the priests and none of them were made perfect. Mark well one inference from this. If the sacrifices were presented reverently and perpetually according to God's own command. And if they were presented by men about whose priesthood there could be no manner of question—for they had received it indisputably of the Lord—if these offerings were of no service to the taking away of sin, it is clear enough that the offerings of so-called priests in these modern times cannot have any efficacy!

There was a priesthood, certainly appointed of God, offering victims ordained by Divine order—and yet their service did not put away sin! How much less, then, can it be wise to trust in doubtful priests who present

sacrifices unwarranted by the Word of God? Their descent cannot be proven. Their title and pretensions of one sect are ridiculed by another—they are all alike deceivers! Have done with them and rest alone in Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession! If Jerusalem has no sacrifice in all her flocks, what use can it be to look to Rome? If Aaron's seed cannot put away sin, to what end shall we look to the slaves of Antichrist?

Following the Apostle's words, we come to the character of our Lord's sacrifice, and we perceive, in reading, that His priesthood was personal, and entirely within Himself. There is but one true atoning Priest. The 12th verse says, "this Man." The word, "Man," is not in the original. It is "this," "this Priest," if you will, "this Man," if you please, But its vagueness may make us think that the Apostle scarcely knew what to say. You see the stars and the moon in their brightness, but suddenly they are all eclipsed and lost in a superior light. What can this glory be which has paled their fires? It is the sun rising in his strength.

So, while we are beholding the priesthood of Aaron with all its excellence, it suddenly ceases to shine because of the Glory which excels—the radiant Presence of One for whom, like Heaven's manna, it is not easy to find a fully descriptive name. Shall we call Him, "Man?" Blessed be His name! He is so, our near kinsman, the, "Son of Man." Shall we call Him "Priest?" He is so. Blessed be His name! He is the true Melchisedec! Shall we call Him, "God?" Well may we do so, for He counts it not robbery to be equal with God! But this one divinely mysterious Person—this unique and solitary High Priest—accomplishes what the many priests of Aaron's race could not compass!

They were weak, but He is all-sufficient. He has worked out eternal redemption and made an end of sin. Note well, that none stand with Him at the altar! None is appointed to aid Him—neither before Him nor after Him is there one to share His office. He is without father, without mother, without predecessor and without successor. He stands alone and by Himself, this glorious One who looked and there was no man, and therefore His own arm brought salvation! He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him. Jesus, the sole sacrificing Priest of our profession has completed what the long line of the Levitical priesthood must have left forever incomplete.

And we are told further, by the Apostle, that as there was but one Priest, so there was only one Sacrifice. He "offered one Sacrifice for sins." He himself was the Sacrifice—His body the Altar—Himself the Priest, Himself also the Victim. On Calvary's Cross He presented Himself a Substitute for human guilt and there He bore the crushing weight of Jehovah's wrath in His own body on the behalf of all His people. On Him their sins were laid, and He was numbered with the transgressors! And there He, in their place, suffered what was due to the righteousness of God and made Atonement to Divine Justice for the sins of His people.

This was done, not by *many* offerings, but by one Sacrifice, and that one alone! Jesus offered no other sacrifice! He had never made one before, nor since, nor will He present another sacrifice in the future. His sin

offering is one. The text adds that, as there was but one Sacrifice, so it was but once offered *forever*, or, as it puts it, “one Sacrifice for sins forever.” Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. There is, in the Scriptures, no such idea as that of Christ perpetually offering Himself—it is a childish invention of superstition! We are expressly told that He offered Himself “once.” Under the Law the lamb was offered many times, the same sacrifices were repeated—but our Lord exclaimed, “It is finished,” and concluded all His sacrificing works. He “offered one Sacrifice for sins forever.”

I do not know how your Bibles happen to be marked as to the comma in the passage. Mine, now before me, reads thus—“After He had offered one Sacrifice for sins forever, sat down.” But that which I use at home is marked in the other way—“After He had offered one Sacrifice for sins, forever sat down.” We do not quite know where the comma should be—some of the best scholars maintain that it should be joined to the preceding words—others that it belongs to the succeeding. It does not involve any point of doctrine, and it may be read whichever way you please, without error. I think, however, the preponderating testimony is in favor of its being read, “He offered one Sacrifice for sins forever.” At any rate those words express a great and precious Truth of God.

Look back as far as you can, there was no Sacrifice for sins except the “Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world.” Look on as far as you will, till this present dispensation shall have completed its circle, and men shall have passed the judgment-seat, and you shall find no Atonement for sin except this one—it stands alone, shining as a lone star or a solitary rock in the midst of a raging sea. The Propitiation which God has set forth was and ever must be one. The Lord Jesus offered Himself once, once only, once only forever! There is no other atoning priest, no other sacrifice, and there is no repetition of that one Sacrifice.

Now we go on to notice the results of Christ’s one offering, which are, in the text, described as threefold—towards Himself, His enemies, and His people. Towards Himself—After He had offered one Sacrifice for sins He forever sat down at the right hand of God. Every priest, under the old dispensation, stood. But this Man sat down and the posture is very instructive. The typical priests stood because there was work to do. They must still present their sacrifices. But our Lord sits down because there is no more sacrificial work to do! Atonement is complete, He has finished His task. There were no seats in the tabernacle. Observe the Levitical descriptions and you will see that there were no resting places for the priests in the holy place. Not only were none allowed to sit, but there was nothing whatever to sit upon!

According to the rabbis, the king might sit in the holy places, and, perhaps, David did sit there. If so, he was a striking type of Christ sitting as King. A priest never sat in the tabernacle—he was under a dispensation which did not afford rest, and was not intended to give it—a covenant of works which gives the soul no repose. Jesus sits in the Holy of Holies and herein we see that His work is finished. There is more teaching in the passage. He “sat down.” This shows that He took possession of the

Holy Place. Under the Law, when the priest had done his work, what did he do? He went home. Neither the temple nor the tabernacle were his home. If you had asked a priest, "Where do you dwell?" he would have said, "among the tribe of Levi, yonder, I have my abode."

But this Man, when He had finished His work, sat down in the Holy Place because He *was* at home—not a servant, only, but a Son! Yes, and Lord of the whole house! And, therefore, He took His own seat therein by right. It is a joyful Truth that He did this representatively—to show us that while the Law gave no permanent possession and could not establish the seed of Israel in possession of sacred privileges—the Gospel gives us an abiding place among the children of God, who dwell in His house forever. The Apostle tells us where this seat of Christ was. He says, He "sat down at the right hand of God." This indicates the highest Glory possible! Our poet calls it—

"The highest place that Heaven affords."

There was no nobler position, or Jesus would have had it.

Note the remark of this same Apostle in the first chapter of this Epistle—"Unto which of the angels said He at any time, sit you at My right hand?" Angels do not sit at the right hand of God—they are constantly in the place of service, and therefore they stand ready to fly on their Master's command. But Jesus sits in the highest seat as Lord over His own house, clothed with honor and dignity, enthroned in the place of favor at the right hand of God! Sitting there He is to be viewed as clothed with everlasting power, "able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him." "Exalted to be a Prince and a Savior to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins." He is no more the "despised and rejected, the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He is no more in weakness and dishonor taken out to die—He sits as a King upon His Throne distributing royal bounties, coequal with Jehovah Himself! As King of kings, Jesus Christ is exalted at the right hand of the Father!

So much with regard to the result of the Redeemer's passion in reference to Himself. Now, observe carefully the result of His offering with regard to His enemies. He sits there "waiting till they are made His footstool." They are crushed already! Sin, which is the sting of death, has been removed and the Law, which was the strength of sin, has been satisfied. Sin being put away by Christ's death, He has effectually broken the jaw teeth of all His enemies. When Jesus Christ offered Himself unto God, He fulfilled that ancient promise, "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Christ has set His foot upon the old dragon's head and crushed out his power! Still, however, a feeble fight is kept up. Feeble, I say, for so it is to Christ, though to *us* it seems vigorous.

Sin and Satan within us, and all Christ's enemies without us, including Death itself, are vainly raging against the Christ of God, for every day they are being put beneath His feet. Every day, as the battle rages, the victory turns unto the enthroned Christ. In us I trust sin has been put beneath Christ's feet. In thousands of others it shall yet be so. Jesus upon the Throne waits the growth of that victory till all His enemies shall be utterly and ignominiously beaten. "O long expected day, begin!" Father, fulfill

Your Son's expectations, for Your saints expect it in Him. Let the time come when every enemy shall be beneath His feet!

We will not tarry, however, on that, but close this exposition of the words of the text by noticing the effect of Christ's death upon His own people. We are informed that He has "perfected" them. What a glorious word! Those for whom Christ has died were perfected by His death! It does not mean that He made them perfect in *character* so that they are no longer sinners, but that He made those for whom He died perfectly free from the *guilt* of sin. When Christ took their sins upon Himself, sin remained no longer upon them for it could not be in two places at one and the same time. If it was on Christ it was not upon them—they were acquitted at the bar of God when Christ was, on their behalf—"numbered with the transgressors."

When Jesus suffered the penalty due to His people's sins to the last jot and tittle, then their sins ceased to be and the Covenant was fulfilled—"Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more forever." There was a clean sweep made of sin—"He has finished transgression, and made an end of sin"—and that for all His people. They need no other washing, no further purging as far as pardon of sin and acceptance with God in the matter of justification are concerned, for they are all perfected by His Sacrifice. His people are described in the text as "those that are sanctified," and you must beware of misunderstanding that word as though it meant those who are made perfectly holy in character.

The word implies an *inward* work of Divine Grace, but it means a great deal more. The passage should be read, "He has perfected forever them that are *being* sanctified," for it is in the present in the Greek. The text is not to be made to say that those who are perfectly sanctified are *perfected*—that would be a commonplace, self-evident truth—but the great High Priest perfected forever those who are *being sanctified*. Now, sanctification means, primarily, the setting apart of a people by God to be holy to Himself. Election is sanctification *virtually*—all God's people were sanctified—set apart and made holy to the Lord in the eternal purpose and Sovereign decree before the earth was.

Christ has, by His death, perfected all who were sanctified or set apart in election. This purpose of sanctification is carried out, further, when those set apart are called out by Grace. When effectual Grace separates men from the world by conversion and regeneration, then they become, in another sense, the sanctified—they are set apart even as Christ set apart Himself—dedicated to God's service and separated from sinners. As the work which began at regeneration is continued and carried on in them they are in another aspect sanctified—they are realizing in themselves that sanctification or dedication to God which was theirs from before the foundation of the world.

The text relates not only to those in Heaven who are perfectly sanctified, but it relates to all who were set apart in the purposes of Grace. As far as their pardon and justification are concerned, Christ perfected them forever when He offered up Himself without spot unto God.

II. We have thus studied the interpretation of the words, reading, marking, and learning them. Now, I ask your earnest attention while we try to DIGEST THESE TRUTHS. It is in the digestion that the real nutriment shall come to our hearts. All you who desire eternal life lend me your ears, for this matter concerns you—observe that the whole business of this passage concerns *sinner*s. The verse speaks about the Jewish priests who offered sacrifices for sins, and then it further speaks concerning Christ Jesus who has put away sin.

O you guilty, the Gospel is meant for you! If there are any of you who are innocent and pure, and without spot—for you I have no words of consolation. But oh, you Sinners, the Gospel is for you! For you the Priesthood and the Substitution of Jesus! For you His death on earth! For you His reign and power in Heaven! This fact ought to encourage every trembling conscience. Are any of you saying, “Ah, I shall never be saved, I am so guilty”? Believe not that lie of Satan! “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” The Gospel has for its special aim and intent the putting away of sin, and therefore it is suitable to your case.

Hearken, then, further to me. See in the text the position out of which you should labor to escape. It is the position of those who stand daily ministering and daily offering sacrifices which can never put away sin! You are seeking mercy and I know what you are doing—you are going about to establish a righteousness of your own. You thought, “I will pray very regularly.” You have done so for months, but prayers can never put away sin. What is there in prayer, itself, that can have merit in it to make atonement for sin? You have read the Scriptures regularly, for which I am most glad—but this you always *ought* to have done! And if you now do it most commendably, in what way will that put away sin?

“Ah, but I have been a regular attendant at a place of worship.” It is well you should, for, “faith comes by hearing.” But I see no connection between the mere fact of your sitting in a place of worship and the putting away of sin! You know it has not eased your conscience, but has even increased your sense of sin. Perhaps some of you have for years been trying to save yourselves and you have got no further. You feel as if you were further off than ever you were. “Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which profits not?” Why do you stand daily at the altar offering that which can never put away sin? It would be infinitely wiser to flee to the Sacrifice which can atone!

Now, follow the text, and, oh, may it come into your very soul, for its practical teaching is that the one sole Object of faith for the pardon of sin is the Man, the Priest, Christ Jesus! “This Man,” says the Apostle, “offered one Sacrifice for sins forever.” If you would have peace of heart, you must get it only from this one glorious Person, the Christ of God! I tell you solemnly, you will damn yourself by your prayers and your tears and your repenting, and your Church attendance, and your Chapel attendance as easily as by blasphemy and fornication, if you trust in them!

If you make a Savior and an idol of your best works, they are accursed. Though your idol is of purest gold, it is as much an abomination unto the

living God as if you had made it of filth. There must be no looking anywhere but to Jesus, not in any measure or degree. He who looks partly to Jesus, and partly to himself, looks not to Christ at all. If a man shall put one foot upon the land and the other on the sea—the foot that is on the land will not help him—he must certainly fall because his other standing place is weak.

If a chain is made strong enough to bear huge weights in every portion except one link, yet we all know its strength is not to be measured by the stronger portions, but by the weak link. And if you have one weak link in your hope—if you are resting in anything you are, or hope to be, or can do or feel—that one weak link will snap and ruin you forever—

***“None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good.”***

From top to bottom, from foundation to pinnacle, our hopes must be in the work of Jesus and we must trust in Him alone, or else we shall build in vain. “Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid.” Other hope beneath the skies there is none. O Soul, learn the uselessness of looking to anything but Christ! Be assured of this—if you will look to Him and to Him alone, He will put away your sin! He has done it by the Sacrifice of Himself.

Furthermore, here is another thought. I would that you would drink it in as Gideon’s fleece drank in the dew—it is this—the efficacy of the Atonement of Christ for sin is as great today as ever it was. He “offered one Sacrifice for sins,” for what? For a thousand years? No! But the text says “forever!”—FOREVER!—

***“The dying thief rejoiced to see,
That fountain in his day.
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.
Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood,
Shall never loose its power;
Till all the ransomed Church of God,
Be saved to sin no more.”***

“One Sacrifice for sins forever.” The devil tells you it is of no use for you to believe in Christ—there is not efficacy for you—you have sinned away your day of Grace. Tell him he is a liar! Christ has offered *one* Sacrifice for sins forever, and while a man lives beneath the Covenant of Mercy where the Gospel is sounded in his ears, there is efficacy in the Atonement forever!

The atoning Sacrifice has no limit in its merit. The salvation of some has not drained it of even the smallest degree of its power! As the sunlight, though it is seen by millions of eyes, is as bright as ever it was, so is it with Jesus! Perhaps the sun’s fires may grow dull and become dimmed in the course of ages—but it is certain that the eternal fountain of mercy, the Sun of Righteousness, will never fail. He will continue to flood His people with the golden sunlight of His forgiving Grace. He has made one Sacrifice for sins forever. I will come to Him, then. He is able to save me—He is able to save me even though I were a sinner of 70 years of age. I

will come to Him, I will rest in Him—in Him alone. Oh, believe me, if you do this you have eternal life abiding in you!

A further thought. The text leads me to say to you that it is utterly hopeless, if you desire salvation, for you to expect Jesus Christ to do anything more than He has already done. Many are waiting for a something but they scarcely know what. Now Jesus, when He died and went to Heaven, perfected forever all His work, and if you do not believe, today, in what He has done, there will be no surer grounds for belief tomorrow. If faith is difficult to me today, I must not expect that I shall have any more evidence, or that there will be any more truth for me to rely upon if I live another 20 years. God has set forth Christ for you as guilty sinners to rest on, and if that is not enough for you, what more would you have? Christ has offered *Himself*. He has died and suffered in our place. He has risen and gone into His Glory. If you cannot depend upon Him, what more would you have Him do?

Shall He come and die again? You have rejected Him once—you would reject Him though He died twice. But that cannot be done! There is enough in His sacrifice to answer all the purposes of mercy and if you sin willfully by rejecting Him, “there remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation.” This is the point—all the Atonement that could save me in 10 years time is here *now*. All that I can ever rely upon if I postpone all thoughts of faith, is here already! There will be no improvement in Christ. He has perfected His work. Oh, poor troubled Soul, rest on Him now! While I put these words, as it were, into your mouths, how I wish I could put them into your hearts!

How foolish you are who are looking for signs and wonders or else you will not believe. May the Spirit of God show you that Jesus is now able and willing to save you, and that all you have to do is to take what He has done and simply trust Him and you shall be saved this morning, completely saved, perfected through His one Sacrifice! There remains no more to be done by the Redeemer. He sits down and He will not rise for any further sacrifice. He has finished His Atonement and perfected those He means to save. If you do not believe in Him, there remains no more sacrifice for sins.

Yet, again, I need you, dearly beloved Brothers and Sisters, to gather from the text before us the true posture of every *Believer* in Christ. “This Man, after He had offered one Sacrifice for sins forever, sat down.” If I am a Believer, that is *my* posture! If you are a Believer that is yours—you are to sit down. Under the Law there was no sitting down. Even at the Passover the Israelites stood with their loins girt and their staves in their hands. There was no sitting down. It is only at the Gospel supper that our proper posture is that of reclining, or sitting down, because our warfare is accomplished. They that have believed have entered into rest. Jesus has given us rest. We are not traversing the wilderness. We are come unto Mount Zion, unto the glorious assembly of the Church of the First-Born whose names are written in Heaven! Our justifying work is finished, finished by Christ! Sit down Christian. Sit down and rest in your Lord!

There is much to be done as to fighting your sins and much to be done for Christ in the world, but so far as justification and forgiveness are concerned, rest is your proper place—peace in Christ Jesus your lawful portion. Your position is also to be one of expectancy. Christ, when He sits down, expects His enemies to be made His footstool. Expect, O Believer, the time when you shall be rid of all sin. Fight manfully against your inbred corruptions. Struggle against sin as you see it in the outside world and expect every day, with holy faith, that you shall get the victory. As Christ sits there waiting, He has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Himself—and we will sit there and look down upon this erring world and expect the time when all evil shall be beneath our feet as it is beneath His.

Meanwhile, our posture is, once again, that of those who are perfected in Christ Jesus. How I wish that we could all realize this and live in the power of it! If I am, indeed, a Believer, I have nothing whatever to do in order to put away the guilt of my sins. I have much to do by faith to overcome the *power* of sin in me, and to seek after holiness—but so far as the *guilt* of transgression is concerned, Jesus Christ's one offering has perfected all His people—there is not a sin remaining upon them, nor a trace of sin! They are “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Before God's sight they are perfectly lovely. They are not *somewhat* beautiful, but they are altogether lovely in Christ! They are accepted not in part but altogether “accepted in the Beloved.”

When I get upon this strain, words are quite inadequate to express the emotions of my soul. This Truth of God might well make David dance before the Ark of the Lord—to think that though black in ourselves, we are comely in Christ—though like the smoke-dried tents of Kedar we are foul, yet clothed in our Savior's beauties we are like the curtains of Solomon for Glory! The glory of the text is that we are perfected forever—not for tomorrow, and then suffered to fall from Grace—not for the next 20 years and then turned out of the covenant! But He has perfected “forever” those that are set apart. It is a work which abides like the worker Himself, and while Christ sits on the Throne His people cannot die! While His work remains forever perfect, they are also forever perfect in Him.

Now, Brethren, another practical point is this, that it becomes us to make the evidence of our interest in this gracious work more and more clear to others. The text says, “Has perfected those that are sanctified,” or set apart as holy unto God. We must be more and more set apart every day. We must labor after holiness. This must be our object—not in order that we may be saved, for we are saved already—but in order that others may clearly see that we are saved, and their seeing our good works may glorify our Father which is in Heaven. If I have in myself no measure of holiness, how shall I be recognized as belonging to Christ? Is it not foolish presumption to say, “I am perfect in Christ,” if still my soul lives in sin, and loves it? May the Lord, by His Spirit, lead us in the ways of holiness, and then, walking in the light as He is in the light, we shall have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, shall cleanse us from all sin.

Finally, it remains for us to remember that Christ will be one of two things to every one of us here present—either we shall see Him at the right hand of God and rejoice that He is lifted so high—or else we shall behold Him there with horror as we writhe beneath His feet. For His people, perfected forever, it is their Heaven to think that Christ is highly exalted! Oh, would we not exalt Him if we could? Is there anything in this world that we would keep back from Him? Is there any suffering from which we would shrink if we could lift Him high? I hope I can speak for all of God's people and say the dearest object of our life is to honor Him. Oh for high thrones for Jesus and bright crowns for Jesus!—

***“Let Him be crowned with majesty
Who bowed His head to death!
And be His honors sounded high
By all things that have breath!”***

Let him have the highest place that Heaven can yield Him.

But, if we will not believe His Godhead. If we will not trust Him as the Mediator. If we have no part in His Sacrifice. If we oppose His Gospel. If we reject His claims to our obedience—there is another position we shall have to take up—and that is beneath His feet. Those feet will be heavy, indeed! They were pierced once—but if ever those pierced feet come upon you, they will crush you to powder! Nothing is so terrible as love when once it is turned to anger. Oil is soft, but how it burns! In flame love into jealousy and it is cruel as the grave. Beware, you that reject the Savior, for in the day when He comes He will strike you with a rod of iron, and even His face, which is full of tenderness today, shall then be full of terror—and this shall be your cry, “Hide us you mountains! You rocks conceal us from the face of Him that sits upon the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.”

What a terrible mixture of words, “The wrath of the Lamb.” It is one of the most dreadful expressions in Scripture! The Lord grant we may never feel its terrible meaning. May His blood cleanse us. Amen.

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CHRIST EXALTED

NO. 91

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 6, 1856,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever,
sat down at the right hand of God; from henceforth
expecting till His enemies are made His footstool.”
Hebrews 10:12, 13.***

At the Lord's Table we wish to have no subject for contemplation but our blessed Lord, Jesus Christ, and we have generally been accustomed to consider Him as the Crucified One, “the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.” We have had before us the emblems of His broken body and of His blood shed for many for the remission of sins, but I am not quite sure that the crucified Savior is the only appropriate theme, although, perhaps, the most so. It is well to remember how our Savior left us—by what road He traveled through the shadows of death. But I think it is quite as well to remember what He is doing while He is away from us—to remember the high glories to which the Crucified Savior has attained. And it is, perhaps, as much calculated to cheer our spirits to behold Him on His Throne as to consider Him on His Cross. We have seen Him on His Cross, in some sense—that is to say, the eyes of men on earth did see the Crucified Savior. But we have no idea of what His glories are above. They surpass our highest thought. Yet faith can see the Savior exalted on His Throne and, surely, there is no subject that can keep our expectations alive, or cheer our drooping faith better than to consider that while our Savior is absent, He is absent on His Throne! And that when He left His Church to sorrow for Him, He has not left us comfortless—He has promised to come to us—that while He tarries, He is reigning and that while He is absent, He is sitting high on His father's Throne!

The Apostle shows, here, the superiority of Christ's Sacrifice over that of every other priest. “Every priest stands daily ministering and offering, oftentimes, the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins—but this ‘Man,’ or Priest—for the word, ‘Man,’ is not in the original—“after He had offered one sacrifice for sins,” had finished His work and forever, He “sat down.” You see the superiority of Christ's Sacrifice rests in this—that the priest offered continually and after he had slaughtered one lamb, another was needed. After one scapegoat was driven into the wil-

derness, a scapegoat was needed the next year, “but this Man, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins,” did what thousands of scapegoats never did and what hundreds of thousands of lambs never could effect—He perfected our salvation and worked out an entire Atonement for the sins of all His chosen ones!

We shall notice, in the first place, this morning, *the completeness of the Savior’s work of Atonement*—He has done it—we shall gather that from the context. Secondly, *the Glory which the Savior has assumed*. And thirdly, *the triumph which He expects*. We shall dwell very briefly on each point and endeavor to pack our thoughts as closely together as we can.

I. We are taught here, in the first place, THE COMPLETENESS OF THE SAVIOR’S WORK. He has done all that was necessary to be done to make an Atonement and an end of sin. He has done so much that it will never be necessary for Him to again be crucified. His side, once opened, has sent forth a deep stream, deep enough and precious enough, to wash away all sin! He needs not that His side should be opened again, or that His hands should any more be nailed to the Cross. I infer that His work is finished from the fact that He is described, here, as *sitting down*. Christ would not sit down in Heaven if He had more work to do. Sitting down is the posture of rest. Seldom did He sit down on earth. He said, “I must be about My Father’s business.” Journey after journey, labor after labor, preaching after preaching followed each other in quick succession. His was a life of incessant toil. Rest was a word which Jesus never spelled. He may sit for a moment on the well. But even there, He preaches to the woman of Samaria. He goes into the wilderness but not to sleep. He goes there to pray. His midnights are spent in labors as hard as those of the day—labors of agonizing prayer, wrestling with His Father for the souls of men! His was a life of continual bodily, mental and spiritual labor. His whole Man was exercised. But now He rests. There is no more toil for Him, now. There is no more sweat of blood, no more the weary feet, no more the aching head. No more has He to do. He sits still. But do you think my Savior would sit still if He had not done all His work? Oh, no, Beloved! He said once, “For Zion’s sake I will not rest until her glory goes forth like a lamp that burns.” And I am sure He would not rest, or be sitting still unless the great work of our Atonement were fully accomplished. Sit still, Blessed Jesus, while there is a fear of Your people being lost? Sit still, while their salvation is at hazard? No! And Your truthfulness and Your compassion tell us that You would still labor if the work were still undone. Oh, if the last thread had not been woven in the great garment of our righteousness, He would be spinning it now! If the last particle of our debt had not been paid, He would be counting it down now! And if all were not finished and complete, He would never rest, un-

til, like a wise builder, He had laid the topstone of the temple of our salvation! No. The very fact that He sits still, rests and is at ease, proves that His work is finished and is complete!

And then, note again that His sitting at the right hand of God implies *that He enjoys pleasure*. For at God's right hand "there are pleasures forever more." Now I think the fact that Christ enjoys Infinite pleasure has in it some degree of proof that He must have finished His work. It is true, He had pleasure with His Father before that work was begun. But I cannot conceive that if, after having been Incarnate, His work was still unfinished, He would rest. He might rest before He began the work, but as soon as He had begun it, you will remember, He said He had a baptism wherewith He must be baptized and He appeared to be hastening to receive the whole of the direful baptism of agony! He never rested on earth till the whole work was finished. Scarcely a smile passed His brow till the whole work was done. He was "a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief," until He could say, "it is finished." And I could scarcely conceive the Savior happy on His Throne if there were any more to do. Surely, living as He was on that great Throne of His, there would be anxiety in His breast if He had not secured the meanest lamb of His fold and if He had not rendered the eternal salvation of every blood-bought one as sacred as His own Throne! The highest pleasure of Christ is derived from the fact that He has become the "Head over all things to His Church," and has saved that Church. He has joys as God—but as the Man-God, His joys spring from the salvation of the souls of men. That is His joy—which is full in the thought that He has finished His work and has cut it short in righteousness! I think there is some degree of proof, although not, perhaps, positive proof there, that Jesus must have finished His work.

But now, something else. *The fact that it is said He has sat down forever proves that He must have done it.* Christ has undertaken to save all the souls of the elect. If He has not already saved them, He is bound to do something that will save them. Remember He has given solemn oath and promise to His Father that He will bring many souls unto Glory and that He will make them perfect through His own righteousness. He has promised to present our souls unblemished and complete—

***"Before the Glory of His face
With joys Divinely great."***

Well, if He has not done enough to do that, then He must come again to do it! But from the fact that He is to sit there *forever*, that He is no more to wear the crown of thorns, that He is never again to leave His Throne to cease to be king any more, that He is still to be girded by His grandeur and His Glory and sit forever there, is proof that He has accomplished the great work of Propitiation! It is certain that He must have done all

from the fact that He is to sit there *forever*, to sit on His Throne throughout all ages, more visibly in the ages to come, but never to leave it—again to suffer and again to die.

Yet, the best proof is *that Christ sits at His Father's right hand*. For the very fact that Christ is in Heaven, accepted by His Father, proves that His work must be done. Why, Beloved, as long as an ambassador from our country is at a foreign court, there must be peace. And as long as Jesus Christ, our Savior, is at His Father's court, it shows that there is real peace between His people and His Father. Well, as He will be there *forever*, that shows that our peace must be continual and like the waves of the sea, shall never cease! But that peace could not have been continual unless the Atonement had been wholly made, unless justice had been entirely satisfied—and, therefore, from that very fact, it becomes certain that the work of Christ must be done! What? Christ enter Heaven—Christ sit at His Father's right hand before all the guilt of His people was rolled away? Ah, no! He was the sinner's Substitute. And unless He paid the sinner's debt and died the sinner's death, there was no Heaven in view for me. He stood in the sinner's place and the guilt of all His elect was imputed to Him. God accounted Him as a sinner—and as a sinner He could not enter Heaven until He had washed all that sin away in a crimson flood of His own gore—unless His own righteousness had covered up the sins which He had taken on Himself—and unless His own Atonement had taken away those sins which had become His by imputation! The fact that the Father allowed Him to ascend up on high—that He gave Him leave, as it were, to enter Heaven and that He said, "Sit at My right hand," proves that He must have perfected His Father's work and that His Father must have accepted His Sacrifice! But He could not have accepted it if it had been imperfect. Thus we prove that the work must have been finished, since God the Father accepted it. Oh, glorious Doctrine! This Man has done it! This Man has finished it—this Man has completed it! He was the Author, He is the Finisher! He was the Alpha, He is the Omega! Salvation is finished, complete! Otherwise He would not have ascended up on high, nor would He also sit at the right hand of God. Christian, rejoice! Your salvation is a finished salvation—Atonement is wholly made—neither stick nor stone of yours is needed! Not one stitch is required to that glorious garment of His—not one patch to that glorious robe that He has finished. 'Tis done—'tis done perfectly! You are perfectly accepted in His righteousness! You are purged in His blood! "By one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified."

II. And now, our second point—THE GLORY WHICH HE HAS ASSUMED. "After He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God"—the Glory which Christ has assumed.

Now, by this you are to understand the complex Person of Christ. Christ, as God, always was on His Father's Throne. He always was God. And even when He was on earth He was still in Heaven. The Son of God did not cease to be Omnipotent and Omnipresent when He came wrapped in the garments of clay. He was still on His Father's Throne! He never left it, never came down from Heaven in that sense. He was still there, "God over all, blessed forever." As He has said, "The Son of Man who came down from Heaven, who, also," at that very moment was, "in Heaven." But Jesus Christ, as the Man-God, has assumed glories and honors which once He had not. For as Man, He did not at one time sit on His Father's Throne. He was a Man, a suffering Man, a Man full of pains and groans, more than mortals have ever known! But as God-Man, He has assumed a dignity next to God. He sits at the right hand of God—at the right hand of the glorious Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—sits the Person of the Man, Jesus Christ, exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on High! From this we gather that the dignity which Christ now enjoys is surpassing dignity. There is no honor, there is no dignity to be compared to that of Christ! No angel flies higher than He does. Save only the great Three-in-One God, there is none to be found in Heaven who can be called superior to the Person of the Man, Christ Jesus. He sits at the right hand of God, "far above all angels, principalities, powers and every name that is named." His Father "has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in Heaven and of things on earth and of things under the earth." No dignity can shine like His! The sons of righteousness that have turned many to God are but as stars compared with Him, the brightest of the suns. As for angels, they are but flashes of His own brightness, emanations from His own glorious Self. He sits there, the great masterpiece of Deity—

***"God, in the Person of His Son,
Has all His mightiest works outdone."***

That glorious Man, taken into union with Deity, that mighty Man-God, surpasses everything in the glory of His majestic Person. Christian, remember your Master has unsurpassed dignity!

In the next place, Christ has *real* dignity. Some persons have mere empty titles which confer but little power and little authority. But the Man, Christ Jesus, while He has many crowns and many titles, has not one tinsel crown or one empty title. While He sits there, He sits not there *pro forma*. He does not sit there to have nominal honor done to Him. But He has real honor and real glory! That Man-Christ who once walked the streets of Jerusalem, now sits in Heaven and angels bow before Him. That Man-Christ who once hung on Calvary and there expired in agonies

the most acute, now exalted on His Father's Throne, sits and sways the scepter of Heaven—no, devils at His Presence tremble, the whole earth acknowledges the sway of His Providence and on His shoulders the pillars of the universe rest! "He upholds all things by the Word of His power." He overrules all mortal things, making the evil work a good and the good produce a better and a better still, in infinite progression. The power of the God-Man, Christ, is Infinite. You cannot tell how great it is. He is "able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him." He is "able to keep us from falling and to present us spotless before His Presence." He is able to make "all things work together for good." He is "able to subdue all things unto Himself." He is able to conquer even death, for He has the power of death and He has the power of Satan, who once had power over death—He is Lord over all things, for His Father has made Him so! Oh, the glorious dignity of our Savior! I cannot talk of it in words, Beloved. All I can say to you must be simple repetition. I can only repeat the statements of Scripture. There is no room for flights. We must just keep where we have always been, telling out the story that His Father has exalted Him to real honors and real dignities!

And once more—this honor that Christ has now received (I mean the Man-God, Christ, not the God-Christ, for He already had that and never lost it and, therefore, could never obtain it. He was Man-God and, as such He was exalted) was *deserved* honor. That dignity which His Father gave Him, He well deserved. I have sometimes thought if all the holy spirits in the universe had been asked what should be done for the man whom the King delights to honor, they would have said, Christ must be the Man whom God delights to honor and He must sit at His Father's right hand. Why, if I might use such a phrase, I can almost suppose His mighty Father putting it to the vote of Heaven as to whether Christ should be exalted and that they carried it by acclamation, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive honor and Glory forever and ever." His Father gave Him that. But still the votes of all the saints and of all the holy angels, said to it, AMEN! And this thing I am certain of, that every heart here—every Christian heart, says AMEN to it! Ah, Beloved, we would exalt Him, we would crown Him, "crown Him Lord of All." Not only will His Father crown Him but we, ourselves, would exalt Him if we had the power. And when we shall have power to do it, we will cast our crowns beneath His feet and crown Him Lord of All. It is deserved honor! No other being in Heaven deserves to be there. Even the angels are kept there and God "charges His angels with folly." And certainly none of His saints deserve it! They feel that Hell was their desert. But Christ's exaltation was a deserved exaltation. His father might say to Him, "Well done, My Son, well done. You have finished the work which I had given You to

do. Sit You forever, first of all men, glorified by union with the Person of the Son. My glorious co-equal Son, sit You at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”

One more illustration and we have done with this. We must consider the exaltation of Christ in Heaven as being, in some degree, a representative exaltation. Christ Jesus, exalted at the Father’s right hand, though He has eminent Glories in which the saints must not expect to share, He is essentially the express image of the Person of God. He is the brightness of His Father’s Glory, yet, to a very great degree, the honors which Christ has in Heaven, He has as our Representative! Ah, Brethren it is sweet to reflect how blessedly Christ lives with His people. You all know that we were—

***“One, when He died, one, when He rose,
One, when He triumphed o’er His foes;
One, when in Heaven He took His seat,
And angels sang all Hell’s defeat.”***

Today you know that you are one with Him, now, in His Presence. We are at this moment “raised up together,” and may, afterwards, “sit together in heavenly places, even in Him.” As I am represented in parliament and as you are, so is every child of God represented in Heaven! But as we are not one with our parliamentary representatives, that figure fails to set forth the glorious representation of us which our forerunner, Christ, carries on in Heaven—for we are actually one with Him! We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. His exaltation is our exaltation. He will give us to sit upon His Throne, just as He has overcome and is set down with His Father on His Throne. He has a crown and He will not wear His crown unless He gives us crowns, too. He has a Throne but He is not content with having a Throne to Himself. On His right hand there must be His bride in gold of Ophir. And He cannot be there without His bride. The Savior cannot be content to be in Heaven unless He has His Church with Him, which is “the fullness of Him that fills all-in-all.” Beloved, look up to Christ now! Let the eyes of your faith catch sight of Him—behold Him, there, with many crowns upon His head. Remember, as you see Him, there, you will one day be like He is, when you shall see Him as He is! You shall not be as great as He is, you shall not be as glorious in degree, but still, you shall, in a measure, share the same honors and enjoy the same happiness and the same dignity which He possesses. Be content to live unknown for a little while. Be content to bear the sneer, the jest, the joke, the ribald song. Be content to walk your weary way through the fields of poverty, or up the hills of affliction. By-and-by you shall reign with Christ, for He has “made us kings and priests unto God and we shall reign forever and ever.” By-and-by we shall share the glories of the Head! The oil has been poured on His head. It has not

trickled down to us, yet—save only in that faithful fellowship which we have. But, by-and-by, that oil shall flow to the very skirts of the garments and we, the meanest of His people, shall share a part in the glories of His house by being made kings with Him—to sit on His Throne—even as He sits on His Father’s Throne!

III. And now, in the last place, WHAT ARE CHRIST’S EXPECTATIONS? We are told, *He expects that His enemies shall be made His footstool.* In some sense that is already done. The foes of Christ are, in some sense, His footstool now. What is the devil but the very slave of Christ? For he does no more than he is permitted against God’s children. What is the devil, but the servant of Christ, to fetch His children to His loving arms? What are wicked men, but unwittingly to themselves, the servants of God’s Providence? Christ has even now “power over all flesh that He may give eternal life to as many as God has given Him,” in order that the purposes of Christ might be carried out. Christ died for all and all are now Christ’s property. There is not a man in this world who does not belong to Christ in that sense, for He is God over him and Lord over him.

He is either Christ’s Brother, or else Christ’s Slave, His unwilling vassal that must be dragged out in triumph, if He follows Him not willingly. In that sense all things are now Christ’s.

But we expect greater things than these, Beloved, at His coming, *when all enemies shall be beneath Christ’s feet upon earth.* We are, therefore, many of us, “looking for that blessed hope. That glorious appearing of the Kingdom of our Savior, Jesus Christ.” Many of us are expecting that Christ will come. We cannot tell you when. We believe it to be folly to pretend to guess the time, but we are expecting that even in our lifetime the Son of God will appear! We know that when He shall appear, He will tread His foes beneath His feet and reign from pole to pole and from the river even to the ends of the earth. Not long shall anti-Christ sit on her seven hills. Not long shall the false Prophet delude his millions. Not long shall idol gods mock their worshippers with eyes that cannot see and hands that cannot handle and ears that cannot hear—

“Lo! He comes, with clouds descending!”

In the winds I see His chariot wheels. I know that He approaches and when He approaches, He “breaks the bow and cuts the spear in sunder and burns the chariot in the fire.” And Christ Jesus shall then be King over the whole world. He is King, now, virtually. But He is to have another Kingdom. I cannot see how it is to be a spiritual one, for that is come already. He is as much King, spiritually, now as He ever will be in His Church, although His Kingdom will assuredly be very extensive. But the Kingdom that is to come, I take it, will be something even greater than the spiritual Kingdom. It will be a *visible Kingdom of Christ on earth.*

Then kings must bow their necks before His feet. Then at His Throne the tribes of earth shall bend. Then the rich and mighty, the merchants of Tyre and the travelers where gold is found, shall bring their spices and myrrh before Him and lay their gold and gems at His feet—

***“Jesus shall reign wherever the sun
Does his successive journeys run—
His Kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.”***

Once more, Beloved—*Christ will have all His enemies put beneath His feet in that Great Day of Judgment.* Oh, That will be a terrible putting of His foes beneath His feet, when at that Second Resurrection, the wicked dead shall rise. Then the ungodly shall stand before His Throne and His voice shall say, “Depart, you cursed.” Oh, Rebel, you that have despised Christ—it will be a horrible thing for you, that that Man, that gibbeted, crucified Man, whom you have often despised—will have power enough to speak you into Hell! That the Man whom you have scoffed and laughed at and of whom you have virtually said, “If He is the Son of God, let Him come down from the Cross,” will have power enough, in two or three short words—to damn your soul to all eternity—“Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!” Oh, What a triumph that will be, when men, wicked men, persecutors and all those who opposed Christ, are all cast into the lake that burns! But, if possible, it will be a greater triumph when he who led men astray shall be dragged forth—

***“Shall lift his brazen front, with thunder scarred,
Receive the sentence and begin anew his Hell.”***

Oh, when Satan shall be condemned and when the saints shall judge angels and the fallen spirits shall all be under the feet of Christ, “then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, He has put all things under Him.” And when Death, too, shall come forth and the, “death of death and Hell’s destructions” shall grind his iron limbs to powder, then shall it be said, “Death is swallowed up in victory.” For the great shout of, “Victory, victory, victory,” shall drown the shrieks of the past—shall put out the sound of the howling of death. And Hell shall be swallowed up in victory!

He is exalted on high—He sits at His Father’s right hand, “from henceforth expecting till His enemies are made His footstool.”

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.**

PERFECTION IN FAITH

NO. 232

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, JANUARY 2, 1859,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“For by one offering Christ has perfected
forever them that are sanctified.”
Hebrews 10:14.***

THINK of this morning’s text—“The Lord will perfect that which concerns me.” Is it not very grateful to observe that what is just in one part of Scripture presented to us as a matter of *faith*, is in another place stated as a matter of *fact*? Think of this evening’s text—“He HAS perfected us forever.” This morning we went downwards, from faith to prayer. After having said in confidence, “The Lord will perfect that which concerns me,” we meekly besought Him—“Forsake not the works of Your own hands”—sinking as it were to a lower note in the scale of music. Then we beheld Perfection in the dim obscurity of the future, like the sun veiled behind a cloud. Our faith rested on it as a thing at present unseen, our hearts yearned after it as an inheritance yet in reserve for us.

Now tonight, this perfection is brought near to us, a thing accomplished, as an ever-present fact, whose eternal reality shines upon us with unclouded luster. It is thus I read this verse—“By one offering our Lord Jesus Christ HAS perfected forever them that are sanctified.” I have been turning this text over and over and over in my mind and praying about it and looking into it and seeking illumination from the Holy Spirit. But it was a long time before I could be clear about its exact meaning. It is very easy to select a meaning and then to say that is what the text means—and very easy also to look at something which lies upon the surface. But I am not quite so sure that after several hours of meditation any Brother would be able to ascertain what is the Spirit’s mind in this particular verse, “By one offering Christ has perfected forever them that are sanctified.”

When I was trying to find out what this meant, I thought I would read the chapters before it and if I should happen to find out any word that should seem to be the key to this verse, I would then under the Spirit’s guidance, seek to open this lock and mystery with the pick-lock which was there furnished to me. Well, I read the chapters and I did find out a word which seemed to me to explain the whole of this verse. You must have patience with me, while I try to show you what I think it means.

Then I think it will stand out in a very clear and glorious light. First, the condition of the child of God—what he is. He is a sanctified Person—“Them that are sanctified.” “Secondly, what Christ has done for Him—“He has perfected forever them that are sanctified.”

First, then, THE CHILDREN OF GOD ARE HERE INTENDED, UNDER THE TERM “SANCTIFIED.” They are described as sanctified persons. What does this mean? We usually say there are two meanings to the term “sanctified.”

One is “set apart.” God has set apart His people from before the foundation of the world, to be His chosen and peculiar inheritance. We are sanctified by God the Father. There is a second signification, which implies not the decree of the Father, but the work of the Holy Spirit. We are sanctified in Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit when He subdues our corruptions, imparts to us graces and leads us onward in the Divine walk and life of faith. But the word here, I think includes both of these senses. And I must try, if I can, to find a figure which will embrace them both. And what is the Apostle speaking about? In the ninth chapter he is speaking about the tabernacle and the candlestick and the table and the showbread and the sanctuary and the golden censor and the ark of the covenant overlaid with gold and the pot of manna. He is talking about priests and about priestly things and holy things. And he is declaring that all these things of which he speaks were sanctified things, but that though they were sanctified things, they wanted to be made perfect by the sprinkling of blood.

Now, I believe, the sanctification of our text is to be understood in this sense. There were certain golden vessels that were used in the sanctuary which were never used for anything else but for the service of God. They were set apart, they were made holy and they were kept strictly to be the vessels of the sanctuary of the Lord God. They were *sanctified* things. Again, in the sanctuary there were persons who did nothing else but wait upon the Lord. These were consecrated to their offices. For God chose the tribe of Levi and out of the tribe of Levi He chose the house of Aaron. These persons were chosen and then they were prepared. They underwent certain ceremonies and many washings and so they were made ceremonially holy. And these priests were therefore *sanctified* persons, because they were set apart, dedicated and reserved to the special service of the Lord God.

Now, Brethren, that is just what you and I are and what we ought to be. We are sanctified persons—that is to say, we are chosen by God to be the peculiar vessels which He will use in pouring out His mercy. We are to be the special priests whom He shall employ in His Divine worship in this world. No man had any right to take wine for his own drinking and drink

it out of the golden cups of the sanctuary. If he did so, he did it to his own destruction—witness Belshazzar. He took the cups and the golden candlesticks and so forth and used them in his debaucheries and lo—he was swept away and the handwriting on the wall foretold his doom. Even so, Beloved, Christian men are not to be used for anything but for God. They are a set-apart people. They are vessels of mercy, they are not for the devil's use, not for their own use, not for the world's use, but for their Master's use. He has made them on purpose to be used entirely, solely and wholly for Him.

Now, that is what is meant in this text by “sanctified.” We are sanctified persons, set apart for God's use, consecrated—just as the vessels, the cups, the candlesticks and the tables and the altars of the sanctuary, were sanctified unto God and set apart for His service. And I said we that are priests are sanctified persons, not because of any holiness in our character, seeing there were some of them that were not holy in their character. My text does not touch *character*—it touches *position* in the sight of God. We are not perfect in character, any one of us—we are only perfect in position. There were, too, men who officiated as priests before God—namely the sons of Eli—who committed sin and iniquity before God. And yet they were set apart for God's service, mark you. And when they offered the sacrifices as priests, because they had been washed with water and sprinkled with blood, they were officially accepted as being sanctified persons.

Now, Brethren, the children of God are sanctified persons, to offer spiritual sacrifices unto God through Jesus Christ and we have no right to do anything else but serve God. “What?” you say, “have not I to attend to my business?” Yes and serve God in your business. “Am I not to look after my family?” Assuredly you are and serve God in your family. But still you are to be a set-apart person. You are not to wear the white robe nor the breastplate, but still you are to think of yourself as beings as much a priest as if the breastplate were on your breast and the white robe about your loins, for you are priests unto Christ and His Father. He has made you a peculiar generation, a royal priesthood and has set you apart for Himself.

Now, I think that this first head of my sermon gives you an inkling of what the rest must mean. I have already hinted at what I think is the sense of the text. I have explained, I suppose, clearly enough in what sense we are a sanctified people, as understood in this verse. We are chosen and set apart and reserved to be God's instruments and God's servants and thus we are sanctified.

II. Now comes the second thing—IN WHAT SENSE ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND THAT CHRIST HAS *PERFECTED* THESE THAT ARE SANCTI-

FIED? Why, just this. When the golden vessels were brought into the temple or into the sanctuary, they were sanctified the very first moment that they were dedicated to God. No one dared to employ them for anything but holy uses. But they were not perfect. What did they need, then, to make them perfect? Why, to have blood sprinkled on them. And, as soon as the blood was sprinkled on them, those golden vessels were perfect vessels, officially perfect. God accepted them as being holy and perfect things and they stood in His sight as instruments of an acceptable worship.

Just so was it with the Levites and the priests. As soon as ever they were set apart to their office—as soon as ever they were born, in fact, they were consecrated, they belonged to God. They were His peculiar priesthood. But they were not perfect until they had passed through many washings and had the blood sprinkled upon them. Then God looked upon them in their official priestly character, as being perfect persons. They were not perfect in character, I repeat, they were only perfect *officially*—perfect in the sight of God. And they stood before Him to offer sacrifice as acceptably, as if they had been pure as Adam himself.

Now, then, how does this refer to us and what is the meaning of this text, that “by one offering Christ has perfected forever them that are sanctified?” Turn back a moment or two. You will find in the 9th chapter of the Hebrews, at the 6th verse, “Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people.”

Mark here. The first meaning of my text is this. The child of God is a priest and as a priest he is sanctified to enter within the veil. He is now permitted to go into the place which was once within the veil, but which is not so now, because the veil is rent in two—but the high priest could not go within the veil, because he was not perfect—he had to be sprinkled with the blood and that made him officially perfect. It would not make him perfect merely to put on the breast-plate, or to wear the ephod. He was not perfect till the blood had been sprinkled upon him and *then* he went within the veil. But when next year came round he was not fit to go within the veil till blood was sprinkled on him *again*. And the next year, though he was always a sanctified man, he was not always, officially, a perfect man. He had to be sprinkled with blood again. And so, year after year, the high priest who went within the veil, needed afresh to be made perfect, in order that he might obtain access to God.

Here is one sense of the text. The Apostle says that we who are the priests of God have a right as priests to go to God’s Mercy Seat that is

within the veil. But it were to our death to go there unless we were perfect. But we *are* perfect, for the blood of Christ has been sprinkled on us and, therefore, our standing before God is the standing of perfection. Our standing, in our own conscience, is imperfection, just as the character of the priest might be imperfect. But that has nothing to do with it. *Our standing in the sight of God is a standing of perfection.* And when He sees the blood, as of old the destroying angel passed over Israel, so this day, when He sees the blood, God passes over our sins and accepts us at the throne of His mercy, as if we were perfect. Therefore, Brethren, let us come boldly. Let us “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”

The Apostle brings in, in the twenty-second verse of this tenth chapter, one inference which I have just drawn from my text. In having access to God, perfection is absolutely necessary. God cannot talk with an imperfect being. He could talk with Adam in the garden, but He could not talk with you or with me even in Paradise itself, as imperfect creatures. How, then, am I to have fellowship with God and access to His Throne? Why, simply thus—“The blood of Christ has perfected forever them that are sanctified,” and consequently we have access with boldness to the throne of the heavenly grace and may come boldly in all our time of need. And what is better still, we are *always* perfect, always fit to come to the throne, whatever our doubts, whatever our sins. I say not this of the priest’s character. We have nothing to do with that at present. We come before God in our *station*, not in our character and therefore, we may come as perfect men at *all* times, knowing that God sees no sin in Jacob and no iniquity in Israel. For in this sense Christ has perfected forever every consecrated vessel of His mercy.

Oh, is not this a delightful thought, that when I come before the Throne of God, I feel myself a sinner, but God does not look upon me as one? When I approach Him to offer my thanksgivings, I feel that I am unworthy in myself. But I am not unworthy in that official standing in which He has placed me. As a sanctified and perfected thing in Christ, I have the blood upon me. God regards me in my sacrifice, in my worship, yes, and in myself, too, as being *perfect*. Oh how joyful this is! And there is no need a second time to repeat this perfecting. It is an everlasting perfection. It allows a constant access to the throne of the heavenly grace. That is one meaning of the text.

Again—a little further on, our Apostle, in the 9th chapter of the Hebrews, says, at the 21st verse, “He sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry.” They were all sanctified vessels, you know, but they were not perfect vessels till they were sprinkled with

the blood. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood. And without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these. But the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these," and so forth. Now, Beloved, the vessels of the sanctuary, as I have said, were sanctified the moment they were put there, but they were not *perfect*—God could not therefore accept any sacrifice that was touched with the golden tongs or that lay upon the brazen altar, so long as those golden tongs and the brazen altar were imperfect.

What was done to make them perfect? Why, they were sprinkled with blood. But they had to be sprinkled with blood ever so many times—once, twice, thrice, multitudes of times, because continually they needed making perfect. Now you and I are this day, if we are consecrated persons, like the vessels of the sanctuary. Sometimes we are like the censer—God fills us with joy and then the smoke of incense ascends from us. Sometimes we are like the slaughter-knife that the priest used. We are enabled to deny our lusts, to deny ourselves and put the knife to the neck of the victim and sometimes we are like the altar and upon us God is pleased to lay a sacrifice of labor and there it smokes acceptably to Heaven. We are made like sanctified things of His house.

But, Beloved, we, though we are sanctified and He has chosen us to be the vessels of His spiritual temple, are not *perfect* till the blood is on us. Yet, blessed be His name, that blood has once been put upon us and we are perfected forever! Is it not delightful to think that when God uses us in His service He could not use unhallowed instruments? The Lord God is so pure that He could not use anything but a perfect tool to work with. "Then surely He could never use me or use you." No, but don't you see, the *blood* is on us and we are the sanctified instruments of His Grace? And moreover we are the perfect instruments of His Grace through the blood of Jesus. Oh, I delight to think that although in preaching the Gospel I am in my own estimation and in yours, rightly enough, imperfect—yet when God makes use of me in conversion, He does not make use of an imperfect man—no, He looks upon me in Christ as being perfect in Him and then He says, "I can use this tool. I could not put My hand to an unholy thing, but I will look upon him as being perfected forever in Christ and therefore I can use him."

Oh, Christian, do try to digest this precious thought—it has indeed been precious to my soul since I first laid hold upon it. You cannot tell what God may do with you, because if He uses you at all He does not use you as a *sinner*—He uses you as a sanctified person. No, more—as a *perfect* person. I will repeat it. I do not see how a holy God could use an unholy instrument. But He puts the blood on us and then He makes us per-

fect—perfects us forever and then He uses us. And so I see the work of God carried on by men whom we think are imperfect—but I never see God doing any of His deeds except with a perfect instrument. And if you ask me how he has done it, I tell you that all His consecrated ones, all whom He has sanctified to His use, He has first of all perfected forever through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

And now we will have one more thought and then I shall have given you the full meaning of the text. In the seventh chapter, the nineteenth verse, there is a word that is a key to the meaning of my text and that helped me all through it. And I will give you the key now. “For the law made nothing perfect but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw near unto God.” Then with this, compare the tenth chapter and first verse, “The law having a shadow of good things to come and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year, continually make the comers thereunto perfect.” There is and we have got it in the text, “for then,” says he, if they had been perfect, “would they not have ceased to be offered.” Why offer any more, if you are a perfect man? “If the sacrifice made is perfect, the worshippers, once purged, should have had no more conscience of sin.”

Now mark—the Jewish sacrifice was never intended to make the Jews’ moral character any better and it did not. It had no effect upon what we call his sanctification. All the sacrifice dealt with was his justification and the perfection would be sought after—the perfection is not of sanctification, which the Arminian talks about, but the perfection of *official standing*, as he stood justified before God. Now that is the meaning of the word “perfect” here. It does not mean that the sacrifice made the man perfectly holy and perfectly moral and so forth. The sacrifice had no tendency to do that. It was quite another matter. It means that it did not perfectly make him justified in his own conscience and in the sight of God, because he had to come and offer again.

Now, here comes a man who is troubled in his conscience. He comes sighing up the temple and he must speak to the priest. He says to the priest, “I have committed such-and-such a sin.” “Ah,” says the priest, “You will never have any ease to your conscience unless you bring a sin offering. He brings a sin offering and it is offered and the man sees it burn and goes away. He has got faith—faith in the great sin offering that is to come—and his conscience is easy. A day or two after, the same feelings arise and what does he do? He goes to the priest again. “Ah,” says the priest, “you must bring another offering. You must bring a trespass offering.” He does that and his conscience grows easier for a time.

But the more his conscience gets quickened, the more he sees the unsatisfactory character of the offering he brings. At last he says, “I am so

uneasy, oh, that I could have a sacrifice every hour! For do you know,” says he, “while I can put my hand on the head of the victim, I feel so happy—when I come to see it slaughtered and the blood flowing, I feel so easy. But I do not feel perfect. I will even go up to the temple,” he says, “that there I may live.” He sees a lamb slaughtered in the morning and tears of joy are in his eye. “Oh,” says he, “I have seen that lamb. And when I saw the blood of that lamb flowing, I felt so rejoiced,” Noon comes. “Ah,” says he, “my sins arise again. I have got a conscience and where can I get relief for it?” And off he went to the temple. And there was another lamb in the evening, because God well knew that the sacrifices were themselves imperfect, only a shadow of the great substance and that His people would need to have the service renewed, not only every year, but every day—no, every morning and every evening.

But now, Beloved, behold the glory of Christ Jesus as revealed to us in our text. “Those sacrifices could not make the comers thereunto perfect.” They could not feel in their own conscience that they were perfectly justified and they wanted fresh offerings. But here today I see the slaughtered Lamb on Calvary and it was but yesterday I rejoiced in Him and I can rejoice in Him again today. Years ago I sought Him and I found Him. I do not want another Lamb. I do not want another sacrifice. I can still see that blood flowing and I can feel continually that I have no more conscience of sin. The sins are gone. I have no more remembrance of them. I am purged from them—and as I see the perpetual flowing blood of Calvary and the ever rising merits of His glorious passion, I am compelled to rejoice in this fact, that He has perfected forever *me*—made me completely perfect through His sacrifice.

And now, Christian, try and lay hold upon this meaning of the text. Christ has made your conscience at ease forever. And if it disturbs you, recollect it has no cause to do so, if you are a Believer in Christ. For has not He given you that which will put away all conscience of sin? Oh, rejoice! It has purged you so entirely that you may sit down and rest. You may sing with the poet —

***“Turn, then, my Soul, unto your rest;
The merits of your great High Priest
Speak peace and liberty.
Trust in His efficacious blood,
Nor fear your banishment from God,
Since Jesus died for you.”***

Look at the text. Once again I am going to say the same things, lest I should not be quite understood. Dear Brethren, we could not have access to God, unless on the footing of *perfection*. For God cannot walk and talk with imperfect creatures. But we are perfect, not in *character*, mark, for

we are *still* sinners. But we are perfected through the blood of Jesus Christ, so that God can allow us to have access to Him as perfected creatures. We may come boldly, because being sprinkled with the blood, God does not look on us as unholy and unclean, otherwise He could not allow us to come to His Mercy Seat. He looks upon us as being perfected forever through the one sacrifice of Christ. That is one thing.

The other was this. We are the vessels of God's temple. He has chosen us to be like the golden pots of His sanctuary. But God could not accept a worship which was offered to Him in unholy vessels. Those vessels, therefore, were made perfect by being sprinkled with blood. God could not accept the praise which comes from your unholy heart. He could not accept the song which springs from your uncircumcised lips, nor the faith which arises from your doubting soul, unless He had taken the great precaution to sprinkle you with the blood of Christ. And now, whatever He uses you for He uses you as a perfect instrument, regarding you as being perfect in Christ Jesus. That, again, is the meaning of the text and the same meaning, only a different phase of it.

And, the last meaning is that the sacrifices of the Jews did not give believing Jews peace of conscience for any length of time—they had to come again and again and again, because they felt that those sacrifices did not present to them a perfect justification before God. But behold, Beloved, you and I are complete in Jesus. We have no need of any other sacrifice! All others we disclaim. He has perfected us forever. We may see our conscience at ease, because we are truly, ready and everlastingly accepted in Him. "He has perfected forever them that are sanctified."

Now, what have I to do, but to turn to you and ask this one question and I have done. Are you a sanctified person? I have known a man say sometimes to a Believer, "Well, you look so sanctified—ah, you are one of those sanctified fellows." Well, if they said so to me, I should say, "I wish you would prove it." What can be a more holy thing than to be a sanctified man? And what a more happy thing! Let me ask you, then, are you sanctified? Says one, "I feel so sinful" That I do not ask you—I ask you whether you are set apart to God's service. Can you say—

***"Dear Lord, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do.
Take me just as I am and make use of me.
I desire to be wholly Yours"?***

Do you feel that for you to live is Christ? That there is not any object you are living for but Christ—that Christ is the great aim of your ambition, the great object of all your labors? That you are like Samson, a Nazarite, consecrated to God? Oh, then, remember that you are perfected in Christ. But, my Hearer, if you are not sanctified to God in this sense, if

you live to yourself, to pleasure and to the world, you are not perfected in Christ and what is to become of you? God will give you no access to Him. God will not use you in His service. You have no rest in your conscience and in the day when God shall come to separate the precious from the vile, He will say, "Those are my precious ones, who have the blood on them. But these have rejected Christ, they have lived to themselves, they were dead while they lived and they are damned now they are dead."

Take heed of that! And may God give you grace to be sanctified to God and then shall you be forever perfected through Christ.

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

A SAVIOR SUCH AS YOU NEED

NO. 714

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 7, 1866,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us: for after He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, then He adds, Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more. Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.”
Hebrews 10:15-18.

WE have all heard of Utopia, that imaginary land where all things are such as one might desire. A man who should conceive a *spiritual* Utopia might well be supposed to say, “What a delightful thing it would be if a man could, in this life, be completely saved! What a priceless gift would be bestowed upon a man if he could know, by infallible authority, that his every sin was pardoned as to the past, and that, as to his sins in the future, there is provided the certainty of pardon! And what if such a man should also possess the invaluable blessing of another nature, a nature which would be prone to good, just as his present nature is inclined to sin?

“A nature which would prompt him to every holy thing, and spur him forward to the loftiest aims! What a thrice happy man would he be who could feel that death itself would be gain to him, and that the trials of life will cause him no real loss! He would be blest, indeed, who could rest secure at all times, because whenever the messenger of doom might come he was ready to meet him, prepared with the absolute certainty that he should enter into immortal glories!”

A vision of such a supposable blessing as this has crossed the minds of many, but they have permitted it to melt into thin air, and have said, “The thing is impossible, but, if it could be attained, what a blessing it would be!” Now, I have come here this morning to tell you that this priceless blessing is obtainable! No, more—that it has been *obtained*, and is now enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of persons now living upon the face of the earth—and that you, my dear Hearers, shall every one of you enjoy it if you are led to put your trust in that Savior who came into this world on purpose to bring a perfect salvation to the sons of men!

It is true that every man who has believed in Jesus is perfectly pardoned. There is against him no sin in God’s book and God has blotted out all his transgressions. As for the sins which he may yet commit, the blood of Jesus has already been shed to make atonement for those possible sins, and they are already, in God’s esteem, carried away by the great Sin-bearer. As to his nature, the Believer is a renewed man. Albeit that his old nature is still inclined to that which is evil, yet he possesses within him a mortal principle—an incorruptible seed—which lives and abides forever.

And as to his dying or his living, these are but small matters to him. If he lives in the flesh he serves God, and if he dies he only falls asleep to wake up in Jesus Christ’s likeness to serve Him yet more perfectly above.

Thus, what was held to be Utopian is but the common possession of every Christian, and this supposable good, which might have been thirsted after if it had not been obtainable, is actually in the possession and enjoyment of every Believer in Christ Jesus!

I. I must not tarry, but conduct you at once to the text—IT IS THIS WHICH CONSTITUTES THE GLORY AND SUPERIORITY OF THE NEW COVENANT OF GRACE—NAMELY THAT IT GIVES, TO ALL WHO ARE INTERESTED IN IT, PERFECT SALVATION.

Under the Old Covenant no one who rested in its many sacrifices ever was or could be perfected. The worshipper brought his turtledoves or his young pigeons, his bullock or his ram, and these were offered. He went away feeling that he had been obedient to a *ceremonial* command, and therefore he enjoyed some degree of short-lived content. After a time he sinned again, and he had to say to himself, "I must provide another victim. I must go once more up to the tabernacle, or to the temple, for I have further sin to be washed away."

And even when this was done, after awhile he must come again. He could never come to a point in his life in which he could say, "It is finished, there has been a sufficient sacrifice offered. The atonement is complete. I have no need from now on to bring another offering." Such a state of mind was not supposable under the old Jewish law. There was always needed a renewal of sacrifice because it was always an imperfect thing, never finished, but always needing an additional sacrifice. It is true that the true saints under the old dispensation, did, I have no doubt, obtain peace and rest, but that was because they looked through and *beyond* the burnt offering upon the visible altar to the great Sin-Offering upon the invisible altar of God's eternal purpose, and virtually entered into the New Covenant.

For instance, David, in the fifty-first Psalm, passed right through the veil of outward ordinances and stood before the true Mercy Seat in the secret of God. He says, "You desire not sacrifice, You delight not in burnt offering." He gets away from the ceremonial to the evangelical, and he rested in the real and true power of the sacrifice, which was to be presented in the latter days. The mass of the Jewish people—the great multitude of the nation—rested content with that which was *outward*. And they found no solid peace—for their very worship gave them a remembrance of sin every year.

Let us rejoice that it is not so under the Gospel system. The sacrifice has been offered once—offered in such a way that complete atonement has been made. Sin has been pardoned, and the sinner who has taken that one finished sacrifice to be the ground of his trust feels that there is nothing left for him to do! It is all done for him! He has not to add a single stone to the building, for the topmost pinnacle, the Lord Jesus, has brought forth with shouts of, "Grace, Grace unto it," crying with His expiring breath, "It is finished!" Our text tells us that in two points the Old Covenant was far behind the new. First, in the matter of sanctification the Old Covenant did not do what the new one accomplishes, for the new writes God's Law upon our hearts and upon our minds, whereas the Old Covenant was only written out on tablets of stone.

And secondly, the Old Covenant could not put away the guilt of sin, whereas the New Covenant runs on this wise: "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

1. To begin, then, with the first point—he who came to the outward and visible rites of Jewish ceremony was not *sanctified*. He might stand as long as he would at the altar, and watch the blood poured out in copious libations, but he would go away and sin just as he had sinned before. There were, no doubt, tens of thousands of persons who were familiar with all the ceremonies of the Jewish law who had no holy thoughts excited by it. They were neither hindered from sin nor impelled to virtue by anything which they beheld, for they only looked upon the outward, and never gazed into the inward meaning or felt the true *spiritual* power. And so they obtained no benefit as to the sanctification of their lives by all that they saw.

I do not doubt that tens of thousands heard the Law of Moses read, but were not led to keep it. Did not the people stand shivering around Mount Sinai to hear that Law proclaimed as it never had been proclaimed since, and yet what effect had it upon them? A sort of stupid terror seized them so that they desired the voice of the Lord to be hushed, for they could not endure to hear it! But a very few days afterwards they took their earrings from their ears and made them into a molten calf—and bowing down before it, they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.”

All the quaking of the earth, all the moving of that smoking hill, all the thunder of the pealing trumpet could not make Israel obedient. They knew the Law, but they would not keep it! So far as its influence upon their lives was concerned, the Law with all the ceremonies which clustered around it was a failure. It did not make them holy—it could not! But the *Gospel* is no such failure. Observe that those who come under the influence of the New Covenant really are sanctified, and that by means calculated to so Divine an end. The New Covenant does not give me a Law, it is content to tell me that, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the Law shall fail.”

But what does the New Covenant do? Instead of bringing me a Law, it says, “I will give you love instead of Law. You shall not be under the principle of Law any longer, but you shall be ruled by the principle of Divine Grace. Instead of saying to you, ‘You shall do this, and you shall not do the other,’ I will make you love your God. And when you love Him, then you will say, ‘What is my God’s will shall be *my* will, and that which my God abhors I will abhor for His sake.’ ” Law is a principle of power with *perfect* beings, but it is not powerful enough to keep such wretched hearts as ours in subjection. It rather provokes hostility and excites rebellion—but when love comes in, this omnipotent principle sweetly constrains us.

Let me give you an illustration of the difference between the Old and the New Covenants drawn from human affairs. There are two schoolmasters. One of them, with many threats, issues rules and laws for his pupils as to what they shall do and what they shall not do, and certain severe punishments are threatened for disobedience, the rod being the great governor of the school. Now, I can suppose these children to be mere hypocrites—obeying when the master was present, but utterly destitute of any principle of order or obedience—glad enough to run into riotous disorder at the first instant the master’s back is turned.

But the other master, by his kindness, his gentle reasoning and loving instructions has won the hearts of his pupils. He has, therefore, no need

to be always giving minute regulations because the lads themselves, knowing in their own consciences what is right to him, and having an affection for him, would be unwilling to grieve him. Men will do far more from love than we might dare to ask as a matter of duty. Napoleon's soldiers frequently achieved exploits under the influence of fervid attachment for him which no law could have required them to attempt. Had there been cold-blooded orders issued by some domineering officer, who said, "You shall do this and you shall do that," they would have mutinied against such tyranny. And yet when the favorite little corporal seizes the standard, and cries, "Come on," they will rush even to the cannon's mouth out of love to the person of their gallant leader.

This is the difference between the Law and the Gospel. The Law says, "You shall, or you shall be punished." But the Gospel says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have forgiven all your trespasses. Now My love shall sweetly constrain you, and the influence of inward principle shall guide you in My ways. My Law shall be written not upon stone but upon the fleshy tablets of your hearts." The Old Covenant, in all that it did, only provided *precepts*. But the Gospel provides the power to *keep* the precept. The Law appealed to the selfishness of our corrupt nature. The Gospel appeals to the nobler instincts of a Heaven-born life. The Law drove us, but the Gospel *draws* us. The Law came behind us with its dog and stick as our drovers do from the cattle markets. But the Gospel goes before us as the Eastern shepherd before his sheep, and we cheerfully follow where the Gospel leads the way.

This is the difference, then, between the old Law and its inability to sanctify us, and the Gospel and its wonderful power to purify. Beloved Brethren upon whom the Gospel has exercised its power, you know that the love of Christ constrains you. Before your conversion you used to hear moral essays and to yield your assent to the excellence of virtue. But when temptation attacked you, what help could mere moral essays afford you? What strength to resist sin did you find in your belief in the excellence of virtue?

Did you not resign yourself to the energy of evil as the snow melts in the fierce heat of the sun? But now, since you have been converted, you are not kept from sin by fear but by *love*, and you are not impelled to holiness because you are afraid of Hell, but because, being saved from the wrath to come and loved with an everlasting love, you cannot be so recreant to your heart's love and to every hallowed impulse of gratitude as to turn back to the beggarly elements from which you have been delivered.

What the Law could not do with its iron fetters, the Gospel has done with its silken bonds. If God had thundered at you, you would have grown proud like Pharaoh, when he said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?" But when the Lord Jesus spoke softly to you, you bowed before Him, and said, "He is my Lord and my God." The blustering wind of the Law made you bind about yourself the cloak of your sins, but the genial warmth of the sun of the Gospel constrained you to cast away the garments of your sin and fly to the Savior.

Melted and constrained by love, the icy bosom flows in streams of devout affection and sacred love where the glorious summer of heavenly Grace pours its full influence upon it, while all the howling winds of winter did but lock it in more iron bonds. Yes, there is a sanctifying power

in the principle of the Gospel which is not to be found in the principle of the Law!

2. The second point concerns pardon of sin. The Law, as we have observed, could never put away sin. There was always a fresh offering needed because the stain still remained. But it is not so with the Gospel. Brethren, if you and I were living now as Jews under that old dispensation, when we came home from offering our sin-offering we could not be sure that we were pardoned. We should gravely question it, for our understanding would say to us, "What connection is there between the killing of a lamb or a bullock and the pardon of sin?" And the conviction would force itself upon our understanding that the blood of bulls or of goats could not take away sin.

We would, therefore, feel uncertain as to whether any pardon was received. Moreover, we would never feel safe, for, albeit that yesterday we offered the sin-offering, and did feel secure, yet we have sinned since yesterday and in what state are we now? Suppose we die before we present another lamb, or suppose we expire just at the point when we had nearly completed a sufficient sacrifice, but yet some portion of sin is left—what then? Why, as a Jew, I could never have felt safe! I might have felt *hopeful*, but that would have been all. There would always have been the dark thought, "Perhaps I have not been fully obedient," and if I have failed in one point, I hear the rumbling of that curse in my ears, "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them."

But, Beloved, the Gospel yields us something solid to rest upon, for under the Gospel we have offered for us not a *typical*, but a *real* sacrifice for sin! This is an old story, but the Christian cannot hear it too often. Once in the end of the world God Himself descended from the skies and was veiled in our inferior clay. Here on earth God's eternal Son lived and dwelt like one of us. And in the fullness of time, when the sins of all His people had been laid upon Him, He was seized by the officers of Justice, and was taken away as having our sins upon His own Person. And on the tree was He fastened that He might die, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

Christ stood in the place of His people, and when God's wrath fell upon sin it fell upon Him and spent itself upon His Person. There is no wrath left in God's heart now against those for whom the Savior died. Christ has suffered all. The penalty which was due to our guilt has not been remitted, but has been paid to the utmost farthing by God Himself in the Person of His own dear Son. That death of Jesus Christ on Calvary has a sublimity about it which language fails to convey to the human mind—for He who there, as Man, was made an offering for sin was none other than God Himself! Is it not written, "The flock of God, which He has purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28)?

He who died upon the tree was not mere Man, but, "Very God of very God," and hence there is an infinite efficacy in the pangs which He endured, and in the death to which He became obedient, by which the sin of man is put away from the Presence of God. My Brothers and Sisters, when you and I have been, by faith, to the Cross, we do not ask with the ancient Israelites what connection there can be between the sacrifice and pardon. On the contrary, we can clearly see a very distinct and logical connection between the Sacrifice of Jesus and the pardon of sin, for if

Christ died for me I must be pardoned! How can it be possible that if Christ has suffered in my place I should suffer, too?

Would this be just? How can it be consistent with justice to punish the Substitute *and* those also for whom He stood? A man employs a substitute for himself to serve in the army. Is he to be called upon to serve in person, too? A man finds another person to pay his debts for him. Is he to pay his own debts after that, himself? Surely not! For the thing is done and done with. I say it, not fearing to be misunderstood in the connection in which I say it, that the sin of God's people is "non est," has ceased to be, for Christ Jesus destroyed it by burying it in His tomb.

The Prophet has said, "The Lord has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." And since Jesus has taken upon Himself that sin, and has been punished for that sin, there remains nothing now for which God's people can be punished—their sins God has punished already. And it is according to neither justice nor mercy that sin should be atoned for twice—that first the bleeding Sufferer should endure—and then those for whom He suffered. Surely God is not unjust to forget the Savior's work and labor of love!

Now there was no connection, you see, between the blood of a bull and the putting away of sin, but there is a great connection between the blood of Christ and the putting away of sin because that was shed instead of *our* blood. He died in the place of the multitude of men of Adam born who put their trust in Him. He was their Substitute and their complete salvation. You know this doctrine well enough, for you have heard it hundreds of times. Do you all believe it? Are you all resting on it? That is the point—to rest on this is to build on a rock which will not be shaken, even when earth's old columns bow, and the stars fall like fig leaves from the tree!

Further, not only has a real sacrifice been offered, but sin is therefore really atoned for. I want to bring every Believer and every unbeliever, too, to face this Truth of God. What sin is that which I have committed? Do I trust Christ? If I unfeignedly trust Him, then the punishment due to my sin has been exacted already! Have I been a swearer? My blasphemy was laid on Christ before I was born, and I cannot be punished at God's bar for that blasphemy because Christ has been punished for it.

Have I been a thief? Have I been a liar? Have I been a drunkard? Or, have my sins, instead of that, been merely sins of the *heart* rather than of the life? Have I been an unbeliever, hard-hearted, callous, careless? Whatever my sins may have been, they were numbered on Christ's head of old when He was the Scapegoat for my sins, and all the wrath which was due to all the sins which I have committed, or ever shall commit, if I am a Believer, was borne by my Redeemer! He received for my debts a full receipt from the hand of everlasting Justice, and my sins are forever put away by Him.

What does the Scripture say? "He finished transgression, and made an end of sin." What a wonderful word—"made an end of sin"! And then, again, "Once in the end of the world has Christ appeared to put away sin." You know what that means: to put it right away so that you cannot find it any more. He has made an end, then, of His people's sin and put it away. Christ, by suffering what was due to God on account of sin, has uplifted sin from His people and destroyed it, stamping it out as men stamp out sparks of fire, casting it right into the depths of the sea as men cast away that which they wish never to see again.

Surely this gives us solid ground for comfort if we now are resting upon it! It appears from the text, yet further, that since a real Sacrifice has been offered, and sin has been really atoned for, all the sin of those who are in the Covenant is gone. No, do not think I speak too boldly! What does the text say? "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." They are gone, then! Every Believer in Christ is as clear before God as though he had never sinned! If he had not sinned he would have worn the innocence of a creature, but now, though he has sinned, he has been washed in the blood of Jesus! And clothed with the righteousness of Christ he wears the righteousness of the Creator Himself.

If I had been a perfectly innocent creature I could have gone up to Heaven on the footing of mortal merit. Yet, sinner as I am, I rest in Jesus and now I shall enter Heaven on the footing of *immortal* merit. I could have gone there had I never sinned, enrobed in a white garment, but I shall go there with a garment quite as white now, only I shall have to sing, "I have washed my robe, and made it white in the blood of the Lamb." Christian, let not your past sin lead you into despondency. Hate it, repent of it—but do not let it depress your spirit, or destroy your joy—for your sin is forgiven. "I have blotted out like a cloud your iniquities, and like a thick cloud your transgressions."

The Lord has cast your sins into the depths of the sea. "Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be white as snow." All the Believer's sins are gone, and what is more, they are gone on the highest authority, for what does the text say?—"Thus says the Lord, their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." Now, if the Jew received pardon from the lips of a priest he might not be quite sure that the priest had any right to give it.

And I am sure if I received absolution from any priest on earth I should feel as if it was not worth the shilling which I paid for it. What right has he to pardon me? I never offended *him*. If I have offended him he can pardon me for the offense as it stands against himself—but it is clear that nobody can pardon except the person offended. If anybody insulted me and one of you forgave him for it, I should say, "Well, much good may it do him." Who can forgive but he who has been injured? Now, the pardon of our sin is no good except it comes from God Himself. And the text says, "Thus says the Lord, their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

God himself speaks here, not through the mediate interposition of some earth-born priest, but He speaks directly Himself, "I forgive them, I pardon them, I cleanse them. Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." And then observe, this pardon is forever. It is not, "Their sins and iniquities I will forgive for the present," but, "I will remember them *no more*." Sin once pardoned can never be imputed to a man again! God never plays fast and loose with us. He does not say today, "I absolve you," and then the next day accuse us. The Apostle Paul used this as an argument. He says, "Who is he who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

And, as if nobody could, he answers triumphantly, "It is God that justifies." He gives as a reason why none can condemn—the fact that Christ has died and risen again! Sin forgiven comes not back to us. Let none of you labor under fear of that. Your old sins are buried and they shall never have a resurrection. Then there comes in, to complete the whole, the sweet satisfaction that our sins are gone in the most complete

sense. God says He will remember them no more. It is possible for God to forget, then? Can Infinite Wisdom cease to remember? Can the Eternal Mind cast a thing completely out of itself?

Brethren, He speaks after the manner of men, and you know what a man means when he says he will never remember a thing. I have heard some say, "Well, I can forgive it, but I will never forget it," which being interpreted, means, "I never will forgive it." But God, when He forgives, forgets, too! That is to say, He will make no difference in His future dealings with us on account of our past sins. He will treat His children as though they had always been obedient children, and had never revolted. When the prodigal is received and forgiven, he is not put at the end of the table, below the salt, or sent into the kitchen with the servants as if his faults were forgiven but yet remembered. He is invited to the *table* and he feasts there upon the best the house affords. The fatted calf is killed, the ring is on his finger, and there are music and dancing for him—as sweet music and as joyous dancing as for the constantly obedient elder son—no, more, for there is more joy over him than over the son who went not astray.

Brethren, God in this *sense* forgets His people's sins. Why is it, then, that you and I sometimes are desponding in spirit concerning past sin? It is right of us to hate it, to sorrow over it, but it is *not* right for us to get to fearing and trembling as to the punishment of that sin. Why do we? I will tell you. It is because we forget the Cross. That repentance which does not look to the Cross is a *legal* repentance, and it will breed misery.

True Repentance looks to Jesus bleeding on the tree and she weeps, but as she weeps she says, "Lord, I do not weep for this sin because I believe I shall ever be punished for it. I know I never shall, for I see my sin punished in the Person of my Savior. I hear the whip that ought to have fallen on my back falling cruelly on Jesus. I see the wounds that ought to have been made in my soul and body made in my Lord's Person. The bitter cry of anguish which ought to have come from a soul like mine I hear coming from Him as He cries, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'" and I mourn for my sin because it made the Savior bleed. I mourn to think I should have been so guilty as to need that He should suffer in order that I might be delivered from my guilt."

Brothers and Sisters, beware of an unbelieving repentance, for God does not accept it! Seek to get repentance at the foot of the Cross. If you have an eye to sin, take care to have an eye to the Atonement, too. Let your eyes be full of tears, but let those tears act like magnifying glasses to your eyes to make the Cross appear a grander and a dearer thing than ever. Never let your sin shake your confidence in Christ, for if you are a great sinner, glorify Him by believing Him to be a great Savior. Do not diminish the value of the blood while you magnify the intensity of your sin. Think as badly of sin as you can, but think right gloriously of Christ—for there is no sin, however hellish or devilish—which the blood of Jesus cannot take away! And if the concentrated essence of everything that is diabolical in iniquity is found in yourself, yet "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin," and herein we *must*, yes, and *will*, rejoice!

This, then, is the superiority of the Covenant of Grace. It really does sanctify a man, supplying him with motives for holiness. It really does justify and pardon a man, actually and really taking away his sin, so that

it is said of him, "His sins and iniquities I will remember no more." We must now, very briefly, glance at the second point.

II. Secondly, THERE IS A DOCTRINE TAUGHT BY THIS which is to be found in the eighteenth verse, "Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin." We have tried to show from the words of the text that Christ is sufficient to purify us by supplying us with holy motives, and to pardon us by His having Himself atoned for sin. The doctrine, then, is, that THERE IS NO MORE SACRIFICE FOR SIN, BECAUSE CHRIST SUPPLIES ALL THAT IS NEEDED.

Just see what a broom this doctrine is to sweep this country from Popery, and to sweep all nations of it! Think, in the first place, of what is called, "the unbloody sacrifice of the 'mass for the quick and the dead.'" What becomes of that? The Apostle says, "Where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin." Where, then, did the "mass" come from, and of what good is it? The Lord's Supper was intended to be the remembrance to us of our Lord's sufferings, instead of which it has been prostituted by the Church of Rome into the blasphemy of a pretended continual offering up of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ—a *continual* sacrifice!

According to the Romish doctrine the offering upon Calvary is not enough! The Atonement for sin is NOT finished! It has to be performed every day, and many times a day, in the many churches of Christendom, by *certain* appointed persons, so that that sacrifice is always being offered. Do you notice how strongly the Apostle speaks in this matter? He says Christ offered a sacrifice for sin ONCE. He declares that while other priests stood ministering at the altar, this Man, the Lord Jesus, offered a sacrifice ONCE, and has by that ONE offering perfected forever His elect ones!

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, the mass is a mass of abominations! It is a mass of Hell's own concocting, a crying insult against the Lord of Glory! It is not to be spoken of in any terms but those of horror and detestation! Whenever I think of another sacrifice for sin being offered, by whomever it may be presented, I can only regard it as an infamous insult to the perfection of the Savior's work!

Then, again, what becomes of penance? Is not penance in its essence an offering for sin? I do not care who it is that prescribes the penance, nor what it is—whether it is licking the pavement with your tongues, or wearing a hair-shirt, or laying on the whip—if it is supposed that by the mortification of the flesh men can take away my sin, this text is like a two-edged sword to pierce the inmost heart of such teaching! "Where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin." Take off your hair shirt, poor Fool! Wash the stones with a dishcloth and keep your tongue clean! There is no need for these fooleries! Christ has completed the Atonement, you need not suffer thus! You need not, like Luther, go up and down the staircase of Pilate, and think that your poor sore knees will find favor with God!

Christ has suffered! God exacts no more! Do not try to supplement His gold with your dross. Do not try to add to His matchless robes the rags of your poor penance. "There is no more sacrifice for sin." How this, again, shuts the gates of "purgatory"! It is held that there are some who die who are Believers, but who are not quite purified from sin, and in an after state they must undergo a purgatorial quarantine to be purged by *fire*, so

that they may become quite complete. But, says the text, “Where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.”

Beloved, when the thief died on the cross he had but *just believed*, and had never done a single good work! But where did he go? Well, he ought to have gone to “purgatory” by rights if ever anybody did, but instead of that, the Savior said to him, “Today shall you be with Me in Paradise.” Why? Because the *ground* of the man’s admission into Paradise was perfect. The *grounds* of his admission there was *Christ’s work*, and that is how you and I will get into Heaven—because Christ’s work is finished. The thief did not go down to “purgatory,” nor, blessed be His name, neither shall you nor I if we trust in the finished work of the Lord Jesus.

“Ah!” you will say, “this is meant for Romanists.” Well, then, a little for yourselves. There are some of you who are quite as bad! You receive the same doctrine only in another shape. There are some here who think they cannot be saved by Christ because they have not had enough terrors of conscience. “Oh,” say some, “if I could dream horrible dreams! If I could feel as if I could kill myself! If I were afraid that Satan would surely have me, then I could come to Christ!” Oh, you Simpleton! Do you think that this can be an offering for *sin*? Do you suppose that your frights, your dreams, your terrors, your unbelief, your distress of mind can help to make you fit for Christ?

Come, poor Soul, without any terrors! Come as you are. Christ is enough for you! If you cannot bring a penny, come! If you are ever so empty-handed, Christ died for empty-handed sinners. He delights to meet with poor miserable beggars who have nothing of their own, that He may say, and say truly, “I have saved them completely, and I shall have all the glory for it.” Some others of you think that you must get your hearts softened before you can trust in Christ. When we preach the Gospel to you, you say, “I do not feel such tenderness as I should like to *feel*.” No, dear Friend, and you never will while you talk so—for true tenderness of heart is not obtained by shutting your eyes to the Cross.

If you will not trust Christ, your heart will grow harder instead of softer. And if you set up the softness of your own heart in the place of Christ’s sufferings, you will find that this unbelief of yours will make you grow more stubborn still. “Oh,” you say, “but I cannot *pray* as I would wish.” Very likely, but then do you think that your prayers are to make up for Christ’s work? I tell you that your prayer is a most precious thing, and that a broken heart is a precious thing, and yet your prayer and your broken heart are *good for nothing* if you put them in the place of Christ! You are not saved by your prayers or your brokenness of spirit, but by what Jesus did upon the tree. And you must rest there and there only.

Will you, Sinner? Will you do this, or will you still put away the comfort of the Cross and say, “No, I will not trust Christ till I can trust my own prayers”? You will never be saved while you talk so. May the Holy Spirit cure you of your unbelief! “Ah!” says another, “but then I cannot *realize* this.” Oh, I see, then is your *realizing* it that is to do it, is it? Not Christ’s sufferings? You will have a finger in this pie, and think that surely my Master cannot do the work without your help. Oh, poor Sinner, you talk about humility, but this is the most rank pride in the world—to want to do something to save yourself! Come now! May the Holy Spirit help you to come *now*, as you are!

Give up these dreams, these notions, these proud fancies, and come as you are, and say, "If God Himself became Man to die for sin, there must be merit enough in His death to remove my sin. Does God himself say that if I trust Christ my sins and my iniquities He will remember no more? Then I will trust Christ, I cannot help it. I must cast myself on Him." Oh, my dear Hearers, depend upon it—you may spin, and spin, and spin—but all that you ever spin God will undo as fast as you spin it! You will think, "Now I am in a fair way of going to Heaven." I tell you, you are in a fair way of going to Hell when you talk so!

You are never on the road to Heaven unless you stand self-condemned. When you are convicted in yourselves, then God acquits you. But when you say, "Lord, I thank You that I am not as other men are," you are a poor condemned Pharisee, and your portion will be the flames! If you will come all unworthy and undeserving as you are—altogether lost and ruined, all hopeless and helpless, fit for nothing but to be swept out of God's universe—if you will acknowledge yourself to be an undutiful child, a wandering sheep and a sinner deserving His anger—then He will meet you! When you are yet a long way off He will meet you, and will fall upon your neck and kiss you, and say, "Take off his rags and clothe him."

My Savior loves sinners! My heavenly Father loves His prodigal children, but He does not love those who bring Him their own works, and their own righteousness. Away with these things, away with them! They are a stench in the nostrils of God! Your very prayers, and tears, and repenting, and humbling—if you put them in the place of the Cross of Christ—are only so much dogs' meat to be cast into the fire of Hell! He will not have you and your good works, but He *will* have you and your *sins*. He will not have you and your riches, but He *will* have you and your *poverty*. He will not have you and your fullness, but He *will* have you and your *emptiness*!

He will have you as you are, just as you are—only trust Him! Trust Him, and you shall find that this New Covenant will do for you what the Old Covenant of "Do, do, do," could never do—it will sanctify you and justify you.

III. Lastly, does not this doctrine ANSWER A QUESTION that has often been propounded to me, namely, HOW IS IT THAT THERE ARE SO MANY HEARTS WHICH CAN FIND NO PEACE? Some people are always learning, but never coming to the Truth of God. They are good people in many senses, and you are very hopeful that there is a work of Divine Grace in them, but they cannot be happy. They are always dissatisfied and discontented. And they are not only miserable, themselves, but they make other people miserable—and so do mischief to others' souls by their unhappiness.

Now, what do you think is the reason? I am sure it is this—they will not agree that Christ shall be All in All to them. I tell you, in God's name, that I am sure in this thing I speak God's very mind. If you will have Christ to be All, you may have peace and joy—no—you SHALL have it! But there is a secret something which you are clinging to. You want to divide the glory *with* Christ. Your mind is not brought down to this—that Christ must be altogether your Savior. Remember—

***"Tis perfect poverty alone
That sets the soul at large,
While we can call one mite our own
We find no full discharge."***

When we get down to perfect poverty and have nothing to depend upon but Christ, if such a soul is not saved God must have reversed His plans and changed His Nature! He never did cast out a needy sinner yet, and He said, "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." But oh, the stubbornness of the human will that it will not come to Christ! We may preach. We may continue to do so till we are dumb in death! Good books may be read. The Bible may be well known, but oh, you will not come and trust my Master! It is such a simple thing, too—and apparently so easy—and yet your proud heart kicks against it.

Oh, you must come down to it, my Hearers, you must come down to it! You shall never have peace—you shall only get worse and worse with all your striving—you shall never have peace till you trust Christ. It is in this matter as it is with a man in the water. We are told that if a man who has fallen into the water kicks and plunges he is sure to be drowned, but if he throws himself back and floats he cannot sink. So it is with you. Now, leave off your kicking and your plunging, and throw yourselves back in simple confidence upon the mercy of our good God in the Person of His dear Son and you shall never perish!

Now, Christians, do you not see the reason why you also sink into this state of heart sometimes? Why, Brothers and Sisters, it is the same with you as it is with sinners—if you do not keep close to the Cross you will soon become unhappy. I know you doubting professors, you who have been singing—

"Tis a point I long to know,"

you would not sing that if you lived close to the Cross and sung—

***"My faith looks up to You,
You Lamb of Calvary,
Savior Divine."***

And you backsliders, you would never backslide if you lived where the blood continually flows! For that which pardons us sanctifies us. I believe that when you and I begin to think we are fine saints, and forget that we are only just filthy sinners washed in the blood, we begin to backslide. There is nothing like living every day as we lived the first day of our conversion. Does not Paul say, "As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk you in Him"? That is, live every day as you lived at first, being *nothing* in yourself, but Jesus being All in All to you. Away with *self*, and let Jesus be glorified! We must not have so much as a shadow of dependence upon anything that *we can do or feel, or promise*—we must depend alone upon that dear, that blessed Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us!

I feel this morning as if I could come afresh to that dear Cross, and rest there on Christ. I feel as if I could put my finger into the print of the nails and thrust my hand into His side, and say, "My Lord and my God!" Oh, cannot some poor soul do this who never did it before? I pray God he may! And if it is done by you, and you trust in Jesus, then let Heaven rejoice! Let earth be glad, and praise surround the Throne of God, because such a one is saved, for is it not written, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more"?

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THE RENT VEIL

NO. 2015

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, MARCH 25, 1888,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom.”
Matthew 27:50-51.***

***“Having therefore, Brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.”
Hebrews 10:19-20.***

THE DEATH of our Lord Jesus Christ was fitly surrounded by miracles. Yet it is itself so much greater a wonder than all besides that it as far exceeds them as the sun outshines the planets which surround it. It seems natural enough that the earth should quake, that tombs should be opened and that the veil of the temple should be rent, when who He only has immortality gives up the ghost. The more you think of the death of the Son of God, the more will you be amazed at it. As much as a miracle excels a common fact, so does this wonders of wonders rise above all miracles of power. That the Divine Lord, even though veiled in mortal flesh, should condescend to be subject to the power of death so as to bow His head on the Cross and submit to be laid in the tomb is among mysteries the greatest. The death of Jesus is the marvel of time and eternity, which, as Aaron's rod swallowed up all the rest, takes up into itself all lesser marvels.

Yet the rending of the veil of the temple is not a miracle to be lightly passed over. It was made of “fine twined linen, with Cherubims of cunning work.” This gives the idea of a substantial fabric, a piece of lasting tapestry, which would have endured the severest strain. No human hands could have torn that sacred covering. And it could not have been divided in the midst by any accidental cause. Yet, strange to say, on the instant when the holy Person of Jesus was rent by death, the great veil which concealed the holiest of all was “rent in two from the top to the bottom.” What did it mean? It meant much more than I can tell you now.

It is not fanciful to regard it as a solemn act of mourning on the part of the House of the Lord. In the East, men express their sorrow by rending their garments. And the temple, when it beheld its Master die, seemed struck with horror and rent its veil. Shocked at the sin of man, indignant at the murder of its Lord, in its sympathy with Him who is the true Temple of God, the outward symbol tore its holy vestment from the top to the bottom. Did not the miracle also mean that from that hour the whole system of types and shadows and ceremonies had come to an end? The ordinances of an earthly priesthood were rent with that veil.

In token of the death of the ceremonial Law, the soul of it quit its sacred shrine and left its bodily tabernacle as a dead thing. The legal dispensation is over. The rent of the veil seemed to say—"Henceforth God dwells no longer in the thick darkness of the Holy of Holies and shines forth no longer from between the cherubim. The special enclosure is broken up and there is no inner sanctuary for the earthly high priest to enter—typical atonements and sacrifices are at an end."

According to the explanation given in our second text, the rending of the veil chiefly meant that the way into the holiest, which was not before made manifest, was now laid open to all Believers. Once in the year the high priest solemnly lifted a corner of this veil with fear and trembling and with blood and holy incense he passed into the immediate Presence of Jehovah. But the tearing of the veil laid open the secret place. The rent from top to bottom gives ample space for all to enter who are called of God's Divine Grace, to approach the Throne and to commune with the Eternal One. Upon that subject I shall try to speak this morning, praying in my inmost soul that you and I, with all other Believers, may have boldness actually to enter into that which is within the veil at this time of our assembling for worship. Oh, that the Spirit of God would lead us into the nearest fellowship which mortal men can have with the Infinite Jehovah!

First, this morning, I shall ask you to consider what has been done. The veil has been rent. Secondly, we will remember what we therefore have—we have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." Then, thirdly, we will consider how we exercise this Divine Grace—we "enter by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh."

I. First, think of WHAT HAS BEEN DONE. In actual historical fact, the glorious veil of the temple has been rent in two from the top to the bottom. As a matter of *spiritual* fact, which is far more important to us, the separating legal ordinance is abolished. There was under the Law this ordinance—that no man should ever go into the holiest of all, with the one exception of the high priest and he but once in the year and not without blood. If any man had attempted to enter there he must have died—guilty of great presumption and of profane intrusion into the secret place of the Most High. Who could stand in the presence of Him who is a consuming fire?

This ordinance of distance runs all through the Law. For even the holy place, which was the vestibule of the Holy of Holies, was for the priests, alone. The place of the people was one of distance. At the very first institution of the Law—when God descended upon Sinai, the ordinance was—"You shall set bounds unto the people round about." There was no invitation to draw near. Not that they desired to do so, for the mountain was together on a smoke and "even Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." "The Lord said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze and many of them perish."

If so much as a beast touch the mountain it must be stoned or thrust through with a dart. The spirit of the old Law was reverent distance. Moses, and here and there a man chosen by God, might come near to Je-

hovah. But as for the bulk of the people, the command was, "Draw not near here." When the Lord revealed His glory at the giving of the Law, we read—"When the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off." All this is ended. The precept to keep back is abrogated and the invitation is, "Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden." "Let us draw near" is now the filial spirit of the Gospel. How thankful I am for this! What a joy it is to my soul! Some of God's people have not yet realized this gracious fact, for still they worship afar off.

Very much of prayer is to be highly commended for its reverence—but it has in it a lack of childlike confidence. I can admire the solemn and stately language of worship which recognizes the greatness of God. But it will not warm my heart nor express my soul until it has also blended with the joyful nearness of that perfect love which casts out fear and ventures to speak with our Father in Heaven as a child speaks with its father on earth. My Brothers and Sisters, no veil remains. Why do you stand afar off, and tremble like a slave? Draw near with full assurance of faith. The veil is rent—access is free.

Come boldly to the Throne of Grace. Jesus has made you near, as near to God as even He Himself is. Though we speak of the holiest of all, even the secret place of the Most High, yet it is of this place of awe, even of this sanctuary of Jehovah, that the veil is rent. Therefore, let nothing hinder your entrance. Assuredly no Law forbids you. But infinite love invites you to draw near to God.

This rending of the veil signified, also, the removal of the separating sin. Sin is, after all, the great divider between God and man. That veil of blue and purple and fine twined linen could not really separate man from God—for He is, as to His omnipresence—not far from any of us. Sin is a far more effectual wall of separation—it opens an abyss between the sinner and his Judge. Sin shuts out prayer and praise and every form of religious exercise. Sin makes God walk contrary to us because we walk contrary to Him. Sin, by separating the soul from God, causes spiritual death which is both the effect and the penalty of transgression. How can two walk together except they be agreed? How can a holy God have fellowship with unholy creatures? Shall justice dwell with injustice? Shall perfect purity abide with the abominations of evil? No, it cannot be.

Our Lord Jesus Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He takes away the sin of the world and so the veil is rent. By the shedding of His most precious blood we are cleansed from all sin and that most gracious promise of the New Covenant is fulfilled—"Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." When sin is gone, the barrier is broken down, the unfathomable gulf is filled. Pardon, which removes sin and justification, which brings righteousness, makes up a deed of clearance so real and so complete that nothing now divides the sinner from his reconciled God. The Judge is now the Father—He who once must necessarily have condemned, is found justly absolving and accepting. In this double sense the veil is rent—the separating ordinance is abrogated and the separating sin is forgiven.

Next, be it remembered that the separating sinfulness is also taken away through our Lord Jesus. It is not only what we have done, but what we *are*, that keeps us apart from God. We have sin engrained in us—even those who have Divine Grace dwelling in them have to complain, “When I would do good, evil is present with me.” How can we commune with God with our eyes blinded, our ears stopped, our hearts hardened and our senses deadened by sin? Our whole nature is tainted, poisoned, perverted by evil—how can we know the Lord? Beloved, through the death of our Lord Jesus the Covenant of Grace is established with us and its gracious provisions are on this wise—“This is the Covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord. I will put My laws into their mind and write them in their hearts.”

When this is the case, when the will of God is inscribed on the heart and the nature is entirely changed, then is the dividing veil which hides us from God taken away—“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” Blessed are all they that love righteousness and follow after it, for they are in a way in which the Righteous One can walk in fellowship with them. Spirits that are like God are not divided from God. Difference of nature hangs up a veil. But the new birth and the sanctification which follows upon it, through the precious death of Jesus, remove that veil. He that hates sin strives after holiness, and labors to perfect it in the fear of God is in fellowship with God.

It is a blessed thing when we love what God loves, when we seek what God seeks, when we are in sympathy with Divine aims and are obedient to Divine commands—for with such persons will the Lord dwell. When Divine Grace makes us partakers of the Divine nature then are we at one with the Lord and the veil is taken away.

“Yes,” says one, “I see, now, how the veil is taken away in three different fashions. But still God is God and we are but poor puny men—between God and man there must of necessity be a separating veil caused by the great disparity between the Creator and the creature. How can the finite and the Infinite commune? God is All in All and more than all. We are nothing and less than nothing—how can we meet?” When the Lord does come near to His favored ones, they own how incapable they are of enduring the excessive glory. Even the Beloved John said, “When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.”

When we have been especially conscious of the Presence and working of our Lord, we have felt our flesh creep and our blood chill. And then we have understood what Jacob meant when he said, “How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the House of God, and this is the gate of Heaven.” All this is true. For the Lord says, “You cannot see My face and live.” Although this is a much thinner veil than those I have already mentioned, yet it is a veil. And it is hard for man to be at home with God. But the Lord Jesus bridges the separating distance. Behold, the blessed Son of God has come into the world and taken upon Himself our nature! “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of the flesh and blood, He also, Himself, likewise took part of the same.”

Though He is God as God is God, yet is He as surely Man as man is man. Mark well how in the Person of the Lord Jesus we see God and man in the closest conceivable alliance. For they are united in one Person forever. The gulf is completely filled by the fact that Jesus has gone through with us even to the bitter end, to death, even to the death of the Cross. He has followed out the career of manhood even to the tomb. And thus we see that the veil which hung between the nature of God and the nature of man is rent in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. We enter into the holiest of all through *His* flesh, which links manhood to Godhead.

Now you see what it is to have the veil taken away. Solemnly note that this avails only for Believers—those who refuse Jesus refuse the only way of access to God. God is not approachable except through the rending of the veil by the death of Jesus. There was one typical way to the Mercy Seat of old and that was through the turning aside of the veil. There was no other. And there is now no other way for any of you to come into fellowship with God except through the rent veil—the death of Jesus Christ, whom God has set forth to be the propitiation for sin. Come this way and you may come freely. Refuse to come this way and there hangs between you and God an impassable veil. Without Christ you are without God and without hope. Jesus Himself assures you, “If you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins.” God grant that this may not happen to any of you!

For Believers the veil is not rolled up but rent. The veil was not unhooked and carefully folded up and put away so that it might be put in its place at some future time. Oh, no! The Divine hand took it and rent it from top to bottom. It can never be hung up again. That is impossible. Between those who are in Christ Jesus and the great God there will never be another separation. “Who shall separate us from the love of God?” Only one veil was made and as that is rent, the one and only separator is destroyed. I delight to think of this. The devil himself can never divide me from God now. He may, and will attempt to shut me out from God—but the worst he could do would be to hang up a rent veil.

What would that avail but to exhibit his impotence? God has rent the veil and the devil cannot mend it. There is access between a Believer and his God. And there must be such free access forever, since the veil is not rolled up and put on one side to be hung up again in days to come. It is rent and rendered useless. The rent is not in one corner but in the midst, as Luke tells us. It is not a slight rent through which we may see a little. But it is rent from the top to the bottom. There is an entrance made for the greatest sinners. If there had only been a small hole cut through it, the lesser offenders might have crept through. But what an act of abounding mercy is this—that the veil is rent in the midst and rent from top to bottom—so that the chief of sinners may find ample passage! This also shows that for Believers there is no hindrance to the fullest and freest access to God. Oh, for much boldness this morning, to come where God has not only set open the door but has lifted the door from its hinges—yes, removed it, post and bar and all!

I want you to notice that this veil, when it was rent, was rent by God—not by man. It was not the act of an irreverent mob. It was not the midnight outrage of a set of profane priests—it was the act of God, alone. Nobody stood within the veil. And on the outer side of it stood the priests only fulfilling their ordinary vocation of offering sacrifice. It must have astounded them when they saw that holy place laid bare in a moment. How they fled, as they saw that massive veil divided without human hand in a second of time! Who rent it? Who, but God Himself? If another had done it, there might have been a mistake about it and the mistake might need to be remedied by replacing the curtain.

But if the Lord has done it, it is done rightly, it is done finally, it is done irreversibly. It is God Himself who has laid sin on Christ and in Christ has put that sin away. God Himself has opened the gate of Heaven to Believers and cast up a highway along which the souls of men may travel to Himself. God Himself has set the ladder between earth and Heaven. Come to Him now, you humble ones. Behold, He sets before you an open door!

II. And now I ask you to follow me, dear Friends, in the second place, to an experimental realization of my subject. We now notice **WHAT WE HAVE**—“Having therefore, Brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest.” Observe the threefold “having” in the paragraph now before us and be not content without the whole three. We have “boldness to enter in.” There are degrees in boldness. But this is one of the highest. When the veil was rent it required some boldness to look within. I wonder whether the priests at the altar did have the courage to gaze upon the Mercy Seat. I suspect that they were so struck with amazement that they fled from the altar, fearing sudden death.

It requires a measure of boldness steadily to look upon the mystery of God—“Which things the angels desire to look into.” It is well not to look with a merely curious eye into the deep things of God. I question whether any man is able to pry into the mystery of the Trinity without great risk. Some, thinking to look there with the eyes of their natural intellect, have been blinded by the light of that sun and have henceforth wandered in darkness. It needs boldness to look into the splendors of redeeming and electing love. If any did look into the holiest when the veil was rent, they were among the boldest of men. For others must have feared, lest the fate of the men of Bethshemesh would be theirs.

Beloved, the Holy Spirit invites you to look into the holy place and view it all with reverent eye for it is full of teaching to you. Understand the mystery of the Mercy Seat and of the Ark of the Covenant overlaid with gold and of the pot of manna and of the tables of stone and of Aaron’s rod that budded. Look, look boldly through Jesus Christ—but do not content yourself with looking! Hear what the text says—“Having boldness to *enter in.*” Blessed be God if He has taught us this sweet way of no longer looking from afar but of *entering* into the inmost shrine with confidence! “Boldness to enter in” is what we ought to have.

Let us follow the example of the high priest and, having entered, let us perform the functions of one who enters in. “Boldness to enter in” suggests that we act as men who are in their proper places. To stand within

the veil filled the servant of God with an overpowering sense of the Divine Presence. If ever in his life he was near to God, he was certainly near to God then, when quite alone. Shut in and excluded from all the world, he had no one with him except the glorious Jehovah. O my Beloved, may we this morning enter into the holiest in this sense! Shut out from the world—both wicked and Christian—let us know that the Lord is here, most near and manifest. Oh that we may now cry out with Hagar, “Have I also here looked after Him that sees me?”

Oh, how sweet to realize by personal enjoyment the presence of Jehovah, How cheering to feel that the Lord of Hosts is with us! We know our God to be a very present help in trouble. It is one of the greatest joys out of Heaven to be able to sing—Jehovah Shammah—the Lord is here. At first we tremble in the Divine Presence, but as we feel more of the spirit of adoption, we draw near with sacred delight and feel so fully at home with our God that we sing with Moses, “Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.” Do not live as if God were as far off from you as the east is from the west. Live not far below on the earth. But live on high, as if you were in Heaven. In Heaven you will be with God. But on earth He will be with you—is there much difference?

He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Jesus has made us near by His precious blood. Try daily to live in as great nearness to God as the high priest felt when he stood for awhile within the secret of Jehovah’s tabernacle. The high priest had a sense of communion with God. He was not only near but he spoke with God. I cannot tell what he said but I should think that on the special day the high priest unburdened himself of the load of Israel’s sin and sorrow and made known his requests unto the Lord. Aaron, standing there alone, must have been filled with memories of his own faultiness and of the idolatries and backslidings of the people.

God shone upon him and he bowed before God. He may have heard things which it was not lawful for him to utter and other things which he could not have uttered if they had been lawful. Beloved, do you know what it is to commune with God? Words are poor vehicles for this fellowship. But what a blessed thing it is! Proofs of the existence of God are altogether here superfluous to those of us who are in the habit of conversing with the Eternal One. If anybody were to write an essay to prove the existence of my wife, or my son, I certainly should not read it, except for the amusement of the thing. And proofs of the existence of God to the man who communes with God are much the same.

Many of you walk with God—what bliss! Fellowship with the Most High is elevating, purifying, strengthening. Enter into it boldly. Enter into His revealed thoughts, even as He graciously enters into yours—rise to His plans, as He condescends to yours. Ask to be uplifted to Him, even as He deigns to dwell with you. This is what the rent of the veil brings us when we have boldness to enter in. But, mark you, the rent veil brings us nothing until we have boldness to enter in. Why stand without? Jesus brings us near and truly, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Je-

sus Christ. Let us not be slow to take up our freedom and come boldly to the Throne.

The high priest entered within the veil of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen with blood and with incense, that he might pray for Israel—and there he stood before the Most High, pleading with Him to bless the people. O Beloved, prayer is a Divine institution and it belongs to us. But there are many sorts of prayers. There is the prayer of one who seems shut out from God's holy temple. There is the prayer of another who stands in the court of the Gentiles afar off, looking towards the temple. There is the prayer of one who gets where Israel stands and pleads with the God of the chosen. There is the prayer in the court of the priests when the sanctified man of God makes intercession.

But the best prayer of all is offered in the holiest of all. There is no fear about prayer being heard when it is offered in the holiest. The very position of the man proves that he is accepted with God. He is standing on the surest ground of acceptance and he is so near to God that his every desire is heard. There the man is seen through and through. For he is very near to God. His thoughts are read, his tears are seen, his sighs are heard. He has boldness to enter in. He may ask what he will and it shall be done unto him. As the altar sanctifies the gift, so the most holy place, entered by the blood of Jesus, secures a certain answer to the prayer that is offered therein.

God give us such power in prayer! It is a wonderful thing that the Lord should hearken to the voice of a man. Yet are there such men? Luther came out of his closet and cried, Vici—"I have conquered." He had not yet met his adversaries. But as he had prevailed with God for men he felt that he should prevail with men for God. But the high priest, if you recollect, after he had communed and prayed with God, came out and blessed the people. He put on his garments of glory and beauty which he had laid aside when he went into the holy place, for there he stood in simple white and nothing else. And now he came out wearing the breast-plate and all his precious ornaments and he blessed the people. That is what you will do if you have the boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus—you will bless the people that surround you.

The Lord has blessed you and He will make you a blessing. Your ordinary conduct and conversation will be a blessed example. The words you speak for Jesus will be like a dew from the Lord—the sick will be comforted by your words. The despondent will be encouraged by your faith. The lukewarm will be recovered by your love. You will be, practically, saying to each one who knows you, "The Lord bless you and keep you—the Lord make His face shine upon you and give you peace." You will become a channel of blessing—"Out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water." May we each one have boldness to enter in that we may come forth laden with benedictions!

If you will kindly look at the text, you will notice what I shall merely hint at—that this boldness is well grounded. I always like to see the Apostle using a "therefore"—"Having therefore boldness." Paul is often a true poet but he is always a correct logician. He is as logical as if he were deal-

ing with mathematics rather than theology. Here he writes one of his “therefores.” Why is it that we have boldness? Is it not because of our relationship to Christ which makes us “Brethren”? “Having therefore, Brethren, boldness.” The feeblest Believer has as much right to enter into the holy place as Paul had. Because he is one of the brotherhood. I remember a rhyme by John Ryland, in which he says of Heaven—

***“They shall all be there, the great and the small;
Poor I shall shake hands with the blessed St. Paul.”***

I have no doubt we shall have such a position and such fellowship. Meanwhile, we do shake hands with him this morning as he calls us Brethren. We are Brethren to one another because we are Brethren to Jesus. Where we see the Apostle go, we will go—yes, rather, where we see the Great Apostle and High Priest of our profession enter, we will follow. “Having therefore, boldness.”

Beloved, we have now no fear of death in the most holy place. The high priest, whoever he might be, must always have dreaded that solemn day of atonement when he had to pass into the silent and secluded place. I cannot tell whether it is true, but I have read that there is a tradition among the Jews that a rope was fastened to the high priest’s foot that they might draw out his corpse in case he died before the Lord. I should not wonder if their superstition devised such a thing, for it is an awful position for a man to enter into the secret dwelling of Jehovah. But we cannot die in the holy place now, since Jesus has died for us. The death of Jesus is the guarantee of the eternal life of all for whom He died. We have boldness to enter, for we shall not perish.

Our boldness arises from the perfection of His sacrifice. Read the fourteenth verse—“He has perfected forever them that are sanctified.” We rely upon the sacrifice of Christ believing that He was such a perfect Substitute for us that it is not possible for us to die after our Substitute has died. And we must be accepted because He is accepted. We believe that the precious blood has so effectually and eternally put away sin from us that we are no longer obnoxious to the wrath of God. We may safely stand where sin must be smitten, if there is any sin upon us. For we are so washed, so cleaned and so fully justified that we are accepted in the Beloved. Sin is so completely lifted from us by the vicarious sacrifice of Christ that we have boldness to enter where Jehovah, Himself, dwells.

Moreover, we have this for certain—that as a priest had a right to dwell near to God—we have that privilege. For Jesus has made us kings and priests unto God and all the privileges of the office come to us with the office itself. We have a mission within the holy place. We are called to enter there upon holy business and so we have no fear of being intruders. A burglar may enter a house but he does not enter with boldness. He is always afraid lest he should be surprised. You might enter a stranger’s house without an invitation but you would feel no boldness there. We do not enter the holiest as housebreakers, nor as strangers. We come in *obedience* to a call, to fulfill our office. When once we accept the sacrifice of Christ, we are at home with God. Where should a child be bold but in his father’s house? Where should a priest stand but in the temple of his God

for whose service he is set apart? Where should a blood-washed sinner live but with his God, to whom he is reconciled?

It is a heavenly joy to feel this boldness! We have now such a love for God and such a delight in Him that it never crosses our minds that we are trespassers when we draw near to Him. We never say, "God, my dread," but "God, my exceeding joy." His name is the music to which our lives are set—though God is a consuming fire we love Him as such—for He will only consume our dross and that we desire to lose. Under no aspect is God now distasteful to us. We delight in Him, be He what He may. So you see, Beloved, we have good grounds for boldness when we enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

I cannot leave this point until I have reminded you that we may have this boldness of entering in at *all times* because the veil is always rent and is never restored to its old place. "The Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron your brother, that he come not at all times into the Holy Place within the veil before the Mercy Seat, which is upon the ark, that he die not." But the Lord says not so to us. Dear child of God, you may at all times have "boldness to enter in." The veil is rent both day and night. Yes, let me say it—even when your eye of faith is dim—you may still enter in. When evidences are dark, still have "boldness to enter in." And even if you have unhappily sinned, remember that access is open to your penitent prayer.

Come still through the rent veil, Sinner, as you are. Though you have backslidden, though you are grieved with the sense of your wanderings—come even now! "Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart," but enter at once. For the veil is not there to exclude you though doubt and unbelief may make you think it is so. The veil cannot be there, for it was rent in two from the top to the bottom.

III. My time has fled and I shall not have space to speak as I meant to do upon the last point—HOW WE EXERCISE THIS GRACE. Let me give you the notes of what I would have said.

Let us at this hour enter into the holiest. Behold the way! We come by the way of atonement—"Having therefore, Brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." I have been made to feel really ill through the fierce and blasphemous words that have been used of late by gentlemen of the modern school concerning the precious blood. I will not defile my lips by a repetition of the thrice-accursed things which they have dared to utter while trampling on the blood of Jesus. Everywhere throughout this Divine Book you meet with the precious blood. How can he call himself a Christian who speaks in flippant and profane language of the blood of atonement?

My Brothers and Sisters, there is no way into the holiest, even though the veil is rent, without blood. You might suppose that the high priest of old brought the blood because the veil was there. But you have to bring it with you though the veil is gone. The way is open and you have boldness to enter. But not without the blood of Jesus. It would be an unholy boldness which would think of drawing near to God without the blood of the great Sacrifice. We have always to plead the atonement. As without shed-

ding of blood there is no remission of sin, so without that blood there is no access to God.

Next, the way by which we come is an unfailing way. Please notice that word—"by a new way." This means by a way which is always fresh. The original Greek suggests the idea of "newly slain." Jesus died long ago but His death is the same now as at the moment of its occurrence. We come to God, dear Friends, by a way which is always effectual with God. It never, never loses one whit of its power freshness—

***"Dear dying lamb, Your precious blood
Shall never lose its power."***

The way is not worn away by long traffic—it is always new. If Jesus Christ had died yesterday, would you not feel that you could plead His merit today? Very well, you can plead that merit after these 19 centuries with as much confidence as at the first hour. The way to God is always newly laid. In effect, the wounds of Jesus incessantly bleed our expiation. The Cross is as glorious as though He were still upon it. So far as the freshness, vigor, and force of the atoning death is concerned, we come by a new way. Let it be always new to our hearts. Let the doctrine of atonement never grow stale but let it have dew upon your souls.

Then the Apostle adds, it is a "living way." A wonderful word! The way by which the high priest went into the Holy Place was, of course, a material way and so a dead way. We come by a *spiritual* way, suitable to our spirits. The way could not help the high priest but our way helps us abundantly. Jesus says, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." When we come to God by this Way, the Way itself leads, guides, bears, brings us near. This way gives us life with which to come.

It is a dedicated way. "Which He has consecrated for us." When a new road is opened it is set apart and dedicated for the public use. Sometimes a public building is opened by a king or a prince and so is dedicated to its purpose. Beloved, the way to God through Jesus Christ is dedicated by Christ and ordained by Christ for the use of poor believing sinners such as we are. He has consecrated the way towards God and dedicated it for us, that we may freely use it. Surely, if there is a road set apart for me, I may use it without fear. And the way to God and Heaven, through Jesus Christ, is dedicated by the Savior for sinners. It is the King's highway for wayfaring men, who are bound for the City of God. "Consecrated for us!" Blessed word! Therefore, let us use it.

Lastly, it is a Christly way. When we come to God, we still come through His flesh. There is no coming to Jehovah except by the incarnate God. God in human flesh is our way to God. The substitutionary death of the Word made flesh is also the way to the Father. There is no coming to God except by representation. Jesus represents us before God and we come to God through Him who is our Covenant Head, our representative and forerunner before the Throne of the Most High. Let us never try to pray without Christ—never try to sing without Christ—never try to preach without Christ. Let us perform no holy function, nor attempt to have fellowship with God in any shape or form, except through that rent which He

has made in the veil by His flesh, sanctified for us and offered upon the Cross on our behalf.

Beloved, I have done when I have just remarked upon the next two verses, which are necessary to complete the sense, but which I was obliged to omit this morning since there would be no time to handle them. We are called to take holy freedoms with God. “Let us draw near,” at once, “with a true heart in full assurance of faith.” Let us do so boldly, for we have a great High Priest. The twenty-first verse reminds us of this. Jesus is the great Priest and we are the sub-priests under Him and since He bids us come near to God and Himself leads the way, let us follow Him into the inner sanctuary. Because He lives, we shall live also. We shall not die in the holy place unless He dies. God will not smite us unless He smites Him. So, “having a High Priest over the House of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.”

And then the Apostle tells us that we may not only come with boldness because our High Priest leads the way but because we ourselves are prepared for entrance. Two things the high priest had to do before he might enter. One was to be sprinkled with blood and this we have. For “our hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience.” The other requisite for the priests was to have their “bodies washed with pure water.” This we have received in symbol in our Baptism and in reality in the spiritual cleansing of regeneration. To us has been fulfilled the prayer—

**“Let the water and the blood,
From Your riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.”**

We have known the washing of water by the Word and we have been sanctified by the Spirit of His Divine Grace. Therefore let us enter into the holiest. Why should we stay away? Hearts sprinkled with blood, bodies washed with pure water—these are the ordained preparations for acceptable entrance. Come near, Beloved! May the Holy Spirit be the spirit of access to you now. Come to your God and then abide with Him! He is your Father, your All in All. Sit down and rejoice in Him. Take your fill of love. Let not your communion be broken between here and Heaven. Why should it be? Why not begin today that sweet enjoyment of perfect reconciliation and delight in God which shall go on increasing in intensity until you behold the Lord in open vision and go no more out?

Heaven will bring a great change in condition but not in our standing, if even now we stand within the veil. It will be only such a change as there is between the perfect day and the daybreak. For we have the same sun and the same light from the sun and the same privilege of walking in the light. “Until the day break and the shadows flee away, turn, My Beloved, and be like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.” Amen and Amen.

**Portion of Scripture Read Before Sermon—HEBREWS 10.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—318, 296, 395.**

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HOLDING FAST OUR PROFESSION

NO. 1897

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

***“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering;
(for He is faithful who promised).”
Hebrews 10:23.***

THE Apostle is drawing certain inferences from the Covenant of Grace upon which he has been enlarging. He shows that God has made a Covenant with His people by which they are effectually preserved. “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put My Laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” He shows that by this Covenant the fear of returning to our old sin is removed and the guilt of our sin is forever put away. He bids us, therefore, be bold in our approaches to God. As pardoned men, upon whom there is no sin, he bids us exercise the freedom of near access to God, who has accepted us in Christ. Then he tells us that since we are put in such a blessed position—a position which is altogether unique—it becomes us to hold fast to what we have received. Since the glorious Gospel has done so much for us, let us never quit it. Since it has brought us into a condition which angels might envy, let us never think of leaving it. Let us not dream of giving up that Divine principle which has worked us such blessedness, but, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.”

I pray God the Holy Spirit to bless these words as we shall think them over. May He make this evening’s meditation a means of establishment to us that, while we hold fast the profession of our faith, the blessed Truths of that faith may also hold us fast as an anchor holds a ship! Never was there a time in which this was more necessary. That exhortation, “Let us hold fast,” might well be written on the cover of every Christian’s Bible. We live in such a changing age that we need all to be exhorted to be rooted and grounded, confirmed and established in the Truth of God. I shall call your attention, first, to this point—*what we have*. We have *faith* and, according to the second rendering, which is adopted by the revisers, we have *hope*. Then, secondly, *what we have done*. We have made a profession of that faith—a confession of that hope. Then, thirdly, *what we are now to do*—to hold fast that profession of faith and hope. And if you ask me, in the fourth place, *why we are to do it?*

I shall, in closing, give you this reason—because “He is faithful who promised.” If God is faithful, let us be faithful, too. Since until now He has proven Himself most true, let us pray that we may also be true.

I. First, then, dear Brothers and Sisters, let us think of WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE by the Grace of God.

If we read the text according to our present authorized translation, we have *faith*. We have made a public avowal of our faith. We can lay our hands upon our hearts and say, “Lord, You know all things. You know that we have faith in Jesus Christ Your Son.” Yes, we have obtained what the Apostle calls “like precious faith”—it is a rare jewel and he is rich that possesses it.

If we have not this faith in possession, let us pause, here, and ask for it and let us confess to God the great sin of unbelief in not believing in such a one as the Son of God who cannot lie—whose life is so transparently true that to doubt Him is a superfluity of naughtiness—an awful insult to the majesty of His faithfulness. Yet it would not be true for us to say—some of us—that we do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, for we do. We have no other confidence. Where could we find any other? He is the rock of our salvation! We could not invent another trust, however hard we were put to it, or however much we wished to do so. If Jesus were to say, “Will you, also, go away?” we would be compelled to answer, “Lord, to whom should we go? You have the words of eternal life.” If the question is whether we have perfect holiness, we must answer it in the negative, to our great sorrow. If the question is whether we are highly advanced in Divine Grace, we would not dare say that we are. It would be immodest if we put forth such a pretension! But if the enquiry is, “Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?” then without hesitation we reply, “Lord, we trust You with undivided faith.” Trembling though it is, our faith is true. And though it does not always work in us all the fruit we would desire, yet it does operate in a very blessed way upon our walk and conversation. We believe that Jesus is the Christ and our trust for eternal life is in Him alone!

It is not a matter of question with you, dear Friend, is it, as to whether you know Jesus to be the Son of God, very God of very God? It is past all question with you that Jesus bore your sins in His own body on the tree. You have no doubt about His wondrous death and His marvelous Resurrection from among the dead. You believe that He has offered a Sacrifice, once, which once offered has ended the sin of His people and that He has gone into His Glory and is now sitting at the right hand of God, expecting till His foes are made His footstool. You have no more doubt about that than you have about your own existence! You also believe that He will shortly come to be our Judge—that He will gather the nations before Him and that He will reign King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Your faith, then, in the Lord Jesus Christ is not a matter of “if,” and, “but”—you stake your salvation on it! I can truly say that if what I preach is not true, I am a lost man. I have invested all that I have in Christ. If this boat sinks, I drown, for I cannot swim and I know no other life-boat. Christ is All in All to me—without Him I can do nothing, I have nothing, I am nothing! Jesus, in the matter of salvation, is everything from beginning to end for me! And you can say the same, I know.

You have faith, nor does your faith confine itself to the belief in the Person and work of Christ and to a simple trusting of yourself to Him, but you believe all that is revealed in relation to Jesus. All the stars which make up the southern cross shine with clear brilliance for you. Every Truth of God which is revealed in Holy Scripture is embraced by your faith and held tenaciously. To you I know, Beloved, it is only sufficient to prove that it is so written in the Bible and you believe it. A Truth may sometimes amaze you because of its greatness, but that does not stagger your faith, for your faith deals with mysteries and is familiar with sublimities which it never dreams of comprehending! Yes, we openly acknowledge that we believe in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Triune God! And we believe in the election of Grace. We believe in the eternal purposes of God and in the working out of all those purposes to the praise of the Glory of His Grace. If God tells us anything, we accept it as sure, unquestionable, infallible Truth. If He veils anything, we desire to leave it veiled, for the limit of Revelation is the limit of our faith.

We may imagine this or imagine that, but we think nothing of our imaginations! Our faith deals with what God says, not with what learned men think. What the Spirit of God has written in this inspired Book is the Truth of God to us and we allow no human teaching to rank side by side with it. Well, then, we have *faith*—faith that believes, faith that learns, faith that reclines, faith that trusts herself entirely in the love of God—faith that can say, “Father into Your hands I commit my spirit.” We have it, and we know that we have it! If any of you here do not know it, do not rest until you *do* know it. Unbelief calls God a liar—do not live a moment in such a horrible God-provoking sin! Not to trust Christ is to abide under the wrath of God. “He that believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” May we never remain in such a state as that, but come to a knowledge of the Truth and to a sound faith in that Truth—for this is the faith of God’s elect.

But another reading—and a very good reading, too—runs thus, “*The confession of our hope.*” Oh yes, Beloved, if we have faith we have hope. We will take both renderings, for they are both correct in fact, if not in the letter. We have a blessed hope, a hope most “sure and steadfast, which enters into that which is within the veil.” If I begin to describe our hope, I must begin with what, I think, is always the topmost stone of it—the hope of the Second Advent of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—for we believe that when He shall appear, we shall also appear with Him in Glory. We know that He has gone up into Heaven. His Apostles saw Him as He ascended from Olivet—and we believe the words which the angels declared soon after His departure to remind us of His coming again—“This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven.” We expect Him to descend in Person and we hope, ourselves, to behold Him in that day. We expect Him to stand in the latter day upon the earth and, in our own flesh risen from the dead, we expect to behold our Savior and our God! This is the glorious hope of the Church! This is how she expects to be victorious over the world—the Lord shall come and end

her conflict in complete triumph! As His First Coming has laid the foundations of His empire, so His Second Coming shall bring forth the cornerstone thereof with shouts of, “Grace, Grace, unto it.”

Wrapped up in that hope, we have personal hopes of our own, which hopes are, first, that our spirits, when we depart the body, shall be with Christ. We have been with Him, here, and we believe we shall be with Him there. Though in some sense while we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord, yet in another sense He is with us even now. We expect, before long, to be absent from the body and, in a fuller sense, present with the Lord. Such is our joyful hope and expectation—Glory, millennium, Heaven, eternity—all lie within the circle of our hope. Ours is not the larger, but *the largest hope*.

We expect that after a while the trumpet shall sound and our bodies shall be raised from beds of dust and silent clay—and that thus we shall be perfected in our manhood as spirit, soul and body. The day of our Lord’s appearing will be the day of the redemption of the body from the dust with which it mingles. We expect, then, as perfect in Christ Jesus, made in the image of Him who is the Firstborn among many brethren, to live forever and ever in eternal blessedness, enjoying the life of God at His right hand where there are pleasures forevermore. We have a joyful, glorious, blessed hope which purifies, comforts, strengthens and sustains us—and this hope is in us now!

As the pastor of this Church, I can joyfully say of the most of those who are here present, that you have a good hope through Grace. That hope gilds the darkness of the present—it is your candle through the long and weary night. You are not always to be sickly, poor and suffering. This hope sheds its light upon the future and reveals glories brighter than imagination could invent! At times when you realize that hope, you almost feel the crown of life settling down upon your brow and removing your throbbing pain once and for all. In the power of that hope you put on the sandals of the Light of God and the garments of immortality—and take your place among the celestial throng! Many a time, by faith, you walk along those streets which are paved with pure gold, like transparent glass, and as you tread the shining way you converse with the shining ones who dwell in the New Jerusalem! Hope already hears with her quick ears the songs of the redeemed and her eye beholds the Lord whom you love enthroned in the highest! Oh, how near does hope bring our Well-Beloved, whom, having not seen, we love! In whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of Glory!

We have faith and we have hope—and we know that we have them. Are we not enriched with the Grace of God? Where faith and hope are found, love cannot be far off, for the three Divine sisters are seldom separated. Let us love the Lord who has given us the first two.

II. Secondly, we have gone a step further than the silent possession of faith and hope. We have made A PROFESSION OF OUR FAITH AND A CONFESSIOIN OF OUR HOPE. I am not going to say much about this, but to remind you of certain joyously solemn facts.

You remember the time, dear Brothers and Sisters, when you first made a profession of your faith. It may do many of us good to go back to those early days. We are getting on in years, some of us, but we do not wish to feel old—at least we want to keep as much of the freshness and joy of youth as we well can! Cheerfulness is most becoming in Christians—we have a life within us of later birth than that which our mothers gave us—we will, therefore, measure our age from our second rather than our first birth. I like to see the old man grow young when he talks of Christ! Let him on that point become enthusiastic, even as in his boyhood. When he speaks of the loving kindness of the Lord to him, he should show the mellowness of years and the energy of youth in happy combination. Perhaps some of you remember the place, the spot of ground, where Jesus met with you. If you do not, at least you remember when you first whispered to your own heart with trembling hope, “I think I know the Lord.” You were almost startled at the echo of your own words! You were afraid that you had been presumptuous! There was great tenderness of conscience upon you, then, and you would not have professed what was not true for all the world. You said within yourself, “I half said that I was a Believer, but I do not think I dare say it again.”

Yet, within a short time, it oozed out again, when you were in company and felt forced to defend your Savior. It was true of you in a blessed sense, “Your speech betrays you. You, also, were with Jesus of Nazareth.” At last it grew so warm round about you that you thought you might as well come out for Jesus and derive help from the confession. The adversaries were ferreting you out and you thought you had better come out and say, boldly, once and for all, “It is even so!” The true Pilgrim never wishes to enter the House Beautiful if he has not a right to be there. He is afraid that he may be guilty of intrusion and he, therefore, hopes the porter at the gate will only admit him when he feels quite sure that he is a Pilgrim such as the Lord of the Way would permit to enter His House.

It was a day of great trembling, but of great joy, when first we avowed our faith in Jesus! What we said we meant. We salted our words with our tears, but oh, we felt it such an honor to be numbered with the people of God! If we had been promised a seat on the floor, or had been allowed only to hear the Gospel in the coldest corner of the building, we should then have been fully content! We sang and meant it—

***“Might I enjoy the meanest place
Within Your House, O God of Grace,
Not tents of ease, nor thrones of power,
Should tempt my feet to leave Your door.”***

We need soft cushions now. We cannot stand to hear a sermon now, nor yet travel very far, especially in damp weather. It is very strange that we should have become so delicate, but it is so. How many miles we could walk when first we knew the Lord! The miles have grown much longer lately, or else our love has grown much shorter! Those were blessed days—changeable, showery, with little more than the dusk of dawn about them—but still there was a morning freshness about them upon which we

look back with supreme delight and somewhat of regret. Then was it a time of love, a season of buds and flowers and songbirds and overflowing life and hope!

Thus early in my discourse I would most earnestly say to you—Hold fast the profession of your faith. By the memories of the day when you made that profession, be firm in it to the end. If you were not false, then; if you were not deceivers then; hold fast the confession of your hope without wavering, for, “He is faithful who promised.” To me it is a solemn memory that I professed my faith openly in Baptism. Vividly do I recall the scene. It was the third of May and the weather was cold because of a keen wind. I see the broad river, the crowds which lined the banks and the company upon the ferry-boat. The Word of the Lord was preached by a man of God who is now gone Home. And when he had so done, he went down into the water and we followed him and he baptized us. I remember how, after being the slave of timidity, I rose from the liquid grave quickened into holy courage by that one act of decision, consecrated therefore forth to bear a life-long testimony!

It was by burial with Christ in Baptism that I confessed my faith in His death, burial and Resurrection. By an avowed death to the world, I professed my desire from that day on to live *with* Jesus, *for* Jesus and *like* Jesus. Oh that I had been more faithful to that profession! But there it was and I am not ashamed of it, nor wishful to run back from it. Ah no, I bear in my body that watermark, that fulfillment of the Holy Scriptures, which says, “Having your hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and your bodies washed with pure water.”—

***“High Heaven that heard the solemn vow,
That vow renewed shall daily hear,
Till in life’s latest time I bow,
And bless, in death, a bond so dear.”***

Let us remember, also, the many times in which we have repeated that profession of faith, that confession of hope, for instead of retracting it, we have gone on to repeat it. We have been marked anew with the King’s name. If you ask how you have renewed your vows, I reply—“You have done it many a time at the table of communion. You have sat there and feasted with your Lord and you have not been ashamed of being there, I am sure. No, you have often feared that it was too good to be true that such a one as you should be eating bread with the children when not long ago you begged for the crumbs which fell from their table! You have sat at the banquet of bread and wine and, in so doing, you have borne witness to the death of Christ until He comes. Thus you have in frequent feasts of love confessed your joyful hope!”

And beside that, in many a Prayer Meeting you have been present and, by your very presence, have expressed your belief that it is not a vain thing to wait upon God. You have also joined in the prayer and this is no mean profession of faith. In many a service, when Christ has been preached, you have been there, not merely to assist by your presence, but because you have agreed with it all. Your heart has, at times, so burned

within you, that you have thought it proper to say, "Amen!" You longed to cry, "Hallelujah!" And it was almost a pity you did not do so, for the outburst would have done no hurt to anybody. Perhaps, sometimes, you *have* done it and you have startled yourself and many others! By such an exclamation you have renewed your profession of your faith.

You have repeated your profession in the shop, in the market, in the place of business, among your friends, in your family and to the partner of your life. Those around you know you to be professedly an heir of Heaven, a child of God! It is well that they should. Why should not the children of Light be as well known as the children of darkness? Why should you conceal yourselves?

As for me and such of us as stand prominently out to preach the Word of God, how many times have we made a profession? I hope our preaching has not been done "professionally," but certainly we can neither preach, nor lead the devotions of a congregation without professing our faith and declaring our hope!

I again break in upon the latter part of my discourse by saying—after all these times in which we have worn our Master's livery, shall we desert Him? After those many occasions in which we have borne His mark upon our foreheads, can we think of becoming apostates? Christ has been confessed by us in the most solemn forms over and over again—shall we be doubly forsworn? Shall we become sevenfold traitors? No, by His rich and Sovereign Grace, I would say to you, believing that the Holy Spirit will help you to keep the command, "Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering; for He is faithful who promised."

We have considered how we began this profession and we have also seen how often we have made it since. Let us think for a minute *what it has cost us*. Has it been worthwhile to be on the Lord's side? Religion has cost many of its disciples somewhat dear but it has cost nothing compared with its worth! What bashfulness it cost you to make the first confession of your faith! What a struggle it then appeared! You were weeks, some of you, before you dared to come and see such an awful person as the minister, to speak of your conversion to him. It had taken you weeks even to tell it to your wife or your husband! The dear soul, for once, seemed to grow into a very dragon when you needed to tell him that you had found the Lord. I have known parents terribly afraid to let their children know of their conversion. They were never half so afraid of sinning as they became afraid of being charged with repenting! You surmounted that difficulty, did you not? You cried to God about it and you obtained courage—and now you wonder how you could have been so foolishly timid. Do not, in the future, fall back into the same fears.

But perhaps some of you lost the friendship of many by becoming disciples of the Lord Jesus. I know one who became a member of this Church—she had moved in high and fashionable circles, but she said to me, "they have left me—every one of them." I said, "I am very thankful, for it will save you the trouble of quitting them. They will do you no good if they profess to be your friends. And they will do you less harm by giving

you the cold shoulder.” It is about the best thing that happens to a Christian when worldlings cut his acquaintance. “Come you out from among them,” is to many a severe command. But all difficulty is removed when the world turns out from us and casts out our name as evil! Still, it has cost many a tear, and many a sigh for the first Believer in certain families to take up his cross and come right out and follow Christ. “Canting hypocrite!” “Sniveling pretender!” Such titles and worse are quickly thrown at us! It is but natural that the world we leave should give us a parting kick.

We, of course, are everything that is bad as soon as we forsake the ways of the world to follow Christ. It is the old fashion—after this manner they dealt with our fathers. I do not suppose that any two men, after a while, counts it at all a hardship, or mourns as though some strange thing had happened to him! Did they not swim through seas of blood in the old times? Did they not fight with beasts at Ephesus and reach to Heaven by the way of the stake? We suffer so little compared with the persecutions of our forerunners that it is hardly worth a thought! But yet, to some very tender hearts, it is a costly business to make a profession of faith. And I say to them—Have you suffered these many things in vain? Will you now go back? Will you turn, again, to the beggarly elements of the world, after having confronted persecution and borne the enmity of men? No, by the Grace of God you will “hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering!”

“But what good does our profession do?” asks one. I do not know that we need ask that question, or answer it, either. If a course of action is commanded of God, it is ours to *obey* whether we can see any use in it or not. It is put continually in the Word of God, “He that with his heart believes, and with his mouth makes confession of Him, shall be saved,” or in other words, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Faith in the Truth of God and an open profession of that faith are constantly put together in the Scriptures! There must be the confession of Christ outwardly, as well as the believing in Christ inwardly. The Lord Jesus, Himself, has said, “Except a man shall take up his cross and follow Me, he cannot be My disciple.” It is not the Lord’s will that we should go in the dark to Heaven along some private road of our own! We are to come out and follow Him in this evil generation, or else He will be ashamed of us when He comes in the Glory of His Father.

If the question is asked again, “What is the good of an open profession?” I would say, Much every way. It is, in itself, a grand thing for his manliness for a man to boldly say, “I am a Christian.” It is good for a soldier of the Cross to draw the sword and throw away the scabbard by being openly known to be a Christian. The world then ceases to urge its coarser temptations. The enemies know where you are and do not raise that question again. Your profession becomes a confirmation of your purpose to lead a better life. You say, “I have lifted up my hand unto the Lord and how can I go back? How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? The vows of the Lord are upon me!” All this is a protection to you in

the hour of trial. To show your colors may not appear to be a great thing, but to many it is half the battle.

Besides, the open confession of our faith has a good influence upon others. How could there be a Christian Church at all if every Christian concealed his faith in his own bosom? Without the Christian Church as an *organization*, how would all the good work that has to be done in the reclaiming of sinners be attended to? Where would be our public proclamation of the Gospel? Where our missions and ministers? If you love your Lord and have faith and hope in Him, do not delay to come forward and acknowledge His name and cause. Say boldly, "Where are His people? I will join with them! Do they meet with any reproach for obedience to Him? I will share that reproach! Have they any work for Christ on hand? I will take my share of that work! Yours am I, Son of David, and all that I have, and I give myself to You to be Yours forever and ever."

It will be to your lasting honor and enduring joy to be found wearing the livery of the Prince of Peace, marching in the ranks of the saints, contending earnestly for the Truth of God and advancing the Kingdom of your God! Thus have I spoken upon the profession of our faith and hope.

III. The third point is, WHAT ARE WE NOW TO DO? I have entrenched upon it, already, and I have done so intentionally. The answer is—*we are called upon to hold fast the profession of our faith.*

Of course this includes *the holding fast of your faith*. The things which you have believed, continue to believe. There may be an advance—there ought to be an advance—in *politics* because the basis to begin with was wrong. And, as you advance, you only approximate a little more nearly to that which is perfectly just, honest and righteous. It is a far cry from feudalism to a righteous commonwealth! *But there can be no advance in true religion!* If it is true at first, the same things are still true and must be true forever and ever. We feel that there can be no progress in the foundational Truths of Christianity when we remember such a text as this, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, forever." Revelation comes from the mind of God, like Minerva is fabled to have sprung from the brain of Jove, full grown, full armed. Nothing may be taken from it! Nothing may be added to it!

I, for one, am perfectly satisfied with an Apostolic faith. If anyone can go beyond the Apostles, let him go—I shall not attempt to do so. I am satisfied to believe what Paul believed. Oh that I were worthy to unloose the laces of his shoes! Though Paul is not my Lord and Master, yet I reverence the Holy Spirit as He speaks through Paul's Epistles. I am perfectly satisfied with what Jesus revealed by His own teaching and the teaching of His Apostles—and going beyond that seems to me to imply that the Revelation is imperfect. But imperfect it is not! It is plain, clear and finished, and they that add to it, or take from it, will incur the plagues with which the Book is closed and guarded. God shall take away from such their names out of the Book of Life and out of the Holy City. Hold fast to the old Truth of God!

The ships in yonder port are swinging with the tide just now. Please God they will swing back to the same place when the tide turns. They have done so before. There came a day when our dissenting Churches almost all went round to Socinianism and then their chapels were empty and their day of power was gone. Earnest men rose up and preached the old Gospel, again, and there was a grand revival! Now they are going off again, turning every man to his own error, except that the Lord has a faithful company that hold fast the faith and will not let it go—and these will yet live to see a great revulsion of feeling! If they do not, that is a small matter to them—to be faithful to their God is their first and their last business!

Hold, next to your hope. Hope in Christ and in His coming and in the victory of the Truth of God. If the storms lower, believe that there is fair weather ahead. And if the night darkens into a seven-fold blackness, believe that the morning comes despite the darkening glooms! Have faith and trust in Him that lives, and was dead, and is alive forevermore! Let your hope begin to hear the hallelujahs which proclaim the reign of the Lord God Omnipotent, for reign He must, and the victory shall be unto Him and to His Truth. Hold fast your faith. Hold fast your hope.

But that is not the text. It is *hold fast your profession of faith, your confession of hope*—that is to say, stand to what you have done by way of open declaration of these things. Constantly keep up your confession. You made it once. Renew it. Often and often say—

***“I’m not ashamed to acknowledge my Lord,
Nor to defend His cause;
Maintain the honor of His Word,
The Glory of His Cross.”***

You are Christians, not for a time, but for eternity! Your new birth is not into a dying existence, but into life everlasting! You are born again of a living and incorruptible seed that lives and abides forever! Therefore, quit yourselves like men and be strong. Stand fast, “Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” Continue your confession and never conceal it.

There are times when you will be inclined to put your flag away into the canvas case and hide your coat of arms in the cellar. Then you may fitly judge that the devil is getting an advantage over you and that it is time that you ceased to be beguiled by his sorceries. Tear up the wrappings, throw the bag away and nail your flag aloft where every eye can see it! Whenever you feel inclined to be ashamed of Christ, do not deliberate, but say, “This is wrong. There is coming over me something that I must not endure. If I were in a right state of mind I should never feel like this.” Never yield to shameful cowardice—scorn such detestable meanness! Away with it, man! Away with it! If you might have gone on peaceably and said nothing about your religion, yet whenever you feel at all afraid to do it, then say, “I must do it. I cannot allow my principles to remain in question. I will, in some way, make a demonstration of the faith that is in me, lest I prove a coward and a castaway after all.”

Perhaps you may have to go into a certain company where you do not want to have it known that you are a Christian. It is imperative that you break through that snare and put the case beyond debate. If I were you, I would make my profession known in that very company because the idea that you must not be known to be a Christian will be very dangerous to you. I cannot exactly tell in what way it may endanger you, but it will surely do so and, therefore, whenever the thought of concealment crops up, down with it and come out clear and straight for Jesus! Only when you are out-and-out for Jesus can you be in a right condition. Anything short of this is full of evil! Since Satan tempts you to hide your faith, feel that he seeks your harm and, therefore, come out all the more decidedly.

Beloved Friends, may God help us never to do anything contrary to the confession of our faith. I have heard of such a thing as a Christian man making a confession of his faith by paying sixpence in the pound in the Bankruptcy Court. They say that he is making a good thing out of his failure. He is making his own damnation sure if he is robbing his creditors and yet professing to be a Christian! Here is a man making a confession of his faith. He is a very good Christian man in his own esteem, but he also knows a good glass of wine and is most fluent when he is getting far into the bottle. Have drunks any hope of eternal life? Look at yonder professor—he is going across to the public house to stand at the counter and drink with those who blaspheme! That is his way of confessing his faith, I suppose. It is not mine!

Have I not seen Christian women become noisily angry and say harsh things to their servants? That is showing your Christianity, is it? I do not want to be sarcastic, but I don't want you to tempt me to be so. If you love the Lord, live as if you loved Him! Let us all try to do so and let us watch that we never undo with our hands what we say with our tongues. I heard in Lancashire of some people who preached with their feet. It is the best way of preaching in the world. By your walk and conversation you will preach twice as well as by your talk! Your tongue is too soft a thing to influence dull minds, you must influence such by your lives.

When we come to die we will gather up our feet in the bed and bear another and more solemn testimony to the Lord our God. We will set up one Ebenezer more on Jordan's brink and bear one more witness for Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood. I recollect what Whitefield said of himself. Someone said, "Dear Mr. Whitefield, I should like to be present with you when you come to die. What a testimony you will bear in your parting moments." "No," said that eminent servant of God, "I do not think I shall bear any testimony in death because I have borne so many testimonies in my life that my Lord will not want any from me when I die." So it came to pass. He stood at the top of the stairs the night before he died and preached his last sermon and then turned in and went to Heaven! Perhaps that is how some of us will write the finis to our lifework. At any rate, let us bear our testimonies while we can. Let us speak up for our Master while we may and, by-and-by, we shall see Him whom our soul loves and rejoice in Him forever!

IV. I may not detain you many more moments and, therefore, let me answer the question WHY ARE WE TO DO THIS? We are to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, because *He is faithful who has promised.*

Have you found Him faithful? Has the Lord failed you? Has the Lord been untrue in His promises to you? If He has, then do not hold fast your profession! If, after all, it has been a mistake and a delusion, then give it up! But if He is faithful who has promised—if He has kept His word to you, helped you in your trouble, sustained your heart under burdens, comforted you in the dark hour of trial—if till this moment you have proven the power of prayer, the wisdom of Providence and the truth of the Sacred Word—then deal with my Lord as He has dealt with you! Be not faithless to the Crucified. Oh, be not Judas to Him who is Jesus to you! He gave His heart for you and even after death it poured out blood and water for you—give your whole heart to Him! If it is so that these Truths of God are firmly established and that God keeps His Covenant, then let us come at once to the feet of the blessed Lord and say, “Lord, we do not regret that we entered Your service. On the contrary, we are ready to begin again.” If we had our lives to live, over again, we that began to be Christians as lads would begin earlier! We that have served the Lord desire no better Master and no better service, but we would wish Him to find, in each one of us, a better servant. Lord, we have been happy with You. When we have been unhappy, it has been our own fault, not Yours. We would return to You and say, “Permit us to serve You still. We would be Your servants forever.”

I have heard of a husband and wife who felt their love for each other to be so strong that they almost wished to go through the wedding ceremony again, to show how content they were to bear the easy yoke of married love. Many of us could say the same. We would also be joined anew to our Lord! Let us take afresh His yoke upon us. Let us put our shoulder down to the Cross, again, and commence again to serve the Lord Jesus with the love of our espousals and the freshness of our earliest days. May the Lord bless us to that end!

While we are doing this, hope that others who never did love Him before will now say, “We will come with you and begin a new life from this good hour.” It will be a happy, happy circumstance if this should be the case. God grant it may be so with many, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

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FUTURE PUNISHMENT A FEARFUL THING NO. 682

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 25, 1866,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”
Hebrews 10:31.***

You will most cheerfully bear me witness that my most frequent subjects are the mercy and abundant loving kindness of our God in Jesus Christ, and that it is my favorite employment to invite the very chief of sinners to come to Jesus Christ with the assurance that He will cast out none who come to Him, but will assuredly give to them eternal life. It is not to my honor to say so, but still you know how seldom I have forced upon your attention those terrible subjects which concern the state of the lost in Hell. I have felt more at home in using the drawing of mercy than the driving of terror, and I can most honestly plead innocence of any charge of delighting in declaring the torments of the finally impenitent, or of entering upon the discussion of the miseries of the lost with eagerness and enjoyment.

He who searches all hearts knows that under an overwhelming sense of urgency and necessity, and purely out of love to the souls of men I bring before you the text which I have announced. The burden of the Lord hangs heavily upon me. I must deliver myself of the blood of some of you who are living in impenitence and who will probably die in it, and who, if you die unwarned, having often listened to my voice, may be able to reproach me in another world if I do not faithfully and earnestly bear my solemn testimony concerning the wrath to come.

Beloved, we know by observation in our pastoral work that while the mercy of God draws many to Him, there are some who are more affected at first by the terrors of the Law. We have many, now, who are members of this Church walking in holiness and in the fear of God. They listened to sermons upon the softer and more tender topics and were not affected. But when they came under the heavy blows of the hammer of God's Law their flinty hearts were broken into shivers and, by God's Grace, before long they turned unto the hand which smote them! God has ordained both the terrors of the Law and the tenderness of the Gospel—that by means of both—men may be saved.

Gospel farming employs many implements, and there are some lands which will never yield a harvest without much more exercising with the plow than others may require. The light of Tabor and the fiery flashes of Sinai are equally Divine and so long as we learn to rest in Calvary it little matters by what means, whether tender or terrible, we may have been brought there. The complete ministry leaves no revealed Truth of God unuttered, but looks for a blessing upon the Word as a whole. The themes of mercy need, in order fully to manifest their brightness, the dark background of the terrors of the Law—for men will never value a Redeemer so

well as when they have a very clear consciousness of the ruin from which He has redeemed them.

The preciousness of mercy is best known by those who discern the terror of justice. If we really feel that God is angry with the sinner and loathes and hates his sin and will certainly take fearful vengeance upon him on account of it, we shall the better understand the force of that Divine mercy which led Him to give His own dear Son, and which now leads Him to cry unto the Sons of men, "Turn! Turn! Why will you die, O house of Israel?"

In addition to these considerations I have been urged to bring this subject before you because the assaults which are now made against the Gospel frequently assail the doctrine of future punishment. It was once the business of infidels to revile the terrible sanctions of the Divine Law—but they may now suspend their exertions, for certain clergymen of the Church of England are doing the work most effectually. No, more—there are certain Dissenting ministers, successors of good and venerable men, who are never more at home than when they are making sport of the terrors of God!

Just now it seems to jump with the humor of certain philosophic schools to depreciate our God as a Judge, and to magnify a supposititious Divine fatherhood which is the offspring of their own effeminate imaginations and flesh-pleasing dreams. It therefore behoves the servants of the Most High and Righteous God to confess the faith which they have received and not be ashamed of it, whatever disgrace may cover them.

I. The text asserts that "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," and our first statement shall be, that SURELY IT IS SO, as we may certainly gather from several considerations.

1. It must be a fearful thing for impenitent sinners to fall into God's hands when we remember the Character of God as revealed in His judgments of old. Taking the Scriptures as our guide we see in them a revelation of God differing very greatly from that which is so current today. The God of Abraham, as revealed in the Old Testament, is as different from the universal Father of modern dreams as He is from Apollo or Bacchus. Let me remind you that ever since the day when Adam fell, with but two exceptions, the whole of the human race has been subjected to the pains of sickness and of death.

If you would behold the severity of Him who judges all the earth, you have only to remember that this whole world has been for ages a vast burying place. Men whine out their abhorrence of God's justice and scout the idea of future punishment with the question, "Would a father do thus-and-thus with his children?" The question needs no other reply than fact. All men die. Would a father suffer his children to pine in sickness and die when it was in his power to prevent it? Certainly not. Since, then, the great God evidently permits much pain, and even death to happen to His creatures, He is evidently not merely father, but something more!

To ungodly men Jehovah reveals Himself in the light of a judge—and a judge, too, whose stern severity has brought to pass the terrible doom of death upon every man of woman born, with two exceptions, from the Fall of Adam even until now. This is the God of Love—but not the newly-devised God who is love and love *alone*. Our business is not to think out our own idea of what God should be, but to find out, as far as we can,

what God really is. Let me then remind you of the deluge. When the world was covered with inhabitants, and according to the computation of some, owing to the longevity of man, with a population more numerous than the present which crowds it, (however that is not a material point in the question)—when the world was covered with inhabitants, and these had sinned—God destroyed all flesh from off the face of the earth with the exception of eight souls, whom in His sovereignty He saved in the ark.

Can you picture to yourself the horrors of that tremendous day, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up and the rains descended from on high? Here were millions of creatures like ourselves destroyed at a blow! Can you hear their shrieks and cries? Do you see them clambering in fright to the mountaintops? Do you behold them struggling for existence amidst the devouring flood? Can you hear the cries of the last strong swimmers in their agony? Who does all this? It is that God who so hates sin that, though He is infinite Love—and we would never detract from that attribute—He is also infinite Justice and will by no means spare the guilty!

Do not imagine that He who thus destroyed the world with a flood was never at any other time equally severe. Let me show you the dreadful picture of Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities of the plain. Those cities were filled with inhabitants, happy and cheerful like ourselves. They found their happiness, however, in sin, and their sin had so provoked God to anger that after a personal visit to the spot what did He do? You who believe in effeminate personification of shallow benevolence, turn here your blind eyes if perhaps the fire which fell from Heaven may yield you some ray of light.

Can you see the dwellers of those cities when the fiery hail begins to fall? In vain were their cries! In vain their tears! The burning sleet pitilessly descends until one dreadful sheet of flame enwraps the sky and all the men of the plain are consumed before the terrible wrath of the Most High. What do you think of this scene of horror? And what of those words of Peter where he speaks of God who, turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow and made them an example unto those that after should live ungodly?

Let me direct your eyes to Egypt. You read the story of the slaying of the first-born in one night and it does not strike you with horror. But only conceive of the first-born throughout all London dying in one night—what a visitation that would be! The whole of Egypt, it is to be believed, contained far more inhabitants than London, and yet without regarding Egypt's bitter cry which He foreknew would ring in His ears—that God who revenges and is terrible slew in one night the chief of all their strength!

Don't forget the destruction at the Red Sea. Pharaoh and his hosts descended into the midst of the sea and perished there. You rejoice, and rightly so, because Israel was preserved, but what a fearful thing it was that Egypt should be destroyed! Pharaoh and all the chivalry of Mizraim swallowed up by the waves, to be mourned by innumerable widows and orphans! Do I hear anybody accusing our God of cruelty on account of this? And why not, if the new benevolence theory is true? Let those who accuse the infinite Jehovah beware! Let them strive with their fellow potters, but strive not with the rod of iron! Jehovah needs none of our de-

fenses. O amazing God! Little does it matter to You what man's judgment of You may be, for with You the inhabitants of the earth are as grasshoppers! You do as You will, and Your judgments are past finding out.

Think of the slaughter of the Canaanites. Palestine was filled with Hivites, Jebusites, and other nations. All these were given to the edge of the sword by God's express command. Dispute the Bible and you may get rid of this, but believe it and you have that terrible fact before you—that He gave a whole population to unmitigated slaughter—and, I believe, justly and rightly so. I profess not to understand the ways of God. Who am I that I should understand Him? Should the potter's vessel think of understanding the potter? I bow before what He does and believe that He is just. Let Him do whatever He may!

There is no need to detain you over the terrible spectacle of thousands smitten by pestilence at the time of David's numbering of the people. Or of Sennacherib's hosts slain in one night by God's own hand, or even over that direst of all judgments—the destruction of Jerusalem! But I cannot forbear quoting the memorable words of Moses when he said of Jehovah, "He repays them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack to him that hates Him, He will repay him to his face" (Deut. 7:10). Well does our Jehovah deserve the title which Isaiah gives Him, "The Lord that renders recompense to His enemies" (Isa. 66:6). What instances does the Scripture give of what Paul calls "the severity of God," and how true is it that, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"!

2. Pursuing our heavy task we shall now draw your solemn attention to the words of the Savior. Our Lord Jesus Christ we believe to be the Incarnation of God, and to represent our God under a most tender aspect. It is a very remarkable fact that no inspired preacher of whom we have any record ever uttered such terrible words concerning the destiny of the lost as our Lord Jesus Christ. You may search the Scriptures through, but you will not find more solemnly alarming expressions than those which the loving Jesus employed.

Now, Sinner, that you may feel their power, instead of quoting them hurriedly, let me just remind you of them slowly and solemnly. It was that tender Savior who still cries, "Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It was also He who said, "Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell" (Matt. 10:28). Read in Matthew 13:41—turn to the passage and read it with your own eyes that you may feel its power more—"The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

He repeats that expression in the forty-ninth verse. "So shall it be at the end of the world; the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." In the same Gospel, in the twenty-second chapter, you will find words equally suggestive in the thirteenth verse—"Then said the King to the servants, Bind him hand and foot and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." And so again He says of the unprofitable servant in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, which chapter also records those

dreadful words, which it is well for us to read as we find them at the forty-first verse—"Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

And as if this were not enough, Jesus closes His discourse with these words at the end of the chapter, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Who was it who uttered that fearful sentence written in the ninth of Mark at the forty-third verse? Let it duly affect you as you read it—"If your hand offends you, cut it off: it is better for you to enter into life maimed than having two hands to go into Hell, into the fire which never shall be quenched: where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched."

Did Jesus say that once? Read the forty-sixth verse "Where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched." Did He only say it twice? Look at the forty-eighth verse—"Where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched." Three times over in one discourse! Do not complain of the preacher if you think him harsh. Oh Beloved, he does not wish to be harsh, but to preach with tears in his eyes these dreadful things! But look at my Master, the Lord Jesus Christ! Did He preach smooth things on this matter?

We heard the other day that the unquenchable fire and the undying worm were mediaeval ideas to be scoffed at in these enlightened times! A courtly preacher insinuated as much and more—but a greater than he, who wore no soft raiment and dwelt in no king's palaces—uses such expressions unmodified and undiluted! I pray you laugh not at them, and scoff not at them, for the lips that spoke them were the lips of Him who loved the souls of men even to the death! The lips of Him who shall come a second time to judge the quick and the dead.

My terrible list is very far from being exhausted. Look at the twentieth chapter of Luke and the eighteenth verse, and the eighteenth chapter of Matthew and the eighth and ninth verses. But still more memorable is that parable of Lazarus and the rich man. The punishment of Dives is not described in terms of gentleness! He cries, "Father Abraham, send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." Abraham gives him no hope of escape from his misery, for the answer to the enquiry is, "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from here to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from there."

Oh, mournful picture, but Jesus drew it! He it was who told us of a certain sinner it were better for that man that he had never been born! And of others that it were better for them that a millstone were hung about their necks, and that they were cast into the depths of the sea! He it is who describes certain sinners as being miserably destroyed, and in another place uses this fearful sentence which I confess, although it is figurative, makes me shiver as I utter it, "The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looks not for Him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers" (Luke 12:46).

Do not talk about grim mediaeval expressions after this! This is the Master Himself, and these are His own words! And I dare to say it that all

the glowing pictures ever painted designed to compel souls to escape from Hell never reached the dread reality which is implied in the words of our Savior, Jesus Christ. I hope that perceiving these terrors to have come from the lips of Jesus, who is all love, kindness, and benevolence, you will understand that it is the highest benevolence to warn men of their danger and to exhort them to escape from the wrath which will surely come upon them, for "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

3. We feel that it must be a fearful thing to be punished for sin when you remember the Atonement. It is our full belief as Christians, that, in order to the pardon of human sin, it was necessary that God Himself should become Incarnate, and that the Son of God should suffer—suffer excruciating pains—to which the dignity of His Person added infinite weight.

Brothers and Sisters, if the wrath of God is a mere trifle, there was no need of a Savior to deliver us! It were as well to have let so small a matter take its course, or, if the Savior came merely to save us from a pinch or two, why is so much said in His praise? What need for Heaven and earth to ring with the glories of Him who would save us from a small mischief? But mark the word! As the sufferings of the Savior were intense beyond all conception, and as no less a Person than God Himself must endure these sufferings for us—that must have been an awful, not to say an infinite evil from which there was no other way for us to escape except by the bleeding and dying of God's dear Son!

Think lightly of Hell, and you will think lightly of the Cross. Think little of the sufferings of lost souls, and you will soon think little of the Savior who delivers you from them. God grant we may not live to see such a Christ-dishonoring theology dominant in our times.

4. But once again, and with this we close this point. The conscience of every sinner tells him that there will be a wrath to come. I do not mean that the conscience of the sinner tells him what kind of punishment it will be, or dictates to him its duration. But we know from facts that dying men who have lived in impenitence have often exhibited fears that are not to be accounted for except upon the supposition that the shadow of a terrible doom had cast itself upon their minds.

These were not the old women of whom so much has been said in the way of despising them. These have been strong men once as boastful as Tom Paine and his fellows! These were men of intellect, sharp intellects, who once threatened to strike the Gospel through the heart—and yet when they have come to die their boasts have all ceased and the blanched cheek and the terror of the wrath to come have all proved the truth of what they denied, and have declared—"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

I am sure we all feel—at least I speak of my own conscience—I feel that God could not be truly God if He did not punish evil. That it would be a pity that there should be a God if He did not punish sin. That He might as well have had no existence at all if such were the fact, and that if a preacher should arise who would tell men that God would not punish their sins, such a man ought to be carefully secluded from society because of the mischief which his doctrines would assuredly cause.

I feel like the judge in America, who when he was waited upon by the Universalists for assistance in setting up a place for their meeting, after

hearing the arguments, said, "No, I cannot help you. In the first place, I do not believe that your doctrines are at all consistent with Holy Writ. And though I am sorry to say I am not so well instructed in the Bible as I ought to be, I believe that if Scripture had meant to teach eternal punishment, I do not see what other terms it could have used. At all events, if your sentiments should prevail, if there is no Hell hereafter, there would very soon be a Hell here. For as soon as it were known that men might commit sin with impunity, men would plunge into sin at once."

The moral sense of man is not stamped out yet, and while it remains it will in more or less distinct terms declare that "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

II. Let me urge you, my dear Hearer, in the second place, NOT TO ATTEMPT TO DEPRIVE YOURSELF OF THE BENEFICIAL EFFECT WHICH A PROPER CONSIDERATION OF THIS DOCTRINE WOULD HAVE UPON YOU.

1. Do not *deny* the fact, at any rate. If you do, be consistent and deny Scripture altogether. If you doubt the punishment of the future state, doubt the inspiration of Scripture at once—for to doubt one and hold the other is impossible! Do not so violate your own conscience as to dream of sin's escaping punishment. If you should persuade yourself to doubt the existence of Hell, your doubting it will not quench its fires. If there is no Hell hereafter I am as well off as you are, but if there is, where will *you* be? Take it on the most common supposition—I have two strings to my bow, you have only one—and that one I believe to be a lie. Oh, my Hearers, if I were to stand here and persuade you that there was no danger, you might very well say, "Then why need you tell us so? Why be in earnest when there is nothing to be in earnest about?"

2. In the next place, do not have the edge of this truth taken off by those who suggest a hope that though you may be punished for a time in the next world you will ultimately be destroyed and annihilated. Now nothing in nature ever has been annihilated yet, and it would be a new thing if *you* should be. I am not about to argue the point this morning, but I pray you do not let the terrors of the wrath to come be taken off by that idea—for even supposing it to be true, yet those who teach it tell us that there will be a limited but a very fearful punishment! They still agree with the teaching of the text, that "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

If I knew that I should be damned for a *day* I would labor to escape from it! But to be damned for a thousand years will be terrible, indeed, and it would still be true that "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." I dare not, however, hold out to you the hope of annihilation while the Bible contains such words as these—"These shall go away into everlasting punishment"—*everlasting!* The word is precisely the same as that which is applied to Heaven, and though I shall be told that this is an old argument, I reply that this is the very reason why I use it.

Be it for others to invent novelty—we count that the old is better. If that passage does not teach the eternity of punishment, neither does it teach the eternity of reward. It is to be *always* punishment, too—always punishment. Now if the lost should suddenly be annihilated, that annihilation would be no punishment—it would be a gift to be sought with tears. It would be the cessation of all punishment, for how can they be punished

who have ceased to be? The punishment spoken of is said to be *everlasting*, and everlasting it will be!

In the second Epistle to the Thessalonians, the first chapter and seventh and ninth verses, we are told that such men shall be punished with eternal destruction. Some lay hold upon the word “destruction” as meaning annihilation, but it is eternal *destruction*. Annihilation is done at once and done with—but this destruction lasts on *forever*. It is *eternal* destruction, and then it is explained—“eternal destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and the Glory of His power.” Therefore to be forever banished from the Glory of God and shut out from every source of hope is the destruction here meant.

There is a very terrible passage in the twentieth chapter of Revelation where in vision John speaks concerning the condition of lost spirits. If you read the tenth verse speaking of Gog and Magog, it says, “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the Lake of Fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.” I do not know what the words forever and ever can mean if they do *not* mean forever and ever. Yes, cries one, that torment is for the devil. Very well, why do you not sympathize with the devil as well as with men? Is not there as much reason to sympathize with fallen angels as with fallen men?

But our Lord has said that the same punishment which awaits Satan will befall the impenitent, for He says, “Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” And in the last verse of the twentieth chapter of Revelation we find that whoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire—that same place into which Death and Hell were cast! This fire will not cause annihilation, for in Revelation 21:8 we are told that certain sinners, such as the “fearful and unbelieving, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.”

How can those have a part who have no existence? To have a part in that fire is the second death. When Jesus speaks of the fire of Hell, He does not say that annihilation is effected by it, but speaks on this wise: “shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be (not annihilation, but the signs of *conscious* misery)—*weeping*, and *wailing*, and *gnashing* of teeth.” Now I am not going fully into this subject, but I can only say this much—if our Lord and His Spirit intended to make us believe that there would be a worm that never dies, and a fire that never could be quenched, and did mean to teach us that there was a punishment for sin which would last forever, I do not know what other words could have been used.

And I do pray, dear Friends, whether you think so or not, be on the safe side! For even if it were but a thousand years only, think what that must be! It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, even if you could get out again. But when it comes with the solemn sanction, as I am persuaded it does, that you *never* will escape from those hands, oh, why will you die? Why will you die? Look, look to Jesus, and find eternal life in Him! Beware lest you be “wandering stars, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.”

3. Some suppose that instead of annihilation, restoration awaits the lost. There are no texts in Scripture which, when read by honest men, can mean this. They must be wickedly and perniciously perverted before they

can be made to teach anything of the sort. Scripture does not speak of the fire of Hell as chastening and purifying, but as *punishment* which men shall receive for deeds done in the body. They are to be visited with many stripes and receive just recompense for transgressions.

What can there be about Hell fire to change a man's heart? Surely the more the lost will suffer the more they will hate God! When God sent plagues upon the earth men blasphemed His name (Rev. 16:9). Men do so now. Are they likely to turn at His rebuke then? Satan has been punished for these six thousand years—do you see any signs of repentance about him? Do you see any tokens of his being reclaimed? Is he not just as much a roaring lion, going about seeking whom he may devour, as ever he was? And the case of Satan must run parallel with ours! There are no tokens of his restoration now, nor will there be any tokens of ours then.

Besides, if the Gospel of Christ cannot save you, what can? If the wooing of Christ's wounds cannot make you love Christ, do you think the flames of Hell will? Oh, my Hearers, if, with such a Gospel as that which is proclaimed to you, you will not turn, do you think you will turn in the world to come? Jesus says not so, but declares that, "he that believes not shall be damned." You live in the company of saints now—at all events, you live in a land which represses immorality. But in Hell there are no preachers of the Gospel—no holy examples to win you to holiness. The dwellers in Hell are enemies of God—a pretty school for virtue that!

Do you suppose, then, that you who leave this life without the fear of God will be led to turn to Him then? Cast away the thought, my Hearer, it will deceive you. This fearful doctrine did much mischief in America at one time, but it was so revolting to the common sense of many consciences that its day was soon over. This error will eat out the very soul of piety. Still, were it true, Believers in Jesus are as well off as you are. A gentleman once said to a Universalist who had been arguing with him, "I suppose if I hate your religion, laugh at it, ridicule it, and spit on it, it will be all the same with me at the last?" "Yes," said the other. "Well," said the first, "mind you do not do that with mine, or you are a lost man."

I like the remark of the people who were requested to accept one of these preachers as ministers. They said, "You have come to tell us that there is no Hell. If your doctrine is true, we certainly do not need you! And if it is not true, we do not *want* you—so that, either way, we can do without you." It is a most dreadful fact that there is no provision made for the future restoration of the lost. Not a word said about it except that for them remains the blackness of darkness *forever*.

Abraham did not say to the rich man, "My dear son, you will return to my bosom when you have undergone those purifying fires." Oh, no! That would have been something more than a drop of water to cool his tongue—that would have drenched him with buckets full of the cooling draught. But no, it was just this: "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed so that they which would pass from here to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from there."

4. Some ungodly men say, "Well, you do not believe for a minute that there is any material fire, do you?" My dear Hearer, what is that to you? There is a text which speaks of destroying both body and soul in Hell, which seems to indicate punishment for the body. But if it were not so, do you think that soul punishment is a trifle? Why, it is the very soul of pun-

ishment! It is far more dreadful than bodily pain. Go across to Bethlehem Hospital and observe poor creatures perfectly free of pain in body whose minds are wrung with bitter anguish—and you will soon see that none can bear a wounded spirit.

Oh, listen to the Lord, for it is a fearful thing to fall into His hands. If there is no material fire. If there is no literal worm, this will be sorry consolation for a soul on flame with woe! Though I am thus speaking, I know what some will do. You will go away and say, “I could not bear to hear him.” I do not ask you to hear *me*, but I pray you do not neglect your *souls*. You will say, “What a harsh preacher!” Say so, but do not be harsh with your own souls. You will say, “He brings up the old bugbear.” If it is an old bugbear, you are men and need not worry about it—but if it is not so, should I not be a demon if I did not warn you?

As long as God spares my life, I hope I shall not be found unfaithful to your souls. So long as I believe this Book, I cannot but warn you that “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

III. In the third place, and briefly, I should like you to CONSIDER HOW THIS TEXT IS PUT. The punishment to be endured is here described as falling into the hands of the living God. Will not that be fearful? You hear men speak of falling into the hands of the devil—that, no doubt, would be something terrible—but this is much worse, falling into the hands of the living God!

But what could there be that would terrify and alarm the soul in falling into the hands of the living God? Let me remind you. You sinners, when you begin to think of God, feel uneasy. In a future state you will be *compelled* to think of God. God is not in all your thoughts now—it is the only place where He is not—but when you enter the future state, you will not be able to escape from the thought of God. You will then realize the words of David, “If I make my bed in Hell, You are there also.” That thought will torment you. You will have to think of God as One to whom you were ungrateful. You will look up and think, “There is the God who made me, who fed me, clothed me, and if He chastened me, did it for my good, and I never thanked Him, but I used His name by way of blasphemy.”

You will feel remorse, but not repentance as you recollect that He did honestly invite you to come to Him—that He did call and you refused—that He stretched out His hands and you paid no attention to Him. As you think of the happiness of those whose hearts were given to Him it will make your miseries great to think of what you have lost. You will hate Him, and here, it seems to me, will be your misery. The hatred of the soul to everything that is good will involve fearful misery, and more so if that soul sees that good is infinite, that good is victorious, that goodness reigns in Heaven!

Well may the wicked gnash their teeth, as they note the overthrow of evil and the establishment of good! Ungodly men, both here and hereafter, hate God because He is good! Just as of old, the wicked hated the saints because they were saints—and they hate Him all the more because He is so powerful that they cannot defeat Him or frustrate His designs. Ah, those sins of yours will feed the flame within your conscience and will be an undying worm within your heart. Oh, Friends, it is misery on earth to hate God! It is misery to live with those who hate God!

But when sin shall become fully developed there will be no need of racks and flames—sin itself will be enough to make its own punishment—no punishment more acute and more terrible—while the Presence of God all the while shall act as a great exciting cause to stir up the bad passions, and the vile enmity, and the horrid rebellion of lost, fallen spirits. Oh turn to Him, for to turn FROM Him is to be unhappy! To love God is Heaven—to hate Him brings Hell. You are so made that you cannot sin and be happy.

It was right of God to make you such a creature that holiness and happiness should go together—it was right of Him to make you such a creature that sin and sorrow must go together, and if you will have sin, you must have sorrow. Oh turn from it while you may! Oh may God's Spirit turn you now before you enter into that world where there is no turning, but where the die is cast and the road is chosen. As the arrow once shot speeds onward in its course and turns not from it, so must you speed on in holiness and happiness or in sin and sorrow, for there is no turning from the course.

IV. I desire to close by saying, if THESE THINGS ARE SO, THEN ACT ACCORDINGLY. Sinner, unless you are prepared to say this text is a lie, do not fall into the hands of the living God. But you say, "How can I escape, then?" By falling into the hands of the living God *now*, in another sense. If you will come and confess your sin. If you will trust in Him whom God has set forth as a propitiation for sin, there is pardon for you! There is pardon for you NOW!

However great your sins may have been, if with a broken heart you will say, "I will arise and go unto my Father," there is room in His heart. There is room at the table of His Divine Grace. There is room in Heaven for you. Whoever among you turns unto the living God shall certainly live. "Only confess your iniquity," said He, "only return unto Me, and I will have mercy upon you—

***"You sinners, seek His Grace, whose wrath you cannot bear:
Fly to the shelter of His Cross, and find salvation there."***

To trust Christ is the true way of escape! Rely upon Him and you shall live.

To the saint—what should be the effect of this doctrine? I will show you from the lips of one who hates it. I read in a newspaper yesterday the notes of a sermon preached by a certain Congregational preacher in London, a sermon which I must confess did not altogether so much startle me as it would have done if I had not known the gentleman's past.

But it did startle me when I read these words. I will quote a few sentences: "If I dwelt upon this doctrine Sunday after Sunday in this place of worship, and induced you to believe that people who have lived and died impenitent are thrown into a state of condemnation and misery—I say, if I believed that, how could I fail to feel for you or find rest to my spirit until I grasped every one of you and beseeched you to consider how terrible is your destiny, and how awful your danger?"

"Are we not giving up ourselves to all sorts of pleasures and entertainments? When the work of the day is over, do we not try to obtain some sort of relaxation among the drama, the theater, the cards, and all kinds of social delights to direct our thoughts from the terrible, piercing realities which are every day and every hour wearing out our lives? How dare you do that if spirits of men are going into everlasting damnation every instant

that you breathe! If you believe that with every breath you draw there is some soul damned forever—some poor human being which has lost its way and come into utter misery—how can you go about playing games? How can you be going to concerts and sitting in front of stages and theatrical entertainments and finding your pleasures and recreations there?

“If you do, you are like demons! If you can look on and see unnumbered millions of your fellow creatures perishing forever, and if you can live and enjoy yourselves, you deserve to perish forever.” And then he goes on to say that if we can go to comfortable places of worship and sit there contentedly, and spend our lives in making money and live for nothing else, then we are false to our profession of belief in this doctrine. And he denounces the inconsistency, and adds, “If I believe that doctrine I dare not preach here. I do not know where I dare preach, but somewhere under the open sky where I should be able to say that human beings are being lost. If this doctrine of everlasting damnation is true, how ought you to labor to save souls from everlasting death!

“You ought never to think of anything else, but declare it from the housetops, and never enjoy yourselves or make more money or sit quietly in chapel! You ought to wander over all the earth and bring spirits back again to the God who will damn them if they do not come unto Him.” Now when I read all this, I thought, “It is even so. The doctrine of eternal punishment should thus act upon us! And for this very reason it ought to be preached and insisted upon—one would not have been surprised to hear the preacher proceed to press the doctrine in order to produce just such hatred of frivolity and worldliness, and just such zeal and fervor—but who is not horrified to find that the next sentence is—“I really believe that the doctrine of everlasting damnation is a blasphemy against God! I believe it to be demoralizing to the spirit of man, and subversive of all the laws of humanity! I believe that the doctrine of Atheism would be better.”

After first of all showing how we ought to live if that doctrine IS true, and very properly showing its influence in promoting zeal and fervor, this misguided man declares that Atheism would be better than a doctrine so practically useful! No answer is needed beyond his own words. Surely that doctrine is not so very demoralizing which would make ministers and hearers earnest to win souls, keep them from vain amusements, and make them give up mere money-making, and pleasure-seeking and self-comfort—and drive them into earnest, passionate weeping, longing and labor for men that they might be saved!

I pray God that such teachers may have a better mind, and that all of us may be kept faithful by the power of the Holy Spirit, working to win men because “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

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HOLD FAST YOUR SHIELD

NO. 1263

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

***“Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which has
great recompense of reward.”
Hebrews 10:35.***

THE early Christians had to suffer for their faith. They were exposed to great ridicule and enmity. They were, indeed, the byword, the laughing-stock and the derision of all mankind. There are still to be seen in Rome, in the praetorian guardroom, caricatures of Christians and of their Lord. I dare not mention what they are, but they are so insulting to everything which we hold dear, that they remain as lasting evidence that Christians were counted as the offscouring of all things for the sake of Jesus, their crucified Savior. Nor did it end in ridicule. They were deprived of their goods. Ruinous fines were exacted from them. They were driven from city to city and not thought worthy to dwell among the sons of men.

They were made a spectacle to all men, both in their lives and deaths. Very frequently they were not put to death as other condemned persons were, but their execution was attended with circumstances of cruelty and scorn which made it still harder to bear. They were daubed with pitch and set up in the gardens of Nero to be burned alive to light that tyrant's debaucheries, or taken to the amphitheater, there to fight with beasts and to be torn in pieces. Everything that could be invented that was at once degrading and cruel, their persecutors devised for them. Malice exhausted its ingenuity upon believers in Christ. Yet there was never a braver race of men.

“Men,” did I say? Why, the women were as brave as their brothers! The name of such women as Blandina will remain in everlasting recollection. Set in a hot iron chair, tormented with whips, or tossed upon the horns of bulls, such heroines showed no cowardice. The tenderness of their sex only increased the glory of the courage with which they adhered to their Master under unutterable torments. The despised sect wearied out a long succession of Roman emperors. Those despots passed edict upon edict, each one more ferocious than its predecessor, in order to exterminate the followers of the Nazarene!

But the more they persecuted them the more they multiplied. And instead of hiding themselves, they came boldly to the courts of the magistrates, confessing Christ and defying death. Never was the victory of patience more complete than in the early Church. The anvil broke the hammer by bearing all the blows that the hammer could place upon it. The patience of the saints was stronger than the cruelty of tyrants. Christ, then, the immortal Christ, was stronger than all the pangs of death and they

triumphed though they were slain! Truly did the Apostle say, “In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”

The secret reason for the triumph of Christians in those circumstances was *their confidence in Christ*. Brothers and Sisters, we are not subjected to the same persecution and it will not do for us to wrap ourselves about with the garments of our ancestors and say that Christians are this and that, as though we were to be honored without enduring trial. Yet, remember, there are still conflicts for you. If you are real Christians, you will have to endure the trial of cruel mockeries. In some cases family ties are the source of far greater sorrow than comfort. Truly is it written, “A man’s foes shall be they of his own household.”

The coming of the Gospel into a man’s heart has often rendered him the object of hatred to those who loved him before. In his own house and in society abroad, the Christian working man has, at this day, to run the gauntlet much more severely than some suppose. And in almost every sphere of life the genuine Christian meets with the “cold shoulder” and the sneer—and sometimes with cruel misrepresentation and slander, for, until the hearts of men are changed, persecution in some form or other will continue. Those that are born after the flesh will always persecute those that are born after the Spirit.

For us, then, our only defense is holy confidence—the confidence which sustained the martyrs—and to us Paul speaks as well as unto them. “Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which has great recompense of reward.” Let us notice, first, *the elements of this confidence* of which the Apostle speaks. And then we shall speak upon *how it may be cast away*. God grant we may never attempt to do so! Thirdly, let us consider *why it should be held fast*—because it “has great recompense of reward.”

I. First, then, WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF THIS CONFIDENCE of which the Apostle speaks? Those who are acquainted with the original will know that it is not very easy to explain this word in one English word. The nearest approach to it would be *boldness*—“Cast not away your *boldness*.” It is frequently translated by that word. In Acts, where we read, “When they saw the boldness of Peter and John,” it is the same word in the Greek as that which is here translated, “confidence.” But it means something rather different from boldness, because we read of Christ, in the Gospel by Mark, that He spoke *openly*—and there the word is precisely that which is here used and translated—“confidence.” And the Apostle says, “We use great *plainness* of speech,” and there the word is the same, also. It means that freedom, that peace, that at-home-ness, which makes a man feel bold, free, confident.

We come back to the word in the text—your confidence, your child-like plainness, freedom, quietude, peace of heart, rest, sense of security and, therefore, courage. The Apostle meant a great deal when he said, “Cast not away, therefore, your *confidence*.” And the elements of it seem to me to be these. First, confidence in the principles which you have espoused. Some persons appear to think that a state of doubt is the very best which we can possibly reach. They are very wise and highly cultured individuals

and they imagine that by their advanced judgments nothing in the world can be regarded as assuredly true.

Some of the broad Church school would seem to believe that no doctrine in the Bible is worth dying for, or worth anybody's losing over and above a halfpenny for. They do not feel sure of *any* doctrine—it may be true and there is a good deal to be said for it, but then, a good deal may be said on the other side—and you must hold your mind, “receptive,” and be ready to accept “new truth.” Some Robinson or other said something about new truth as if there ever could be such a thing and, under cover of his probably misinterpreted speech, like chameleons, they are always taking their cue from the particular light that falls upon them.

They have no light in themselves and no truth which they hold to be vital. Such people cannot understand this confidence, but the smallest babes in the family of faith know what it means. Here are certain things which God has taught me. I believe them and am sure about them. “Dogmatic,” one says. Exactly so! Call it what you like, but we are bold to confess that there remains no doubt to us after God has spoken! The question is solved by God's Word! The doubt is laid to sleep, forever, by the witness of the Holy Spirit! Oh, to know the grand Truths of the Gospel and to know them Infallibly!

For instance, the grand doctrine of the Substitutionary Sacrifice of the Son of God—to know it and hold it and be able to say, “Let others question and quibble, but I believe it! It is my only hope, it is all my salvation. I stake my soul upon it. If that is not true then am I lost.” And so with regard to all the other grand Truths of Revelation, the thing is to know them and grasp them firmly. There must be leverage if we would move men and, to have a leverage you must have a fixed point. There must be certain undoubted Truths of God about which you can sing, “O God, my heart is fixed! My heart is fixed! I will sing and give praise”—things which you perceive to be plainly taught in the Scriptures—things brought home by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is the groundwork of true confidence. But to make it complete there must be *an open acknowledgement of our belief in our Lord Jesus*. The Apostle has said, “Hold fast the profession of your faith,” not merely your faith, but the *profession* of it. To hold a Truth of God which I am ashamed to utter is to be false both to God and man. To have convictions which I stifle and principles which I dare not profess, is to be unworthy of the Lord that bought me and unworthy of the Spirit who has instructed me. God forbid that we should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and God forbid that we should refuse to glory in that!

Let us never cloak our faith in Jesus, whatever the company, and though we are not to cast pearls before swine, yet, if a time comes to exhibit pearls, let us not conceal them, even though swine should gaze upon them. We are not sent into the world to comfortably sneak through it into Heaven, but we are sent, like a troop of soldiers, to fight our way and to win a victory all along from the beginning of our pilgrimage even to the close of it. The colors are not to be covered up and kept by the color-

sergeant in a tent somewhere in the rear! They are to be unfurled to the breeze and borne in the front and every believing soldier is to labor earnestly to bear them farther forward and to smite the foe that dares to insult the standard of the Lord. "Cast not away your confidence," that is, hold confidently the Truths of God which God has taught you and never blush or stammer, or show the slightest sign of hesitancy in avowing them.

To do all this you must *know your own interest in those truths*. A man will readily let go a truth which may condemn him. Who will die for a truth in which he has no share? The man who can live and die for Christ is the man who believes that Christ has lived and died for him. A doctrine—what is that? A mere statement written in a book. It stirs no man's heart and awakens no one's enthusiasm. But a blessed Truth of God which has been verified in one's own experience, in which one feels that he has a share, no, which is all his own—*this* is a thing for which a man may well be willing to be counted the offscouring of all things.

Beloved Christian Friends, do you know that you have passed from death unto life? If so, you do not doubt the doctrine of Conversion. Do you know that you have been washed in the blood of Jesus? If so, you do not doubt the doctrine of Atonement. Do you know that Christ has saved you, and that you are one with Him? Then you do not doubt the doctrine of Union to Christ. Do you know that He has preserved you to this day? Then you do not doubt His faithfulness—you have proof of it before your eyes! We must "eat this roll," as Ezekiel did, before we can bear testimony to it. The Truths of God must be the food of our spirits, the sustenance of our inward life, before we can have that confidence in it which the Apostle bids us never to cast away. These are the first points of confidence—a full conviction of the Truth of the Gospel, willingness to confess it and a full assurance of our own interest in it.

But the word, as I have said, cannot have all its meaning brought out by this word, *boldness*. It means beside, *a full and firm reliance upon the faithfulness of God*, so that we are free from all mistrusts, fears and simply rest in God. It is a very sweet thing to admit that God is true and to sing, with the Psalmist of old, "His mercy endures forever." "Why," says one, "that is a very simple fact and I never doubted it." Dear Brothers and Sisters, when the Holy Spirit taught the Psalmist to make that Psalm whose many verses conclude with, "His mercy endures forever," He knew very well that we do not so easily believe in the Lord's enduring mercy as we think we do. And, therefore, He has given us line upon line, and precept upon precept.

Do you not feel that you have a very great deal of faith in God when you have no afflictions? Do you not feel sure about your daily bread when you have a good job, or have an excellent pension, or a good sum of money in the bank? Such faith is very easy and very unreal—the publicans and sinners have *that* faith. But to trust in God when you see nothing but starvation before you! To believe when you cannot see! Ah, this is another kind of faith, and *the* faith and the *only* faith that is of the operation of the

Spirit of God. I wonder whether you could have believed in Jesus if, for having been here last night, you had been arrested at the foot of the steps of the Tabernacle and taken off to Horsemonger Lane Jail, and kept there in prison in the dark, with only bread and water for several months?

Suppose you were occasionally stretched upon the rack, or beaten with rods? Would you feel, in the loneliness of the prison, smarting under the rounds you endured, quite sure that all things worked together for good—quite certain of that promise, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you”? If it were intimated to you that tomorrow morning you must go out to be burned to death in the great square of the city, or to be torn to pieces in the amphitheatre by wild beasts, would you be quite sure that the promises of God were faithful and true? Yet, Beloved, that is the kind of faith we *must* have, for God deserves it! He cannot lie! He has promised that those who trust in Him shall never be forsaken or confounded world without end. Now, to have the confidence of the text, we must subscribe in heart to a full surrender—“Whatever happens, I believe in God. Come what may, I rest in His promises and I leave my matters entirely in His hands, resting them with Him as with a faithful Creator.” Happy is the man who has this confidence! Let him take care that he never casts it away!

Where that confidence really reigns in the soul, it takes the form of a sense of *full acceptance before God*. Let me illustrate that by the condition of a child. A child that lives in full confidence with its father is quite sure of its father’s love. It is also sure about its father’s wisdom and, consequently, quite content with all its father’s dealings. This is confidence, and the sort of confidence which is meant in the text. That, at least, is *part* of what is meant—confidence towards God—confidence that all is well between my soul and God. Confidence that I can walk with Him in the light as He is in the light—that the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses from all sin and, therefore, I have fellowship with Him as a man has fellowship with his friend.

We must have confidence so as to avail ourselves of perpetual access to God, so as to be able to speak with Him at all times, not merely in the closet where we are accustomed to pray, but everywhere! True confidence makes the Believer feel, “I am God’s child. I can speak with my Lord whenever I will and I can hear His voice everywhere—hear it in Nature as well as in the Bible. I dwell always in my Father’s own house at home and I know that ‘goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.’” Oh, what a sweet feeling that is, to know that you are always near to God, that He is always with you and, consequently, you are always at home and your Father is always accessible. Upon this there follows that further confidence, of which John says, “This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us”—confidence that *when we pray we shall be heard*.

Now, all Christians accept this as a matter of doctrine, but very few Christians really believe it. When you talk to them about God’s hearing prayer, they open their eyes at you. You tell them some cases in which He

has answered you, and they look upon you as a wonder! Dear Mr. Muller's Orphanage at Bristol is thought to be a sort of miracle and we, ourselves, in that and other cases are conscious of a feeling of astonishment when we hear of God's answering prayer. It should not be so. If we have the confidence we ought to have in our heavenly Father, we shall be astonished at His goodness, but we shall not be *astonished* at the fact that He keeps His promises and answers His children's prayers.

I sometimes felt, when I was a child, astonished at my father's goodness in giving me what I asked for. But not when he had previously promised it to me. A loving child asks with expectation. Probably if he had not the expectation he would scarcely ask, but he asks because he expects to receive. And, oh, what a sweet confidence that is—to know that God is your Father, that you are on happy terms with Him through Jesus Christ and that you may speak to Him and whatever you desire you may ask of Him, pleading that promise—"Delight yourself, also, in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart." Oh, blessed, blessed confidence! May we always enjoy it!

Over and above that, how delightful to feel that *even what we do not pray for, by reason of ignorance or forgetfulness, our gracious God will bestow*. "Your heavenly Father knows what you have need of before you ask Him." I would pray as if I had to remind the Lord of everything and yet feel when I have done that He has never forgotten, nor could He fail to give anything that was good for me, for did He not say, "No good thing will I withhold from them that walk uprightly"? Beloved, this is the confidence that we have towards God, that He will bestow upon us all things necessary for this life and godliness. That He will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able and that when He sends a trial, He will also make a way of escape.

"Ah," says one, "that is a happy way of living if we could only attain to it." That is how you ought to live, dear Brothers and Sisters, and if you ever do so live, then remember the text, "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence." If you get it, hold it! If you have a childlike simplicity of confidence in God, reckon it to be a priceless jewel and watch it night and day. Let no one rob you of it, but labor with might and main, by His blessed Spirit, to abide in this confidence as long as you live. You may add to all this the confidence that *He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him*, for we have this confidence—that whether we sleep or wake we shall be together with Him. "We are confident, I say, and willing, rather, to be absent from the body and present with the Lord," for we are confident that though we shall drop this tabernacle, "we have a temple of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

With confidence we are looking forward to resurrection after death! We are looking forward to a grand reunion with the beloved ones that have gone before! We are looking forward to being satisfied when we awake in His likeness! We are looking forward to seeing the King in His beauty in the land that is very far off. We are looking forward to sitting upon Christ's Throne, even as He overcame and has sat down with His Father

upon His Throne. We comfort one another with these words! Yes, we joy and rejoice and we reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.

Oh, blessed confidence, the confidence that He will keep us while we are here and will glorify us hereafter! As sure as Christ is glorified so must His people be! "If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him." This is the confidence we have in Him! Cast not away your confidence!

II. Having thus labored as best I could to show the confidence, let us now spend a few moments in considering how WE MAY CAST IT AWAY. It strikes one, at once, on reading the passage—and the best expositors think so, too—that there is, here, an allusion to the Greek soldier with his shield on his arm. When he went out to battle wearing his shield, which covered him from head to foot, the rule was that he must either come back with his shield or be brought back upon it—but he must *never* cast it away. Among the Spartans there was a law that any soldier who cast away his shield must die—he was not fit to be a soldier.

You remember how one of the old Scriptural songs speaks of the shield of the mighty which was vilely cast away? This showed that in the old war times, the casting away of your shield was a disgrace. It was showing the white feather. It was giving up the conflict and ceasing to hope for safety, much less victory! Our confidence is our shield and we are not to cast it away, or suffer any to tear it from us, but hold it fast until the battle is fought and the victory is won forever. But how can you cast your confidence away? You can cast it away by *exchanging it for self-confidence*. You can get off from the platform on which you now stand, which is that of simple confidence in your Savior, and you can very readily grow confident in yourselves.

All along the road to Heaven there are many junctions and at every one of these, the devil cries out, "Change here for self-righteousness!" The high level railway of the perfect Brethren has been much infested, of late, by devils which cry, "Change here for self-confidence!" When I hear how good they are and how they have conquered their tempers, I am delighted to hear that they are on such good terms with themselves. But at the same time I remember the proverb, "Let another praise you and not your own lips," and I conclude that if they had been quite as good as they say they are, they would have held their tongues about it.

My dear Brothers and Sisters, you who have begun in the Spirit, do you hope to be perfected by the flesh? Hang on to Christ, as a sinner's Savior, till you die! If it has been Christ up till now, do not put, "Christ and Co." for that firm will fail, inasmuch as one of the partners is already a bankrupt! Christ alone will stand, and stand forever! Whatever run there may be upon that bank it will pay out gold coin without end. When *you* come in, it is a *self-reliance* altogether. Better to yoke a cherub with an ant than to think of yoking yourself with Christ! You have cast away your confidence if, in any measure or degree, you confide in self. God keep us from that, and hold us fast to the platform of simple reliance on Christ.

I remember telling you, years ago, a story you have often met with since, of poor Jack the huckster who heard a little ditty sung—

***“I’m a poor sinner, and nothing at all
But Jesus Christ is my All in All.”***

That exactly suited Jack because he had nothing of his own, and so he took Christ and trusted Him. He wanted to join the Church and they asked what was his experience, and he said he did not think he had any, only he was a poor sinner and nothing at all and Jesus Christ was his All in All. “But,” they said, “don’t you have doubts?” And he said, “Well, what is there to doubt? I know that I am a poor sinner and nothing at all, I cannot doubt that. And Jesus Christ is my All in All, for the Bible says so, and why should I doubt it?” They could never get him away from that standpoint—

***“I’m a poor sinner, and nothing at all
But Jesus Christ is my All in All.”***

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, if you get an inch above *that* platform, you will have to come down again! Be empty and Christ will be your fullness! But if you become full in yourself you have done with Christ. Cast not away your confidence by leaving your simple reliance upon Jesus Christ.

Some, however, cast away their confidence by *giving way to sin*. Look at the child I spoke of just now who has such confidence in his father. He goes in and out the house and asks for what he wants and expects to receive it because he knows his father loves him. But see, he has done what his father told him not to do! Do you not see that his confidence is gone? At night he slinks away to bed. In the morning at breakfast he does not eat much, for his father is grieved. That child does not think that he has ceased to be his father’s child, but he knows that his Father is grieved with him and he cannot act with freedom and confidence. If his brothers were to say, “John, ask father for such-and-such,” he would say, “No, you had better, I am out of favor with him.”

Perhaps the father has not said a word, yet, but the boy is conscious of having done wrong and is ill at ease. If he is a wise child he will go, at once, and say, “Father, I have done wrong. Forgive me.” And after his father has said, “Yes, dear child, I forgive you,” his confidence will return. But by doing wrong he has cast away his confidence. He has faith in his father that he will provide him with food and raiment and all things necessary—he never loses that faith—but when he disobeys, he has not that confidence towards his father which enables him to act as a loving, favored child should do. My Brothers and Sisters, we cannot enjoy confidence towards God if we live in disobedience.

Old Master Brooks says, “Assurance will make us leave off sinning, or sinning will make us leave off assurance.” And, depend upon it, it will. He who lives in the light of God’s Countenance must mind what he is doing. Kings’ favorites live under a jealous eye. More is expected from those who lean their heads upon Christ’s bosom than from any other of the disciples. You cannot grieve your heavenly Father and yet feel the same confidence towards Him. Perhaps some of you know that you have not this confi-

dence. Remember that the Lord is ready to forgive you. He is waiting for you to come and say, "Father, I have sinned."

Never let sin rankle in your conscience. It is well, every night, to clear all out by confession. Dear Mr. Muller said from this pulpit, "Do not begin the day unless you feel happy in the Lord." The advice is good. See that you walk in obedience with great watchfulness, so shall you have the freedom of children towards God. "Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God." There is another way of losing our confidence, and that is *by getting into worldly company* and mixing up with the wild and frivolous. A child would soon lose his loving, confident feeling towards his father if his father had an enemy and he constantly went into that enemy's house and heard all the language that was used there. Why, he would gradually harbor hard and wrong thoughts about his father—and if his father knew that he had been associating with his enemies, the child could not feel towards his father as before.

Have you been cast into company some evening where the conversation was not at all to edification, but light and frivolous and perhaps worse? If you are a child of God, have you not felt unfit for devotion when you reached home? You wanted to pray, but you could not. A deadening influence will come over your intimate communion with God if you are on close terms with unbelievers. You cannot walk with God and His enemies. You cannot be in league with Christ and Belial at the same time, or sit at your Master's table and expect Him to smile upon you after you have partaken of the cup of devils. Do not lose your sweet confidence and holy boldness in God's Presence by associating with the world, but come out from among them and be you separate.

You can very easily lose your confidence *by changing your aim in life*. The Christian's aim in life is to live for God's Glory. If he does so, no persecution can ever shake him. If his goods are spoiled, he says, "If it glorifies God for me to lose my property, I am no loser. I gave my goods to God years ago." If he is put in prison, he says, "I have lost my liberty, but I am no loser. I gave up my liberty to God long ago." If they tell him that he will die, he says, "Well, I am no loser, for I gave Him my life long ago. I am altogether Christ's." While your objective is God, you will be bold as a lion! But a sordid motive is the mother of cowardice. Suppose a minister preaches so that he may receive honor from men? How anxious he will be to please his hearers—and he will cut and trim to do so.

But if his sole objective is the Glory of God, he will not smooth his speech or withhold rebukes because of man's anger. He will care no more for human criticism than for the sighing of the rushes by the river. If we once shift our motive. If we seek after honor from men, or for money, or anything of self, we have cast away our confidence. You can be perfectly confident when you feel, "What I have done I did for God's Glory. I have a clear conscience about it." But your confidence is gone if your motive is selfish. Why, you can look 7,000 devils in the face and not care for one of them when your conscience will bear the piercing eyes of God! But if you must confess to sordid motives, you fall from your excellency and stand in

doubt of your own honesty. Cast not away your confidence, then, by shifting your aim.

Alas, dear Friends, some unhappy professors have apparently cast away their confidence *in utter unbelief*. They set out with a great confidence of a certain sort. Like Pliable, from the City of Destruction, they were going to have the Celestial City and enjoy it forever. But they fell into the Slough of Despond and they felt that their confidence could not be kept up—and so they got out of the slough on the side that was nearest their own house—and went back through sheer despair of better things. May God keep you from this! Remember, if you really are Christians, there is nothing for you but to fight it through.

This is what Bunyan impresses upon us in his portrait of the Pilgrim, who, when he saw Apollyon standing across the way and heard him swear that he would spill his soul, would have turned back but he reflected that he had no armor *for his back*, so that to retreat would be certain destruction. For you there is nothing but to cut a lane right through your enemies till you come up to the Throne of God! To turn back means sure damnation! God's vengeance rests upon the deserter and the apostate. Oh, then, Brothers and Sisters, we must go forward! And may God the Holy Spirit help us to do so! If we think of turning aside we are casting away our confidence and renouncing its reward.

III. I will close by noticing THE REASONS GIVEN IN THE TEXT FOR HOLDING FAST OUR CONFIDENCE. The first argument in the text is "therefore." "Cast not away, *therefore*, your confidence." What does this, "therefore," mean? Why, it means this—*because you have already endured so much*. You were made a laughingstock and you suffered the loss of your goods. Therefore, cast not away your confidence, for if you do, you will have suffered for nothing! I have known a man begin to build his house and he has spent a great deal of money upon it. But, at length, he has thought, "I do not quite like the situation. Shall I finish the building?" One strong argument for going on has been this, "I have spent so much money on it, I must go through with it."

Now, some of you have spent much upon your faith. By God's Grace you have been, for years, following on to know the Lord. You bore the troubles of your early youth when, perhaps, father and mother were against you and you were bold, then, for Christ. Some of you have been known as Christian working men for years and you have encountered the chaff of the workshop for many a month. And yet you have not gone back. Well, you have spent a good deal upon your faith—never give it up, my Brother—never give it up. If, for your Lord's sake, you have had the honor to be abused and scandalized, do not turn your back, now. What? Have you half routed the enemy, and will you now flee? Believe me, the rest of them will be routed, too. Yon cowards have fled before you already, fight on till the rest are vanquished!

"But," you say, "they come up thick and fast." So much the better, for so much the grander the victory in the end. You can overcome them—by God's Grace you can! Do not lose the victories which you have already

gained. If it was wise to go so far, it will be wise to go on to the end. Cry for Grace to persevere, for he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved, and only he. Having gone so far it will be disgraceful to turn back now! Do not even *think* of it. I remember going over the Col D'Obbia on the Alps and when I got a little way down I found myself on a steep mountain side upon a mass of loose earth and slate.

There seemed to me to be some miles of almost perpendicular descent and no road. My head began to swim. I set my feet fast down in the loose soil, turned my back to the scene below me, my face to the hillside, and stuck my hands into the earth to hold as best I could. I cried to my friend, "I shall never go down there! I will go back." He coolly replied, "Just look where you have come from." When I looked up it appeared to be much worse to try and clamber up than it could possibly be to go down and so he remarked, "I think you had better go on, for it is worse going back." So, Brothers and Sisters, we must go on, for it will be worse going back. Let us never think of retreating, but gird up the loins of our mind and push onward with firm resolution, by the help of the Spirit of God.

Here is the other argument—Do not cast away your confidence, for *it has great recompense of reward*. There is a reward in it *now* for it makes us *happy*. When we are sweetly confident in God and do not molest ourselves with doubts and fears, how happy we are! Who has not read Cowper's beautiful description of the cottager with her pillow lace and bobbins, who knew no more than, "her Bible true, a truth the learned Frenchman never knew"—who was just as happy as the days were long? We are never so happy as when, in childlike simplicity, we trust our God without a doubt! Do not cast away your confidence, since it yields you such pure delight.

But it makes you so *strong*, too—strong both to bear and labor. When you are like a child in confidence before God, you can endure pain and reproach right bravely—

***"If on my face, for Your dear name,
Shame and reproach shall be,
I'll hail reproach and welcome shame,
For You'll remember me."***

You can bear, like Atlas, a world upon your shoulders when you have God within you! If He is near, you laugh at difficulties! And as for *impossibilities*, there are no such things! Brethren, hold fast your confidence, because it ministers to your strength. And, moreover, it makes you *victorious*. Many a man has been won to Christ by the confidence of simple Christians. Our doubts and fears are mischievous. They are thistle seed. They sow unbelief in others, but our childlike reliance upon God, our humble joy in our dear Father's care and our unmoved resolution through thick and thin to stick to our Master is likely to convert others, by God's good Spirit, to the right way! Therefore, cast not away your confidence.

And, best of all, there is a *recompense of reward to come*. The day will come when the King will review His troops as the squadrons come back from the battle. The day will come when He shall come down our ranks

and look at every one of us. And, if we have been faithful in this evil day, O Brothers and Sisters, it will repay us for anything we suffered if He shall say to us, "Well done!" Oh, those two words! These were enough to make us eternally happy! But hear the rest—"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter you into the joy of your Lord." Believe me! Believe me, my Hearers! Kings and mighty men who have rolled in riches and yet were enemies to Christ, when they hear Christ say, "Well done!" to His poor people, will think themselves accursed that they were not martyrs and that they did not lie in prison, or at least suffer reproach for Christ!

The enemies of Christ laugh today, but they will laugh on the other side of their faces before long. Let them laugh, for *we* shall win! The day shall come when shame shall be the promotion of fools, but the royal robe shall be put upon each man's back who dared to be a fool for Christ. The scars of suffering saints shall shine like diamonds and they that were most abused shall be the brightest of the shining ones! Most glad of all will they be who have the ruby crown of martyrdom to cast at the Savior's feet—but each one of you who have boldly held on to Christ, though despised and rejected—and dared to suffer slander for His dear name's sake—you shall be among the first and brightest who wear the white robe and share their Master's victory. By the palm and by the white robe. By the unfading crown. By the halos of angels, and the streets of gold, cast not away your confidence, for it has great recompense of reward!

Oh, you that know not Christ and have no confidence in Him, beware! He is coming—coming to call you to judgement. Beware, for in the day of His appearing He will look upon you and He will know that you never trusted Him and never suffered for Him, but chose the broad road that leads to destruction. Oh, how you will tremble, then, and with what agony will you cry to the mountains, "Hide us from the face! Hide us from the face of Him that sits upon the Throne!" God grant that you may not thus be carried away with terror, but may you believe your Lord and then have a full confidence in Him—a confidence which you will never cast away, "for it has great recompense of reward."

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Hebrews 10:19-39*.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—675, 632.**

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THE VITAL FORCE

NO. 891

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

***“Now, the just shall live by faith.”
Hebrews 10:38.***

SEE here the germ of the Christian's life! See, too, how it blooms, blossoms and bears! But observe it is not said the just shall live *for* his faith, or because of the merit of his believing in God. This were to place the Christian virtually under the Old Covenant of Law. To confuse faith with works would be, indeed, to bring us back to the old bondage of the first dispensation. It is no more true that the righteous man is saved because of the excellency of his faith, than that any man can be saved because of the excellency of his works. Neither does it say in the text that the just shall live *upon* his faith. Faith would make poor food for his soul! Small consolation may a man fetch from his faith, itself.

It was said of Esau, “By your sword shall you live,” and everyone knows that the intention of that sentence was—“By that which your sword shall capture and subdue.” He could not feed on the *sword* itself—that was mere hard, barren steel. So faith in itself can not feed a soul. It is that which faith *brings*, that which faith *takes* of the things of God and makes the soul own. I know it is very easy for us to degenerate into a congratulation of ourselves because of some quality of our faith. We may as easily make an Antichrist of our faith as of anything else, but this will never do. The Believer never stays upon his faith—it is in the *Object* of his faith that he finds rest!

It is not the telescope which delights me, but the star which I see through it. It is not the mere hand of faith which feeds me, but the heavenly bread which faith's hand uplifts and brings spiritually to my mouth. The text does say this, however, that the just shall live by his faith—and it seems to me that, without any straining of the text, we might find in it, first, *a doctrine*, secondly, *a promise*, and, thirdly, *an indication of practice*—I might almost have said *a precept*.

I. First, then, we descry here A DOCTRINE. “The just shall live by faith.” And that doctrine may be drawn out into distinct branches. Does not the text plainly teach us that *faith is the continued act of the Christian?* Some people seem to imagine that there is a kind of finality in each stage of religious experience, as though we are to repent in the first dawn of our

spiritual life, but afterwards we may leave off repenting and account henceforth that this bitter cup of gall is emptied, no more to sting the conscience with remorse, or move the heart to godly sorrow. Whereas, I suppose we shall pass through the pearly gates brushing away the last tear of repentance—always, till then, having need to mourn past sins and grieve for present frailties in penitential showers of grief.

So it seems to have been the fancy of others that we are to stand as sinners once and for all at the foot of the Cross, look to Jesus and be lightened. But after that we are to press to something higher—something yet beyond, a repose calm and undisturbed, free from rough wields and rude alarms. Beloved, surely such people do not know what the Christian's inner life is. Depend upon it, that as much at the last as at the first, "the just shall live by faith." He that is ripest and nearest Heaven has no more ground of confidence than he who but five minutes ago, like the dying thief, received the assurance of his pardon. The ground of the sinner's acceptance in the first moment of his faith is the finished work of Christ and, after 50 years of earnest service, that must *still* be the sole cause of his acceptance with God and the only rock upon which his soul must dare to build!

The act of simple faith, looking out of *self* and looking alone to *Christ*, is a thing for your penitent publican when first he beats on his breast—but it is also for your dying David—when he knows that the Covenant is ordered in all things and sure. Thus well it becomes the most mature saint, with his last breath, to express his confidence in the God that pardons sin through the application of the precious blood. Never imagine that the publican is to ripen into a Pharisee. Yet such would be our course were we to get off the rock of Christ's finished work and rely with a foolish dependence upon our own graces and our attainments. Faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, then, is the *continual* act of the Believer's life. Just as long as he lives here below, if he does live to God at all, he lives by faith.

We may further learn, therefore, that *faith is a great practical virtue*. The text does not say that the just man shall study the doctrine of faith in his retirement and be able to frame a correct definition of what faith is. It is true that the just man should be meditative, contemplative, studious—a man well instructed in the history of revelation and the mystery of the kingdom of God—but that is not what the text says. It does not say that the just man shall converse about faith and make the object of faith the constant theme of his discourse. It will be so—what is in the heart will be sure to come out in the tongue. But that is not the Truth of God taught here.

In plain English, it is this—the righteous man will carry his faith into his ordinary life. He will *live* by faith. All the actions of his life, such as

have in them any degree of moral or spiritual aspect—all of these shall be conspicuously ruled by his confidence in God. And even the lowest and most common affairs in which he takes part shall be subdued and elevated by the dignity of his trust and the fidelity of his adherence. He shall live by faith. Not alone in the study and in the closet. Not alone in the assembly of the saints and at the table of fellowship, but in the market and on the exchange—in the shop and the counting house, in the parlor or the drawing room—at the plow-tail or at the carpenter's bench. He shall live by faith in the senate house or at the judgment hall—the just man, wherever his life is cast—shall carry his faith with him. No, his faith shall be in him as part of his life—he shall live there by faith.

To advance a little farther. Not only is faith the continuous act of the Christian life, interweaving itself into all the various offices and exercises of the Christian's existence, but *faith has a great quickening power over all the faculties of the spiritual man*. He lives—how? What is the Divine Grace which, as it were, magnetizes his entire system? What is that sacred conductor which brings down life from Him in whom life is? What is that connecting link between the great I AM, the sole, essential, independent Life and the life that comes into our dead spirits, even the Divine life? The text tells us, that *faith* is that great intermedium. This is the Prometheus that stole the heavenly flame and brought it down to men made of clay, and made them live the lives of the immortals.

This it is that brings immortality to us through Jesus who brought life and immortality to light. Whenever faith rules in a man it quickens all his Divine Graces. The Believer is the man to love—to love his God, his neighbor, his enemy. The Believer is the man to hope—to hope for deliverance out of present affliction. To hope for the eternal outgoing of the issues of all this life's battle and strife. If there is any patience, if there is any forgiveness, if there is any generosity, if there is any loving kindness, if there is any zeal, if there is anything lovely and of good repute—all these are quickened and brought out into their life and force according to the life and power and energy of the faith which a man possesses. So then, the just shall live by faith. Faith shall, under God, be a means of quickening to the soul, bringing the Holy Spirit's Divine flame to burn upon the altar of the heart.

Turning this doctrine over in rather a different form, but still keeping to it, let me say that the Believer lives *only* by faith. All other kinds of living are to him spiritual death. Some, I know, try to live by *experience*. What they have felt today, what they felt yesterday—these are their sorry comforts. Such must be starved. At the best, what are our own experiences if we come to feed upon them? And at the worst, do not those who live upon mere feeling dwell in a salt land that is not inhabited? I am sure if I lived

by feeling, I could at one moment persuade myself that I was on the borders of Heaven and I could quite as readily, within an hour, be sure that I was in the very jaws of Hell. Our feelings are fickle as the wind. He that lives by feeling is very much like the mariner at sea when he mounts up to Heaven and then comes down again into the deep—he has nothing at all stable to depend upon.

We may say of the man who lives by feeling, “Unstable as water, you shall not excel.” “Human experience,” said a certain philosopher, “like the stern lights of a ship at sea, illuminates only the path which we have passed over.” But he that believes God and knows that the Almighty God faints not—is neither weary and changes not, neither does He forsake His people—he it is who truly lives and he only lives in proportion as he believes. The Believer lives, I say, only by faith, for that which we have in present possession, my Brethren, such as this world’s goods and creature comforts, ministers not to *spiritual* life. These things ought to be used by us unto God’s Glory and they should excite in us gratitude to Him who gives us them to enjoy, but they are not our life.

You can no more feed a soul with gold than you could satisfy your natural hunger for food with the pebbles of the sea. Your soul’s life depends not upon the multitude of things which you may profess. Still it is faith which, by laying hold upon the promises of God and the Person of Christ, alone, gives life unto the soul of the just. The righteous live by faith *ordinarily*, as I have already said on this subject. But let me give a point of serious admonition to you. I believe that we fail to bring little troubles to God and perhaps on account of their being so little, we fancy that we must not mention them to the Most High. This is but the fruit of our pride, for how do we know that our great things are so great as we think them to be? And are not our little things, after all, but the fractions of a considerable sum to such little creatures as ourselves?

These little, little, little things are of momentous concern to such little ones as we are—and the God that stoops to us at all has already brought Himself down in condescension so low that we need not fear that we shall bring Him lower! No, you may go to Him, if you like, about that lost key. Or about that child’s swelling finger, or about that word that irritated you just now. There is nothing little to a father in the thing that troubles his little child—and your great God, having once condescended to observe and care for you, numbering the very hairs of your head and not suffering a sparrow to fall to the ground without His purpose and decree—will not think that you intrude upon Him if you bring your daily troubles to Him. Let the righteous live by faith *ordinarily* in the common affairs of life.

So, too, let me add, the righteous live by faith *extraordinarily*. I mean that if they are cast upon troubles that are new to them and even new to

others, they will live there by faith, for faith makes the Believer like the fabled salamander that could live in the midst of fire. If the furnace is heated like Nebuchadnezzar's, seven times hotter than it was normally to be heated, faith gets seven times more power from God and laughs to scorn the heat of the flame. Should you be called to some great bodily suffering, should weakness long and dreary ensue and your soul faint, yet underneath you are the everlasting arms—and if you are enabled to exercise faith upon Him who makes the beds of His people in their sickness—you shall find it blessed living, triumphant suffering!

Should the just man be called to banishment, should he be made to endure persecution, should he lie in prison and be called to die for his Lord and Master—in every place the just shall live by faith. Though the edge of the sword threatens him with death, though the jaws of wild beasts were to tear him to pieces, though he were to be cast into the fire, yet the life which faith gives is such a life as to triumph over all these! In ordinary and in extraordinary seasons, then, the Christian is still to wear his shield upon his arm and never cast away his confidence, which has great recompense of reward. The Christian lives by faith *essentially*. Faith touches the very essence of his life. Some of the other Graces are like limbs to the body and he could live, though it were a sorry life, without them.

But faith lives in the *heart*. It is the heart of the Christian's vital system. Take away the Christian's faith, and the vitality of his religion has departed. Oh, many will get to Heaven whose patience was very maimed and some whose eye of hope were very dim. And there are some saints, I doubt not, entering into life halt and maimed, destitute of bright Graces which ought to have adorned them, but not a soul ever lived to God here or obtained admission into the everlasting kingdom without faith! This is the *sine qua non*. Faith *must* be possessed. Without this a man is an unbeliever and his end is to be destroyed. So, Beloved, to live by faith is the very essence of the Christian life. Because of its deep importance we must watch with the greater care that we have the faith of God's elect.

To live by faith *is to live gloriously and in the very highest degree*. "The just shall live by faith." Oh, as yet we hardly know the meaning of this resplendent Truth! There is a life and a life and a life and another life. Life spiritual is all the same as to its essence, but not as to its degree. There is the life of the soul that feebly hopes—it is like the life of the man just recovered from the deep—he breathes and 'tis all. There is the life of the man who sometimes reads his calling and election and knows them to be clear, but who at other times is dull of vision and full of doubting. 'Tis the life of the sick man who sometimes enjoys rest, opens the window and breathes the fresh air, but soon is ready to faint and die.

But there is a life beyond this—the life of the man who is strong in the Lord and the power of His might—who staggers not at the promise through unbelief! There is the life of the man who puts his foot upon temptation and lays his hand on Christian service, who, with a warm heart and loins girt about, casting aside every impediment, gives himself body and soul and spirit to his Master's Glory. This is the life of the warrior comparable unto the first three in David's band, the life of the man who will go down and take the lion by the beard in the pit in the time of snow, or will lift up his spear against 3,000 whom he will slay at one time.

Where does a man get this highest life, life gigantic—like the life of the angels of God, like the life of Christ—no, as the very life of God itself? Where does he get this power that he does chase a thousand and that he can put 10,000 to flight? What makes this man so bold, so strong, so heavenly-minded, so living above the world? It is his *faith* that does it for him, for the just shall live in the highest degree of life and they shall go on thus living until they come to the Glory life, till they come to the perfect life, the life of bliss, of which this present spiritual life is but the bud and it shall all be through faith until they enter into the rest and know even as they are known.

Oh, for a stronger faith! I pant for it as one that pants for life—more life. We prophecy in part, you believe in part. When shall that which is perfect come? “I do believe! Help You my unbelief,” is the last great utterance of the soul.

II. Now, secondly, the text appears to me, as I read it, to contain a PROMISE. “The just shall live by faith.” My faith shall ensure my life! If I do, indeed, believe in Jesus and rest my soul humbly, but simply and confidently, upon the promise of God as revealed to me in His dear Son, I shall not die, but live! And O Brethren, this is great joy, great joy, indeed, to have a faith that will make us live—that will make us live while we die, make us live when men say that we are dead—make us live when they have buried our bodies. A faith that shall even secure that our bodies shall rise again! A faith that shall be to us a guarantee today that soul and body united shall live even amidst the blaze of God's Glory!

Oh, 'tis joy to have faith that makes you immortal! The faith of the just shall constrain them to live. They cannot die! They must not die. God Himself shall as soon die as they shall! The just *shall* live by faith. *This is not true of any other but those who have faith.* Observe the self-righteous well—they live after a sort, but it is always a timorous life—like the life of the hare that is watching for the baying of the dogs. They are always afraid. Their conscience is fluttered and confused with an indistinct sense that, after all, their righteousness will not suffice for the justice of God. And at last, when they get into the swellings of Jordan, in most cases

those who have rested upon sacraments and ceremonies and self-righteousness have found their props all giving way and their refuges of lies all falling to the ground. They have been daubed with untempered mortar! They have heard the siren cry, "Peace, peace," where there is no peace and now, when they most need comfort, they find they cannot live by their self-righteousness.

They have to die and a dreadful death it is to the soul to die to all hope—to fall into the sepulcher of despair and there to perish. *No man lives by his self-righteousness.* There are some who are not boasting of what they have done, but whose confidence for time and for eternity lies in the belief of what they *can* do. I do not know anything that is less comfortable than this paltry conceit, if looked at rightly. Some person who believed much in human ability, once called upon my distinguished predecessor, Dr. Gill and said to him, "Sir, I heard you preaching that men were unable to repent and believe and do spiritual acts of themselves. I do not believe a word of it, I think you are mistaken." Dr. Gill very properly said, "Sir, do you believe that you can repent and believe without the Holy Spirit?" "Certainly, I believe I can."

Said the Doctor, "Have you believed and repented?" "No, I have not, Sir." And then Dr. Gill said, "Sir, you are condemned already and if you are not damned eternally, you are in imminent peril, beyond all others, for on your own confession *you* are guilty, even if others should not be equally culpable in this respect." And he sent his friend away, I hope, not quite so conceited of himself as he was when he entered the vestry. I do not see any comfort there can be in assuming that men have a moral power which they, nevertheless, have no disposition to exert. It seems to me that ability in yourselves becomes a very solemn argument against any peace of conscience—it should rather make us bestir ourselves than be used as a pillow for our heads.

Mark you, I know there are thousands who think they will be able to perform every spiritual act necessary to salvation just when they are coming to die. And their reliance is that they have within them the sacred charm that shall bring them faith in their expiring moments. Is not that the secret belief of many of you? Ah, Sirs, in that day when you shall look for consolation and look in vain—when you shall even call upon God and discover to your horror, that, having neglected Him so long, your prayer comes back without an answer—you shall find, then, that no man can live by his self-righteousness! But the poor heart that casts itself upon the power and merit and Divine Grace and promise of Christ shall find in the darkest hour of life, when heart and flesh are failing, that Christ is able to help—that the promise still stands good and that the eternal Father smiles serenely upon him!

You know the story I have told you sometimes, of the good old soul whose minister called to see her when she was dying and among other things he said to her, “My sister, you are very weak. Don’t you feel yourself sinking?” She looked at him and gave no answer, but said, “Did I understand you, Minister? Please tell me what you said. I hope you didn’t say what I thought I heard.” “Why,” he said, “my dear Sister, I said to you, don’t you feel yourself sinking?” And then she said, “I did not think my minister would ever ask me such a question as that! Sinking? Did you ever know a sinner sink through a Rock? I am believing in Jesus Christ! If I were resting anywhere else I might sink, but as I am resting upon Him, did you ever know a sinner sink through a Rock?”

Yes, and that is just the very point. It is so. God does in the very words of our text seem to assure us that if we believe, we have got on a Rock—that if we believe, we shall live. We shall live by our faith under all circumstances and difficulties. This shall be the living thing—

**“When mortal strength shall droop and die,
And human vigor cease,”**

then the soul, like the eagle, shall stretch its wings and mount higher and higher and higher, by the dint of its sacred immortality. “The just shall live by faith.” We may expect between this place and Heaven a fair share of trouble. If we write down for ourselves pleasant things, it may probably happen that we have written other than the book of the Divine purpose. Many trials will befall us between this and the fair haven, but there is no killing one in them all, for the just shall live through them all by his faith.

We may also reckon upon many temptations. Satan, however old he may be, has not yet come to years of decay. Our old evil nature, too, though it may have lost some of its strength, is yet capable of wonderful outbursts of power and the world outside of us is full of grief. We must expect to be tempted in many fresh ways between here and the Celestial City. But there is no killing temptation in them all, for the just shall live by his faith. Empty your quiver, O enemy of souls, this Divine shield shall catch every arrow and quench its fire and blunt those points and save and deliver us from them all! Beloved Friends, we have to expect, in addition to our trials and to our temptations, that which seems to me to be the heaviest ordeal of all, namely, the test of *long endurance*.

I look with admiration upon Brethren who have remained faithful to God for 60 or 70 years. It seems to me that the length of the Christian’s life is, in itself, oftentimes a very severe trial. A man might stand at the stake and burn for a few minutes, but it is the hanging up over a slow fire—who can bear that? To do one brave and generous action, this seems simple enough. But to stand on the watch-tower day and night, always vigilant, watching lest the foe surprise us—watching lest our hearts betray

us—watching unto prayer that we may keep ourselves in the love of God. Oh, this is a work! This is a labor which only Divine Grace can help us to perform. But here is the comfort. No length of days can exhaust the Believer's patience or endanger his spiritual life because the just shall live by faith!

If he were here so long, that, like Rowland Hill, he was inclined to send a message up to Heaven, for fear they should forget "Old Rowly" down below, yet depend upon it—he could not outlive the Divine energy that vitalized his soul, or lose the spiritual fervor of the just—still would faith preserve the sacred spark and fan it to a flame. This is a promise, then, and under shelter of this promise let us go forward.

Ah, Brothers and Sisters, every now and then we come to a dead stand. We reach a new era in life, a new trial the likes of which we never knew before. At such times we almost wish we could go back, or turn to the right, or to the left. But we are like Israel, there is but one way open, and that way is not at once apparent. It is only open to faith, but it is closed to sense. There is that Red Sea. "Ah, my God, what will become of me? Oh, that Red Sea! You have laid this trial upon me. You have forced me to bear this burden. You have called me to go through this suffering. I must pass through, but oh, I shall never be able to bear it! There will be an end of me now. How shall I be sustained?"

Thus Unbelief will talk, but Faith remembers that the just shall still live by faith and she says within herself, "If my God commands me to go on the sea, or under the sea, or through the sea, I know that He will give me the power to do what He bids and He that puts the difficulty in my path will bear me through it towards the Canaan to which I press." Let us, then, pluck up courage! Let there be no standing still, no lingering with chill reluctance, no shivering on the brink with timorous fear! Your Captain waves His hand and bids you advance! Go on, Trembler, go on, for there is goodness and there is mercy prepared to go before you and to follow after you all the days of your life!

Yes, even when you come to the very brink of death, then, even then, it will be a blessed thing to play the man by faith! To gather up one's feet in the bed. To compose one's self to deliver the last testimony and without so much as a sign of trepidation or a thrill of fear, to pass the iron gate, conscious that Jesus will come to meet and crown with glory the spirit that has trusted in Him. Thus much, I think, is in the text clearly enough as a matter of promise.

III. Now, lastly, the text seems to me to be A KIND OF PRECEPT and to contain much of practical instruction. "The just shall live by faith." Very well, then, dear Friends, is it not clear that as life is the main thing for us to look to—Nature, itself, having taught us by its instincts to guard with

all care our life, *therefore our faith*, upon which our life so evidently depends by virtue of our union to Christ—*ought to be the object of our most sedulous care*. Anything which comes in the way of our faith we should strive against, while the promotion of our faith should be our first endeavor.

I believe, my dear Brethren, that self-examination is a very great blessing, but I have known self-examination carried on in a most unbelieving, legal and self-righteous manner. In fact, I have so carried it on myself. Time was when I used to think a vast deal more of marks and signs and evidences, for my own comfort, than I do now, for I find that I cannot be a match for the devil when I begin dealing in those things. I am obliged to go day by day with this cry—

***“I, the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.”***

While I can believe the promise of God, because it is His promise and because He is my God and while I can trust my Savior because He is God, and therefore mighty to save, all goes well with me. But I do find, when I begin questioning myself about this and that perplexity, thus taking my eyes off Christ, that every virtue of my life seems oozing out at every pore.

I think, Brothers and Sisters, that any practice that detracts from faith is an evil practice, but especially that kind of self-examination which would take us away from the foot of the Cross, proceeds in a *wrong direction*. Do I want to know what is the condition of my evil nature? I need not enquire—it is rottenness through and through! Do I want to know what is the quality of my new-born nature? I scarcely need enquire, for it is the seed of God, incorruptible and cannot sin. The main enquiry I ought, at all times, to make is this—am I hanging on the Cross, alone, and depending on Jesus wholly? If so, there must be a produce of fruits unto righteousness and I am not always the best judge of those fruits for myself. Most probably the less fruit I have, the more I shall think I have and the more I am abounding in every good word and work, the higher will my standard of perfection be and the less likely shall I be to be satisfied with myself or my own attainments.

I do verily believe that those who draw comfort from their own doings and feelings, are the very people that ought to have no comfort, while those Christians who abound most in holiness to the praise of God, are the very people who bemoan everything that comes from themselves and turn away from themselves utterly, crying, “Christ is my salvation! I depend alone on Him.” It would be as well if we were to give up sorting over good works and bad works—for they are so wonderfully much alike—if we threw them all into the sea together and just rested upon Christ Jesus

alone. It would be a consummation of the most desirable kind! Keep your faith, right, then, Brothers and Sisters, keep your faith right.

Remember it is by God's Holy Spirit keeping that faith strong and vigorous you live safe and secure. Rest assured you will be more holy if you have more faith. You will have more confidence and be more courageous in your testimony if you have more faith in God. Every Grace and every virtue will derive progress towards strength and perfection from the progress and perfection of your faith. But if anything shall make you doubt whether Christ can save you or not, the *Achilles tendon* is cut and you cannot run. If anything makes you mistrust the promise of God, who justifies the ungodly, it has taken away from you the very *source* from which your spiritual life is to be refreshed. I hold it to be of the very first importance that we never doubt the promises of God.

What if we are unworthy? Do we break our promises because the persons to whom they are made turn out to be unworthy? Are we mean enough to take such advantages? Is not the word of a man, good or bad, according to the character of him who utters it? And is it not so with God's Word? He is faithful and true and therefore His Word is faithful and true, not because *I* am faithful and true, but because He is such! "*If we believe not, God abides faithful.*" It does not alter the promise! The promise still stands in all its integrity. Brethren, we ought to pray more for faith. "Lord, increase our faith," ought to be our daily, our hourly prayer. We ought to think more of those Truths of God which are the pillars of faith, such as the Covenant of Grace. Such as the fullness and freeness of the mercy of God. Such as the efficacy of the Atonement, the power of the Resurrection, the prevalence of Jesus' plea.

If we dwelt upon the promises more often, instead of looking at the Providences, or consulting our changeful feelings, our faith would grow stronger and then the whole of our life would receive vigorous tone and impulse. I do not know how to speak as I would desire upon this point, but still let me press it upon every Christian here not to listen to that insinuation of the devil—that when he has sinned he ought, then, to give up the belief that he is a child of God. Oh, if the devil can persuade you to do that, then he has obtained an advantage over you! But if you feel that you have been walking contrary to God, of late, yet still come to Jesus! Cast yourselves on Him! Do not let the adversary say to you, "You must not come because you have walked contrary to God."

O poor Backslider, although sin may hide God from you and take away your comfortable sense of His love, yet if you believe in Him, His love is towards you. He has not cast you away! You shall live as long as there is faith in you—and if there is so little faith that we have to rake up the ashes and have to go down on our knees and blow that little spark, yet

the Lord knows how to fan it and to put the match to it and to make a great blaze very speedily so that before you hardly know it, you that were crawling along the road shall be like the chariots of Amminadab, flying along as on mighty wings!

Never doubt God's power to lift you out of the ditch into which you have fallen. Still hold to it—"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. Though I am black with sin and ashamed of myself and dare not look up. Though I feel that I deserve to be cast into the lowest Hell," yet still do not doubt but that the precious blood can wash you and make you whiter than snow! Is there a grander verse in the whole Bible? Is there anything in the compass of Scripture that ever glorified God more than that notable expression of David when he had been sinning with Bathsheba and made himself as foul and as filthy as the very swine of Hell?

And yet he cries, "*Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness. According unto the multitude of Your tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.*" Ah, "Wash me," that is the cry, "wash me, the most scarlet and the blackest of Hell-deserving sinners. If You but wash me I shall be whiter than snow." Believe in the Omnipotent power of the Atonement! Still believe and hold fast to Christ! Cling to Him and if He even seems to frown upon you, hold to Him like the woman whom He called a dog and yet she said, "The dogs eat of the crumbs."

Do not believe that which you *think* you hear Him say, for He cannot say otherwise than this—that whoever believes in Him is not condemned! And he that believes in Him, though he were dead, yet shall he live. Out of your very *death* believe Him! From your very Hell of sin believe Him! Wherever you may be, still believe Him! Never doubt Him, for the just shall live by faith. Oh, it is such a mercy that when we have nothing else to live by, we can, by God's Grace, live by faith!

When I cannot find anything in myself wherein I can find comfort, much less anything whereof I can glory, yet I do believe that Jesus died for me! Does not this doctrine suit some poor trembling sinner here? I wish that one here would say, "Why, if that is so, then I, too, would come and believe in Jesus." Ah Heart, you have been asking, "What shall I do to be saved?" This is the work of God! The God-like work, the greatest of all doings—that you believe in Jesus Christ whom He has sent! Close in with Christ and you shall live! You cannot die. The eternal protection of the everlasting promise covers the head of every soul that has learned to trust in Christ. May God bless you with this faith and with more of it. Amen.

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ENOCH NO. 1307

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 30, 1876,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: and Enoch walked with God, after he begat Methuselah, three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.”
Genesis 5:21-24.*

*“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”
Hebrews 11:5, 6.*

*“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”
Jude 1:14, 15.*

THE three passages of Scripture which I have read are all the authentic information we have concerning Enoch. It would be idle to supplement it with the fictions of ancient commentators. Enoch is called the seventh from Adam, to distinguish him from the other Enoch of the line of Cain, who was the *third* from Adam. In the first Patriarchs God was pleased to manifest to men portions of His Truth in reference to true religion. These men of the olden times were not only, themselves, taught of God, but they were also teachers of their age and types in whom great Truths of God were exhibited. Abel taught the need of approaching the Lord with sacrifice, the need of the Atonement by blood—he laid the lamb upon the altar and sealed his testimony with his own blood. Atonement is so precious a Truth of God that to die for its defense is a worthy deed and from the very first it is a doctrine which has secured its martyrs, who being dead yet speak.

Then Seth and Enos taught men the necessity of a distinct avowal of their faith in the Lord and the need of assembling for His worship, for we read concerning the days of Enos and Seth, “Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.” Those who worshipped through the atoning Sacrifice separated themselves from the rest of men, assembled a Church in the name of the Lord and worshipped, calling upon the name of Jehovah. The heart must first believe in the great sacrifice with Abel and then the mouth must confess the same with Seth. Then came Enoch whose life went beyond the reception and confession of the Atonement, for he set before men the great Truth of communion with God. He displayed in his life

the relation of the Believer to the Most High and showed how near the living God condescends to be to His own children. May our progress in knowledge be similar to the growth of the Patriarchal teaching!

Brothers and Sisters, you know as Abel did, the sacrificial Lamb. Your confidence is in the precious blood and so by faith you bring to God the most acceptable of all offerings. Having advanced so far, the most of us have proceeded a step further, and we have called upon the name and are the avowed followers of Jesus. We have given ourselves up to the Lord in the solemn burial of Baptism, when we were baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, because we reckoned ourselves dead in Christ to all the world and risen with Him into newness of life. Henceforth the Divine name is named on us and we are no more our own.

And now we gather together in our Church capacity. We assemble around the table of fellowship, we unite in our meetings for prayer and worship and the center for us all is the name of the Lord. We are separated from the world and set apart to be a people who declare His name. Thus far so good—we have seen the Sacrifice of Jesus as the way with Abel. We have avowed the Truth with Seth. Now let us take the next step and *know* the life with Enoch. Let us endeavor to walk with God as Enoch did! Perhaps a meditation upon the holy Patriarch's life may help us to imitate it. While considering what he was and under what circumstances he came to be so, we may, by the Holy Spirit, be helped to reach the point to which he attained.

This is the desire of every godly man! All the saints desire communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. The constant cry of our soul is to our Lord, "Abide with me." I buried, yesterday, one of the excellent of the earth who loved and feared and served his God far better than most of us. He was an eminently devout Brother. One of the last wishes of his heart he had committed to writing in a letter to a friend, when he little thought of dying. It was this, "I have longed to realize the life of Enoch and to walk with God."—

"Oh for a closer walk with God!"

He did but write what you and I feel. If such are your desires, and such I feel sure they are, so surely as you are the Lord's people, then I hope a consideration of the life of Enoch may help you towards the realization of your wish.

First, then, *what does Enoch's walking with God imply?* It is a short description of a man's life, but there is a mint of meaning in it. Secondly, *what circumstances were connected with his remarkable life?* These are highly instructive. And thirdly, *what was the close of it?* It was as remarkable as the life itself.

I. First, then, WHAT IS MEANT BY ENOCH'S WALKING WITH GOD? Paul helps us with our first observation upon this by his note in Hebrews. His walk with God was a testimony that *Enoch was well-pleasing to God*. "Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." This is evidently the Apostle's interpretation of his walking with God and it is a most correct one, for the Lord will not walk with a man in whom He has no pleasure. Can two walk together, except they are agreed? If men walk contrary to God, He will not walk *with* them, but contrary to them. Walk-

ing together implies amity, friendship, intimacy, love—and these cannot exist between God and the soul unless the man is acceptable unto the Lord.

Doubtless Enoch, like Elijah, was a man of like passions with ourselves. He had fallen with the rest of mankind in the sin of Adam. There was sin about him, as there is sin about us by nature, and he had gone astray in act and deed as all we, like sheep, have done. Therefore he needed pardon and cleansing, even as we do. Then to be pleasing with God it was necessary that he should be forgiven and justified, even as we are—for no man can be pleasing to God till sin is pardoned and righteousness is *imputed*. To this end there must be *faith*, for there can be no *justification* except by faith. And as we have said, already, there is no pleasing God except our persons are justified.

Right well, then, does the Apostle say, “Without faith it is impossible to please God,” and by faith Enoch was made pleasing to God, even as we are at this day. This is worthy of earnest notice, Brothers and Sisters, because this way of faith is open to *us*. If Enoch had been pleasing to God by virtue of some extraordinary gifts and talents, or by reason of marvelous achievements and miraculous works, we might have been in despair! But if he was pleasing to God through *faith*, that same faith which saved the dying thief, that same faith which has been worked in you and in me—then the wicket gate at the head of the way in which men walk with God is open to us, also!

If we have faith we may enter into fellowship with the Lord! How this ought to endear faith to us! The highest grades of spiritual life depend upon the lower ones and rise out of them. If you want to walk with God as a man of God, you must begin by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, simply, as a babe in Grace! The highest saintship must commence by the confession of your *sinnerness*, and your laying hold upon Christ Crucified. Not otherwise does the strongest Believer live than the weakest Believer—and if you are to grow to be among the strongest of the Lord’s warriors—it must be by faith which lays hold upon Divine strength.

Beginning in the Spirit you are not to be made perfect in the *flesh*. You are not to proceed a certain distance, by faith in Christ, and then to commence living by your own works—your walk is to continue as it begun. “As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk you in Him.” Enoch was always pleasing to God, but it was because he always believed and lived in the power of his faith. This is worth knowing and remembering, for we may yet be tempted to strive for some imaginary higher style of religious life by looking to our *feelings* instead of looking alone to the Lord! We must not remove our eyes from looking, alone, to Jesus, Himself, even to admire His image within ourselves—for if we do we shall go backward rather than forward. No, Beloved, by faith Enoch became pleasing to God and by faith he walked with God—let us follow in his footprints.

Next, when we read that Enoch walked with God we are to understand that *he realized the Divine Presence*. You cannot consciously walk with a person whose existence is not known to you. When we walk with a man, we know that he is there. We hear his footsteps if we cannot see his face. We have some very clear perception that there is a person at our side.

Now, if we look to Hebrews again, Paul tells us, "He that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Enoch's faith, then, was a *realizing* faith. He did not believe things as a matter of creed and then put them up on the shelf out of the way, as too many of us do today—he was not merely orthodox in his *head*—but the Truth of God had entered into his *heart*.

What he believed was true to him, practically true, true as a matter of fact in his daily life. He walked with God—it was not that he merely *thought* of God, that he *speculated* about God, that he *argued* about God, that he *read* about God, that he *talked* about God—he *walked* with God, which is the practical and experimental part of true godliness! In his daily life he realized that God was with him and he regarded Him as a *living* God, in whom he confided and by whom he was loved. Oh, Beloved, do you not see that if you are to reach to the highest style of Christian life, you must do it through the realization of those very things which, by faith, you have received?

Grasp them! Let them be to you substance and evidence. Make them sure, look upon them, handle them, taste them in your inmost soul and so know them beyond all question. You must see Him who is invisible and possess that which cannot be as yet enjoyed. Believe not only that God is, but that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, for this, according to Paul, is the Enoch faith! God realized as existing, observing, judging and *rewarding* human deeds—a real God, really with us—this we must know, or there is no walking with God.

Then, as we read that Enoch walked with God, we have no doubt it signifies that *he had very familiar communion* with the Most High. I scarcely know a communion that is more free, pleasant and cordial than that which arises out of constant walking with a friend. If I wished to find a man's most familiar friend, it would surely be one with whom he walked daily. If you were to say, "I sometimes go into his house and sit a little while with him," it would not amount to so much as when you can say, "I have, from day to day, walked the fields and climbed the hills with him." In walking, friends become communicative—one tells his trouble and the other strives to console him under it—and then imparts to him his own secret in return. When persons are constantly in the habit of walking together from choice, you may be quite sure there are many communications between them with which no stranger may intermeddle.

If I wanted to know a man through and through, I should want to walk with him for a time, for walking communion brings out parts of the man which even in domestic life may be concealed. Walking for a continuance implies and engenders close fellowship and great familiarity between friends. But will God, in very deed, thus walk with men? Yes, He did so with Enoch and He has done so with many of His people since. He tells us His secret, the secret of the Lord, which He reveals only to them that fear Him. And we tell Him, alike, our joys in praise, our sorrows in prayer and our sins in confession. The heart unloads itself of all its cares into the heart of Him that cares for us! And the Lord pours forth His floods of goodness as He imparts to His beloved ones a sense of His own everlasting love to them. This is the very flower and sweetness of Christian experi-

ence, its lily and its rose, its calamus and myrrh. If you would taste the cream of Christian life, it is found in having a realizing faith and entering into intimate communion with the heavenly Father. So Enoch walked with God.

Next it is implied in the term, “walked,” that *his communion with God was continuous*. As an old Divine has well remarked, he did not take a turn or two with God and then leave His company, but he walked with God for hundreds of years! It is implied in the text that this was the tenor of his life throughout the whole of its 365 years. Enoch walked with God after Methuselah had been born, 300 years, and doubtless he had walked with Him before. What a splendid walk! A walk of 300 years! One might desire a change of company if he walked with anybody else, but to walk with God for three centuries was so sweet that the Patriarch kept on with his walk until he walked beyond time and space—and walked into Paradise—where he is still marching on in the same Divine society! He had Heaven on earth and it was, therefore, not so amazing that he glided away from earth to Heaven so easily.

He did not commune with God by fits and starts, but he abode in the conscious love of God. He did not, now and then, climb to the heights of elevated piety and then descend into the marshy valley of lukewarmness, but he continued in the calm, happy, equable enjoyment of fellowship with God from day to day. Night with its sleep did not suspend it. Day with its cares did not endanger it. It was not a run, a rush, a leap, a spurt, but a steady walk. On, on, through three happy centuries and more did Enoch continue to walk with God!

It is implied, also, in this phrase that *his life was progressive*, for if a man walks either by himself or with anybody else, he makes progress, he goes forward. Enoch walked with God. At the end of 200 years he was not where he began. He was in the same Company, but he had gone forward in the right way. At the end of the third hundred years Enoch enjoyed more, understood more, loved more, had received more and could give out more, for he had gone forward in all respects. A man who walks with God will necessarily grow in Grace and in the knowledge of God and in likeness to Christ. You cannot suppose a perpetual walk with God, year after year, without the favored person being strengthened, sanctified, instructed and rendered more able to glorify God.

So I gather that Enoch’s life was a life of spiritual progress. He went from strength to strength and made headway in the gracious pilgrimage. May God grant us to be pressing onward, ourselves. Suffer a few more observations upon Enoch’s walk. In “Kitto’s Daily Bible Pleadings” there is an exceedingly pleasing piece illustrating what it must be to walk with God by the figure of a father’s taking his little son by the hand and walking forth with him upon the breezy hills. Kitto says, “As that child walks with you, so do you walk with God. That child loves you now. The world—the cold and cruel world—has not yet come between his heart and yours. His love, now, is the purest and most beautiful he will ever feel, or you will ever receive. Cherish it well, and as that child walks *lovingly* with you, so do you walk *lovingly* with God.”

It is a delight to such children with their fathers. The roughness of the way or of the weather is nothing to them—it is joy enough to go for a walk with father. There is a warm, tender, affectionate grip of the hand and a beaming smile of the eyes as they look up to father while he conducts them over hill and dale. Such a walk is *humble*, too, for the child looks upon its father as the greatest and wisest man that ever lived! He considers him to be the incarnation of everything that is strong and wise. All that his father says or does he admires. As he walks along, he feels the utmost affection for his father, but his *reverence* is equally strong. He is very near his father, but yet he is only a child, and looks up to his father as his king.

Moreover such a walk is one of *perfect confidence*. The boy is not afraid of missing his way. He trusts implicitly his father's guidance. His father's arm will screen him from all danger and, therefore, he does not so much as give it a thought—why should he? If care is needed as to the road, it is his father's business to see to it and the child, therefore, never dreams of anxiety—why should he? If any difficult place is to be passed, the father will have to lift the boy over it, or help him through it—the child, meanwhile, is merry as a bird—why should he not be? Thus should the Believer walk with God, resting on eternal tenderness and rejoicing in undoubted love! A Believer should be unconscious of dread either as to the present or to the future.

Beloved Friends in Christ, your Father may be trusted, He will supply all your needs—

***“You are as much His care as if beside
No man or angel lived in Heaven or earth.”***

What an *instructive* walk a child has with a wise, communicative parent! How many of his little puzzles are explained to him, how everything about him is illuminated by the father's wisdom! Every step the boy takes, he becomes the wiser for such companionship. Oh, happy are the children of God who have been taught of their Father while they have walked with Him! Enoch must have been a man of profound knowledge and great wisdom as to Divine things. He must have dived into the deep things of God beyond most men. His life must, also, have been a *holy* life, because he walked with God, for God never walks out of the way of holiness. If we walk with God, we must walk according to truth, justice and love. The Lord has no company with the unjust and rebellious and, therefore, we know that he who walked with God must have been an upright and holy man.

Enoch's life must, moreover, have been a *happy* one. Who could be unhappy with such a Companion! With God Himself to be with us, the way can never be dreary. “Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for You are with me.” Granted that God is your Companion and your road must be a way of pleasantness and a path of peace. Did Enoch walk with God? Then his pilgrimage must have been safe. What a guard is the Great Jehovah! He is sun and shield! He gives Grace and Glory. He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Nothing can harm the man who is walking with the Lord God at his right hand.

And oh, what an *honor* it is to walk with the Eternal! Many a man would give thousands to walk with a king. Numbers of people are such worshippers of dignities that if a king did but smile at them they would be intoxicated with delight! What, then, is the honor of walking with the King of kings? What a patent of nobility it is to be permitted to walk with the blessed and only Potentate all one's life long? Who is he that is thus favored to be the King's companion, to walk alone with Him and to become His familiar Friend? Jehovah rules earth and Heaven, and Hell. He is Lord of all who shall walk with Him!

If it were only for the honor of it, oh Christians, how you ought to desire to walk with God! Enoch found it safe, happy, holy, honorable and I know not how much more that is excellent! But certainly this was a golden life—where shall we find anything to equal it?

II. Secondly, let us consider WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES WERE CONNECTED WITH ENOCH'S WALKING WITH GOD. The first remark is that *the details of his life are very few*. We do not know much about Enoch and this is to his advantage. Happy is the nation which has no history, for a nation which *has* a history has been vexed with wars, revolutions and bloodshed. But a nation that is always happy, peaceful and prosperous has no chronicle to attract the lover of sensations. Happy is Enoch that we cannot write a long biography of him! The few words, "Enoch walked with God," suffice to depict his whole career, until, "he was not, for God took him."

If you go and look at a farmer's field and you say of it when you come back, "I saw yellow flowers covering it till it seemed as a cloth of gold. And then I spied out, here and there, white flowers like silver buttons set on the golden vesture. I also saw blue corn-flowers looking up with their lovely eyes, causing the whole field to sparkle," you would think that it is a very pretty field if you are a child. But the farmer shakes his head, for he knows that it is in bad condition and overrun with weeds! But if you come back and simply say, "It is as fine a wheat field as ever grew and that is all," then your description, though brief, is very satisfactory.

Many of those dazzling events and striking incidents and sensational adventures which go to make up an interesting biography may attract attention, but they do not minister to the real excellence of the life. No life can surpass that of a man who quietly continues to serve God in the place where Providence has placed him. I believe that in the judgment of angels and all pure-minded beings, that a woman's life is most to be admired which consists simply of this—"She loved the Lord and did all she could for Him." And that man's life shall be the most noteworthy of whom it can be said, "He followed the Lord fully." Enoch's life has no adventures. But is it not adventure, enough, for a man to walk with God? What ambition can crave a nobler existence than abiding in fellowship with the Eternal?

But some will say, "Well, but Enoch must have been very peculiarly situated. He was, no doubt, placed in very advantageous circumstances for piety." Now, observe that this was not so, for first, *he was a public man*. He is called the "seventh from Adam." He was a *notable* man and looked up to as one of the fathers of his age. A Patriarch in those days must have been a marked man, loaded with responsibility as well as with

honor. The ancient custom was that the head of the family was prophet, priest and king in his household. And abroad, if he was a man of station and substance, he was counselor, magistrate and ruler. Enoch was a great man in his day, one of the most important of the period. Therefore we may be sure he had his trials and bore the brunt of opposition from the powerful ungodly party which opposed the ways of godliness.

He is mentioned among a noble list of men. Some have unwisely thought, "I could walk with God if I had a little cottage, if I lived in a quiet village, but you see I am a public man, I occupy a position of trust and I have to mix with my fellow men. I do not see how I am to walk with God." Ah, my dear Friend, Enoch did! Though he was, undoubtedly, a man distinguished in his time and full of public cares, yet he lost not the thread of sacred converse with Heaven, but held on in his holy course through a life of centuries. Note again that *Enoch was a family man*. "Enoch walked with God and begat sons and daughters."

Some have said, "Ah, you cannot live as you like if you have a lot of children about you. Do not tell me about keeping up your hours of prayer and quiet reading of the Scriptures if you have a large family of little ones. You will be disturbed and there will be many domestic incidents which will be sure to try your temper and upset your equanimity. Get away into the woods and find a hermit's cell—there, with your brown jug of water and your loaf of bread, you *may* be able to walk with God—but with a wife, not always amiable, and a troop of children who are never quiet, neither by day nor night, how can a man be expected to walk with God?" The wife, on the other hand, exclaims, "I believe that had I remained a single woman I might have walked with God. When I was a young woman I was full of devotion. But now with my husband, who is not always in the best of tempers, and with my children who seem to have an unlimited number of needs and never to have them satisfied, how is it possible that I can walk with God?"

We turn to Enoch, again, and we are confident that it can be done! "Enoch walked with God, after he begat Methuselah, 300 years, and begat sons and daughters, and all the days of Enoch were 365 years." Thus, you see, he was a public man and he was a family man—and yet he walked with God for more than 300 years. There is no need to be a hermit, or to renounce married life in order to live near to God. In addition to this, *Enoch lived in a very evil age*. He was prominent at a time when sin was beginning to cover the earth. It was not very long before the earth was corrupt and God saw fit to sweep the whole population from off its surface on account of sin.

Enoch lived in a day of mockers and despisers. You know that from his prophecy, as recorded by Jude. He prophesied, saying, "The Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." He lived when few loved God and when those who professed to do so were being drawn aside by the blandishments of the daughters of men. Church and State were proposing an alliance, fashion and pleasure ruled the hour and unhallowed compromise

was the order of the day. He lived towards the close of those primitive times wherein long lives had produced great sinners—and great sinners had invented great provocations of God. Do not complain, therefore, of your times and of your neighbors and other surroundings, for amid them all you may *still* walk with God.

Enoch walked with God and, in consequence thereof, *he bore his witness for God*. “Enoch, the seventh from Adam prophesied.” He could not be silent! The fire burned within his soul and could not be restrained. When he had delivered his testimony, it is clear that he encountered opposition. I am certain that he did so from the context in Jude, because the passage in Jude has to do with murmurers and “complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaks great swelling words,” and Enoch is brought in as having had to do with such persons. His sermon shows that he was a man who stood firm amidst a torrent of blasphemy and rebuke, carrying on the great controversy for the Truth of God against the wicked lives and licentious tongues of the scoffers of his age. He says, “Behold, the Lord comes with myriads of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed.”

It is clear that they spoke against Enoch, they rejected his testimony, they grieved his spirit and he mourned that in this they were speaking against God. For he speaks “of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” He saw their ungodly lives and bore witness against them. It is remarkable that his great subject should have been the Second Advent! And it is still more noteworthy that the two other men whom one would select as living nearest to God, namely, Daniel and John, were both men who spoke much concerning the coming of the Lord and the Great Judgment Day. I need not quote the words of Daniel, who tells us of the judgment which is to be set, and of the Ancient of Days who shall come upon His Throne. Nor need I repeat the constant witness of John concerning the Lord’s Second Coming. I will only mention his fervent exclamation, “Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!”

Thus you see that Enoch was a preacher of the Word of God and, therefore, he had a care over and above that which falls to the lot of most of you. And yet, with that and all the rest put together, he could please God until his life’s end! If I may speak of an end to a life which ran into an endless state of joy—he continued as long as he was here to walk in faith, to walk in a manner in which God was pleased—and so his communion with the Lord was never broken.

III. This brings us to conclude with the third head—WHAT WAS THE CLOSE OF ENOCH’S WALK? We would first remark that *he finished his work early*. Enoch walked with God and that was such a good, sure, progressive walk that he traveled faster and reached Home sooner than those of us who walk with God, sometimes, and with the world at other times! Three hundred and sixty-five years would have been a long life to us, but it was a short life for that period when several Patriarchs attained to nearly a thousand years of age.

Enoch’s life, as compared to the usual life of the period, was like a life of 30 or 35 years in these short-lived ages—in fact, the best parallel to it is

the life of our Lord. As with the extended ages of men of his period, Enoch's life was of about the same length as that of the Lord Jesus in comparison with such lives as ours. He passed away comparatively a young man, as our dear Brother and Elder Verdon, just departed, has done, and we do not wonder that he did. They say, "Whom the gods love die young," and both Enoch and Verdon were men greatly beloved. Perhaps these holy men ended their career so soon because they had done their lifework so diligently that they finished early.

Some workmen, if they have a job to do in your house, are about it all day long, or rather all week long and make no end of confusion! No wonder that some people live a long while, for they need to do so much to do anything at all! But this man did his work so well and kept so close to God that his day's work was done at noon and the Lord said, "Come home, Enoch! There is no need for you to be out of Heaven any longer. You have borne your testimony, you have lived your life. Through all the ages men will look upon you as a model man and, therefore, you may come Home." God never keeps His wheat out in the fields longer than is necessary! When it is ripe, He reaps it at once! When His people are ready to go Home, He will take them Home. Do not regret the death of a good man while he is young. On the contrary, bless God that there is still some early ripening wheat in the world and that some of His saints are sanctified so speedily!

But what did happen to Enoch? I am afraid I have said he died, or that I shall say so, it is so natural to speak of men as dying, but he, alone, and one other of all the human race are all that have entered the heavenly Canaan without fording the river of death! We are told concerning him that, "he was not." Those gentlemen who believe that the word, "to die," signifies to be annihilated, would have been still more confirmed in their views if the words in my text, "he was not," had been applied to *all* departed men, for if any expression might signify annihilation in *their* mode of translation—this is the one! "He was not" does not, however, mean that he was annihilated! And neither does the far feebler term of dying signify anything of the kind!

"He was not," that is to say, he was not *here*—that is all. He was gone from earth, but he was *there*—there where God had translated him. He was, he *is* with God! And that without having tasted death! Do not grudge him his avoidance of death. It was a favor, but not by any means so great as some would think, for those who do not die must undergo a change and Enoch was changed. "We shall not all sleep," says the Apostle, "but we shall all be changed." The flesh and blood of Enoch could not inherit the kingdom of God—in a moment he underwent a transformation which you and I will have to undergo in the day of the Resurrection. And so, though he was not on earth, he was translated or transplanted from the gardens of earth to Paradise above.

Now, if there is any man in the world that shall never die, it is he who walks with God. If there is any man to whom death will be as nothing, it is the man who has looked to the Second Advent of Christ and gloried in it. If there is any man who, though he passes through the iron gates of death, shall never feel the terror of the grim foe, it is the man whose life

below has been perpetual communion with God! Go not about by any other way to escape the pangs of death but walk with God, and you will be able to say, "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?" It is said of Enoch that, "*God took him.*" A very remarkable expression! Perhaps He did it in some visible manner. I should not wonder. Perhaps the whole of the Patriarchs saw him depart, even as the Apostles were present when our Lord was taken up.

However that may be, there was some special rapture, some distinct taking up of this choice one to the Throne of the Most High. "He was not, for God took him." Note that *he was missed*. This is one thing which I could not overlook. *He was missed*, for the Apostle says he, "was not found." Now, if a man is not found, it shows that *somebody* looked for him. When Elijah went to Heaven, you remember, 50 men of the sons of the Prophets went and searched for him. I do not wonder that they did—they would not meet with an Elijah every day—and when he was gone away, body and all, they might well look for him! Enoch was not found, but they looked for him.

A good man is missed. A true child of God in a Church like this, working and serving his Master, is only one among five thousand—but if he has walked with God, his decease is lamented. The dear Brother whom we have just buried, we shall miss. His brother Elders will miss him. The many who have been converted to God and helped by his means will miss him. And assuredly I shall miss him. I look towards the spot where he used to sit—I trust that someone else will sit there who will be half as useful as he was. It will be almost more than I can expect. We do not want to live and die so that nobody will care whether we were on earth or not. Enoch was missed when he was gone and so will they be who walk with God.

Last of all, *Enoch's departure was a testimony*. What did the Blessed Spirit say by the fact that, "he was not, for God took him," but this—there is a future state. Men had begun to doubt it, but when they said, "Where is Enoch?" and those who had witnessed his departure said, "God took him," it was, to them, an evidence that there was a God and that there was another world. And when they asked, "But where is his body?" there was another lesson. Two men had died before him, I mean two whose deaths are recorded in Scripture—Abel was killed and his witness was that the seed of the serpent hates the woman's seed. Adam, too, had died about 50 years before Enoch's translation, whose witness was that, however late the penalty may come, yet the soul that sins, it shall die.

Now comes Enoch and his testimony is that the *body* is capable of immortality! He could not bear testimony to resurrection, for he did not die—for that we have testimony in Christ who is the first fruits from among the dead. But the testimony of Enoch went a good way towards it, for it bore evidence that the *body* was capable of being immortal and of living in a heavenly condition. "He was not, for God took him." His departure also was a testimony to mankind that there is a reward for the righteous, that God does not sit with stony eyes, regardless of the sins of the wicked, or of the virtues of His saints. It proved that He sees and is pleased with His people who walk with Him—and that He can give them, even now, present

rewards by delivering them from the pangs of death—and therefore He will certainly give rewards to all His people in some way or other.

Thus you see, living and dying—no, not dying, again I am mistaken—living and *being translated*—Enoch was still a witness to his generation! And I pray that all of us, whether we live or whether we sleep, may be witnesses for God. Oh that we could live as my good Brother, Verdon, whom we have lately buried, lived, whose soul was on fire with love to Christ! He had a very passion for souls! I scarcely think there is one among us who did as much as he, for though he had to earn his daily bread, his evenings were spent with us in the service of the Lord, or in preaching the Gospel! And then, all night long he frequently paced the weary streets, looking after the fallen, that he might bring them in! He often went to his morning's work weary, except by the rest which he found in the service of Christ.

He would sometimes meet a Brother with eyes full of joy, and say, "Five souls won for Christ last night!" At other times, after a sermon, here he was a great soul hunter and would fetch enquirers downstairs into the Prayer Meeting. And when he had squeezed my hand he would say in his Swiss tones, which I cannot imitate, "Jesus saved some more last night! More souls were brought to Jesus." For him to live was to win souls! He was the youngest in our eldership, but the gray-heads do him honor. As we stood weeping about his tomb, there was not one among us but what felt that we had lost a true Brother and a valiant fellow soldier. My the Lord raise up others among you to do what Elder Verdon did!

May the Lord quicken the older Brothers and Sisters to be more active than they are and make the young ones more devoted. Our ranks are broken, who shall fill up the gap? We are getting fewer and fewer as the Lord takes one and another Home of the best-instructed and of the bravest-hearted. But, by His Grace, recruits are daily coming in! May others come forward—yes, Lord, bring them forward by Your Holy Spirit to be leaders in the front ranks, that as the vanguard melts into the Church Triumphant, the rear may continually find additions! Translated to the skies are some, may others be translated out of darkness into marvelous light, for Christ's sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Psalm 119:33-56.*
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—122, 780, 775.**

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FAITH

NO. 107

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 14, 1856,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“Without faith it is impossible to please God.”
Hebrews 11:6.***

The old Assembly's Catechism asks, "What is the chief end of man?" And its answer is, "To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." The answer is exceedingly correct. But it might have been equally truthful if it had been shorter. The chief end of man is, "to please God," for in so doing—we need not say it, because it is an undoubted fact—in so doing He will please Himself. The chief end of man, we believe, in this life and in the next, is to please God, his Maker. If any man pleases God, he does that which conduces most to his own temporal and eternal welfare. Man cannot please God without bringing to himself a great amount of happiness, for if any man pleases God, it is because God accepts him as His child! It is because He gives him the blessings of adoption, pours upon him the bounties of His Grace, makes him a blessed man in this life and insures him a crown of everlasting life which he shall wear and which shall shine with unfading luster when the wreaths of earth's glory have all been melted away. While, on the other hand, if a man does *not* please God, he inevitably brings upon himself sorrow and suffering in this life. He puts a worm and a rottenness in the eve of all his joys. He fills his death pillow with thorns and he supplies the eternal fire with firewood of flames which shall forever consume him! He who pleases God, is, through Divine Grace, journeying onward to the ultimate reward of all those who love and fear God! But he who is not pleasing to God, must, for Scripture has declared it, be banished from the Presence of God and, consequently, from the enjoyment of happiness! If then, we are right in saying that to please God is to be happy, the one important question is, how can I please God? And there is something very solemn in the utterance of our text—"Without faith it is impossible to please God." That is to say, do what you may, strive as earnestly as you can, live as excellently as you please, make what sacrifices you choose, be as eminent as you can for everything that is lovely and of good repute—yet none of these things can be pleasing to God unless they are mixed with faith! As the Lord said to the Jews, "With all your sacrifices, you must offer salt." So He says to us, "With all your doings, you must bring faith, or else without faith it is impossible to please God."

This is an old Law of God. It is as old as the first man. No sooner were Cain and Abel born into this world and no sooner had they attained to manhood than God gave a practical proclamation of this Law, that, “without faith it is impossible to please Him.” Cain and Abel, one bright day, erected an altar, side by side with each other. Cain fetched of the fruits of the trees and of the abundance of the soil and placed them upon his altar. Abel brought of the firstlings of the flock and laid it upon his altar. It was to be decided which God would accept. Cain had brought his best, but he brought it without faith. Abel brought his sacrifice, but he brought it with faith in Christ. Now, then, which shall best succeed? The offerings are equal in value—so far as they, themselves are concerned—they are, alike, good. Upon which will the Heavenly fire descend? Which will the Lord God consume with the fire of His pleasure? Oh, I see Abel’s offering burning and Cain’s countenance has fallen, for unto Abel and unto his offering, the Lord had respect—but unto Cain and his offering, the Lord had no respect. It shall be the same till the last man shall be gathered into Heaven—there shall never be an acceptable offering which has not been seasoned with faith! Good, though it may be—as apparently good, in itself, as that which has faith—yet, unless faith is with it, God never can and never will accept it, for He, here, declares, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.”

I shall endeavor to pack my thoughts closely, this morning, and be as brief as I consistently can, with a full explanation of the theme. I shall first have an exposition of what is faith. Secondly I shall have an *argument*, that without faith it is impossible to be saved. And thirdly I shall ask a question—Have you that faith which pleases God? We shall have, then, an exposition, an argument and a question.

I. First, for the EXPOSITION—What is faith?

The old writers, who are, by far, the most sensible—for you will notice that the books that were written about 200 years ago by the old Puritans have more sense in one line than there is in a page of our new books—and more in a page than there is in a whole volume of our modern divinity! The old writers tell you that faith is made up of three things—first, knowledge, then assent and then what they call affiancement—or the laying hold of the knowledge to which we give assent and making it our own by trusting in it.

1. Let us begin, then, at the beginning. The first thing in faith is knowledge. A man cannot believe what he does not know! That is a clear, self-evident axiom. If I have never heard of a thing in all my life and do not know it, I cannot believe it. And yet there are some persons who have a faith, like that of the coal miner, who when he was asked what he believed said, “I believe what the Church believes.” “What does the Church believe?” “The Church believes what I believe.”

“And pray tell, what do you and the Church believe?” “Why we both believe the same thing.” Now this man believed nothing except that the Church was right—but in *what*, he could not tell. It is idle for a man to say, “I am a Believer,” and yet not to know what he believes! But I have seen some persons in this position. A violent sermon has been preached which has stirred up their blood. The minister has cried, “Believe! Believe! Believe!” And the people, all of a sudden, have got it into their heads that they were Believers and have walked out of their place of worship and said, “I am a Believer.” And if they were asked, “Pray tell, what do you believe?” they could not give a reason for the hope that was in them! They believe they intend to go to Chapel next Sunday. They intend to join that class of people. They intend to be very violent in their singing and very wonderful in their rant. Therefore they believe they shall be saved—but what they believe, they cannot tell. Now, I hold no man’s faith to be sure faith unless he knows what he believes. If he says, “I believe,” and does not know what he believes, how can that be true faith? The Apostle has said, “How can they believe on Him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without a preacher? And how can they preach except they are sent?” It is necessary, then, to true faith, that a man should know something of the Bible. Believe me, this is an age when the Bible is not so much thought of as it used to be. Some hundred years ago the world was covered with bigotry, cruelty and superstition. We always run to extremes and we have just gone to the other extreme, now. It was then said, “One faith is right, down with all others by the rack and by the sword.” Now it is said, “However contradictory our creeds may be, they are *all* right.” If we did but use our common sense, we would know that it is not so! But some reply, “Such-and-such a Doctrine need not be preached and need not be believed.” Then, Sir, if it need not be preached, it need not be revealed! You ridicule the wisdom of God when you say a Doctrine is unnecessary—for you do as much as say that God has revealed something which was not necessary—and He would be as unwise to do more than was necessary, as if He had done less than was necessary! We believe that every Doctrine of God’s Word ought to be studied by men and that their faith should lay hold of the whole matter of the Sacred Scriptures and more especially upon all that part of Scripture which concerns the Person of our all-blessed Redeemer! There must be some degree of knowledge before there can be faith. “Search the Scriptures,” then, “for in them you think you have eternal life and they are they which testify of Christ.” And by searching and reading, comes knowledge—and by knowledge comes *faith*—and through faith comes *salvation*.

2. But a man may know a thing and yet not have faith. I may know a thing and yet not believe it. Therefore *assent* must go with faith—that is

to say, what we know, we must also agree unto as being most certainly the Truth of God. Now, in order to faith, it is necessary that I should not only read the Scriptures and understand them, but that I should receive them in my soul as being the very Truth of the living God. And I should devoutly, with my whole heart, receive the whole of Scripture as being Inspired of the Most High and the whole of the Doctrine which He requires me to believe to my salvation. You are not allowed to halve the Scriptures and to believe what you please. You are not allowed to believe the Scriptures with a half-heartedness, for if you do this willfully, you have not the faith which looks alone to Christ! True faith gives its full assent to the Scriptures. It takes a page and says, "No matter what is in the page, I believe it." Faith turns over the next Chapter and says, "Herein are some things hard to be understood, which they who are unlearned and unstable, do twist, as they do the other Scriptures, to their destruction. But hard though it is, I believe it." It sees the Trinity. It cannot understand the Trinity in Unity but it believes it. Faith sees an atoning Sacrifice. There is something difficult in the thought, but it believes it. And whatever it is which it sees in Revelation, it devoutly puts his lips to the Book and says, "I love it all. I give my full, free and hearty assent to every word of it whether it is the threat or the promise, the proverb, the precept, or the blessing. I believe that since it is all the Word of God, it is all most assuredly true." Whoever would be saved must know the Scriptures and must give full assent unto them!

3. But a man may have all this and yet not possess true faith. For the chief part of faith lies in the last head, namely, in an *affiance* to the Truth—not merely the believing it, but the taking hold of it as being ours and in the resting on it for salvation. Recumbency on the Truth was the word which the old preachers used. You will understand that word, *leaning* on it—saying, "This is Truth, I trust my salvation on it." Now, true faith, in its very essence rests in this—a *leaning* upon Christ. It will not save me to know that Christ is a Savior. But it will save me to trust Him to *be* my Savior! I shall not be delivered from the wrath to come by believing that His Atonement is sufficient, but I shall be saved by making that Atonement my trust, my refuge and my all! The essence, the *essence* of faith lies in this—a casting oneself on the promise. It is not the lifebuoy on board the ship that saves the man when he is drowning, nor is it his belief that it is an excellent and successful invention. No! He must have it around his loins, or his hand upon it—or else he will sink. To use an old and trite illustration—suppose a fire in the upper room of a house and the people gathered in the street. A child is in the upper story—how is he to escape? He cannot leap down—that were to be dashed to pieces. A strong man comes beneath and cries, "Drop into my arms." It is a part of faith to know that the man is there—it is another part of faith to believe

that the man is strong—but the *essence* of faith lies in the dropping down into the man's arms—that is the *proof* of faith and the real essence of it! So, Sinner, you are to know that Christ died for sin. You are also to understand that Christ is able to save. And you are to believe that, but you are not saved unless, in addition to that, you put your trust in Him to be your Savior and to be yours forever! As Hart says in his hymn, which really expresses the Gospel—

**“Venture on Him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude!
None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good!”**

This is the faith which saves! And however unholy may have been your lives up to this hour, this faith, if given to you at this moment, will blot out all your sins, change your nature and make you a new man in Christ Jesus! It will lead you to live a holy life and make your eternal salvation as secure as if an angel should take you on his bright wings, this morning, and carry you immediately to Heaven! Have you that faith? That is the one all-important question, for while with faith men are saved, without it, men are damned! As Brooks has said in one of his admirable works, “He that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved, be his sins ever so many. But he that believes not in the Lord Jesus must be damned, be his sins ever so few.” Have you faith? For the text declares, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.”

II. And now we come to the ARGUMENT—*why* without faith, we cannot be saved.

Now, there are some gentlemen present who are saying, “Now we shall see whether Mr. Spurgeon has any logic in him.” No, you won't, Sirs, because I never pretended to exercise it! I hope I have the logic which can appeal to men's hearts, but I am not very prone to use the less powerful logic of the head when I can win the heart in another manner. But if it were necessary, I would not be afraid to prove that I know more of logic and of many other things than the little men who undertake to censure me! It were well if they knew how to hold their tongues, which is at least a fine part of rhetoric. My argument shall be such as I trust will appeal to the heart and conscience, although it may not exactly please those who are always so fond of syllogistic demonstration—

**“Who could a hair divide
Between the west and north-west side.”**

1. “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” And I gather it from the fact that there has never been the case of a man, recorded in Scripture, who did please God without faith. The 11th Chapter of Hebrews is the Chapter of the men who pleased God. Listen to their names—“By faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice.” “By faith, Enoch was translated.” “By faith, Noah built an ark.” “By faith, Abraham went

out into a place that he should afterwards receive.” “By faith, he sojourned in the land of promise.” “By faith, Sarah bore Isaac.” “By faith, Abraham offered up Isaac.” “By faith, Moses gave up the wealth of Egypt.” “By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob.” “By faith, Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph.” “By faith, Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel.” “By faith, the Red Sea was dried up.” “By faith, the walls of Jericho fell down.” “By faith, the harlot Rahab was saved.” “And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and of Barak and of Samson and of Jephthae, of David, also, and Samuel and of the Prophets.” All these were men of faith. Others mentioned in Scripture have *done* something, but God did not accept them. Men have humbled themselves and yet God has not saved them. Ahab did and yet his sins were never forgiven. Men have repented and yet have not been saved, because theirs was the wrong repentance. Judas repented and went and hanged himself and was not saved. Men have confessed their sins and have not been saved. Saul did it. He said to David, “I have sinned against you, my son, David.” And yet he went on as he did before. Multitudes have confessed the name of Christ and have done many marvelous things—and yet they have never been pleasing to God—from this simple reason that they had not faith. And if there is not one mentioned in Scripture, which is the history of some four thousand years, it is not likely that in the other two thousand years of the world’s history there would have been one, when there was not one during the first four thousand!

2. But the next argument is *faith is the stooping Grace* and nothing can make a man stoop without faith! Now, unless man does stoop, his sacrifice cannot be accepted. The angels know this. When they praise God, they do it veiling their faces with their wings. The redeemed know it. When they praise God, they cast their sorrows before His feet. Now, a man who has not faith proves that he cannot stoop. He has not faith for this reason—because he is too proud to believe! He declares he will not yield his intellect, he will not become a child and believe meekly what God tells him to believe. He is too proud and he cannot enter Heaven because the door of Heaven is so low that no one can enter in by it unless they will bow their heads. There never was a man who could walk into salvation erect! We must go to Christ on our bended knees. For though He is a door big enough for the greatest sinner to come in, He is a door so low that men must stoop if they would be saved. Therefore it is, that faith is necessary, because a lack of faith is certain evidence of absence of humility.

3. But now for other reasons. Faith is necessary to salvation because we are told in Scripture that *works cannot save*. To tell a very familiar story so even the poorest may not misunderstand what I say—a minister

was, one day, going to preach. He climbed a hill on his road. Beneath him lay the villages, sleeping in their beauty, with the corn fields motionless in the sunshine. But he did not look at them, for his attention was arrested by a woman standing at her door and who, upon seeing him, came up to him with the greatest anxiety and said, "O Sir, have you any keys about you? I have broken the key of my cabinet and there are some things that I must get right now." Said he, "I have no keys." She was disappointed, expecting that everyone would have some keys. "But suppose," he said, "I had some keys—they might not fit your lock and, therefore, you could not get the articles you need. But do not distress yourself, wait till someone else comes up. But," he said, wishing to improve the occasion, "have you ever heard of the key of Heaven?" "Ah, yes," she said, "I have lived long enough and I have gone to Church long enough to know that if we work hard, if we get our bread by the sweat of our brow and act well towards our neighbors, if we behave, as the Catechism says, lowly and reverently to all our betters, and if we do our duty in that station of life in which it has pleased God to place us and say our prayers regularly, we shall be saved." "Ah," he said, "My good woman, that is a broken key, for you have broken the Commandments, you have not fulfilled all your duties! It is a good key, but you have broken it." "Pray tell, Sir," she said, believing that he understood the matter and, looking frightened, "What have I left out?" "Why," he said, "the all-important thing! The blood of Jesus Christ! Don't you know it is said the key of Heaven is at His belt? He opens and no man shuts. He shuts and no man opens." And explaining it more fully to her, he said, "It is Christ and Christ, alone, who can open Heaven to you—not your good works." "What? Minister," she asked, "are our good works useless, then?" "No," he said, "not *after* faith! If you believe, first, you may have as many good works as you please. But if you believe, you will never trust in *them*, for if you trust in *them* you have spent them and they are not good works any longer. Have as many good works as you please, but still put your trust wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you do not, your key will never unlock Heaven's gate."

So then, my Hearers, we must have true faith because the old key of works is so broken by us all, that we never shall enter Paradise by it! If any of you pretend that you have no sins, to be very plain with you, you deceive yourselves and the Truth is not in you! If you conceive that by your good works you shall enter Heaven, never was there a more fell delusion! You shall find at the Last Great Day that your hopes were worthless and that, like sear leaves from the autumn trees, your noble doings shall be blown away, or kindled into a flame within and you, yourselves, must suffer forever! Take heed of your good works! Get them *after* faith, but remember, the way to be saved is simply to believe in Jesus Christ!

4. Again—without faith it is impossible to be saved and to please God—because without faith there is no union to Christ. Now, union to Christ is indispensable to our salvation. If I come before God's Throne with my prayers, I shall never get them answered unless I bring Christ with me! The Molossians of old, when they could not get a favor from their king, adopted a singular expedient. They took the king's only son in their arms and, falling on their knees, cried, "O King, for your son's sake, grant our request." He smiled and said, "I deny nothing to those who plead my son's name." It is so with God! He will deny nothing to the man who comes having Christ at his elbow! But if he comes alone, he must be cast away! Union to Christ is, after all, the great point in salvation. Let me tell you a story to illustrate this—the stupendous falls of Niagara have been spoken of in every part of the world. But while they are marvelous to hear of and wonderful as a spectacle, they have been very destructive to human life, when, by accident any have been carried down them. Some years ago, two men were being carried so swiftly down the current that they must both inevitably be borne down and dashed to pieces. Persons on the shore saw them but were unable to do much for their rescue. At last, however, one man was saved by floating a rope to him, which he grasped. The same instant that the rope came into his hand a log floated by the other man. The thoughtless and confused bargeman, instead of seizing the rope, laid hold on the log! It was a fatal mistake. They were both in imminent peril, but the one was drawn to shore because he had a connection with the people on the land, while the other, clinging to the log, was borne irresistibly along and never heard of afterwards. Do you not see that here is a practical illustration? Faith is a connection with Christ. Christ is on the shore, so to speak, holding the rope of faith—and if we lay hold of it with the hand of our confidence, He pulls us to shore. But our good works, having no connection with Christ, are drifted along down the gulf of fell despair! Grapple them as tightly as we may, even with hooks of steel, they cannot avail us in the least degree! You will see, I am sure, what I wish to show to you. Some object to anecdotes. I shall use them till they have done objecting to them. The Truth is never more powerfully set forth to men than by telling them, as Christ did, a story of a certain man with two sons, or a certain householder who went on a journey, divided his substance and gave to some, ten talents, to another one.

Faith, then, is an union with Christ. Take care you have it! For if not, cling to your works and there you go floating down the stream! Cling to your works and there you go dashing down the gulf! Lost because your works have no hold on to Christ and no connection with the blessed Redeemer! But you, poor Sinner, with all your sin about you, if the rope is round your loins and Christ has a hold of it, fear not—

***“His honor is engaged to save
The meanest of His sheep.
All that His Heavenly Father gave,
His hands securely keep.”***

5. Just one more argument and then I have done with it. “Without faith it is impossible to please God”—because *it is impossible to persevere in holiness without faith*. What a multitude of fair-weather Christians we have in this age! Many Christians resemble the nautilus, which, in fine, smooth weather, swims on the surface of the sea in a splendid little squadron, like the mighty ships! But the moment the first breath of wind ruffles the waves, they take in their sails and sink into the depths. Many Christians are the same. In good company, in evangelical drawing rooms, in pious parlors, in chapels and vestries, they are tremendously religious! But if they are exposed to a little ridicule, if some should smile at them and call them Methodist, or Presbyterian, or some name of reproach, it is all over with their religion till the next fine day! Then when it is fine weather and religion will answer their purpose, up go the sails, again, and they are as pious as before! Believe me, that kind of religion is worse than irreligion! I like a man to be thoroughly what he is—a downright man. And if a man does not love God, do not let him say he does. But if he is a true Christian, a follower of Jesus, let him say it and stand up for it! There is nothing to be ashamed of in it. The only thing to be ashamed of is to be hypocritical. Let us be honest to our profession and it will be our glory. Ah, what would you do without faith in times of persecution? You good and pious people who have no faith, what would you do if the stake were again erected in Smithfield and if, once more, the fires consumed the saints to ashes? What would you do if the Lollard’s tower was again opened? If the rack were again piled, or in event stocks were used, as they have been used by a Protestant Church as witness to the persecution of my predecessor, Benjamin Keach, who was once set in the stocks at Aylesbury for writing a book against infant baptism? If even the mildest form of persecution were revived, how would the people be scattered abroad! And some of the shepherds would be leaving their flocks!

Another anecdote, now, and I hope it will lead you to see the necessity of faith, while it may lead me on insensibly to the last part of my discourse. A slaveholding American, on one occasion buying a slave, said to the person of whom he was purchasing him, “Tell me honestly what are his faults.” Said the seller, “He has no faults that I am aware of but one and that one is, he will pray.” “Ah,” said the purchaser, “I don’t like that. I know something that will cure him of it pretty soon.” So the next night Cuffey was surprised by his master in the plantation, while in earnest prayer, praying for his new master and his master’s wife and family. The man stood and listened but said nothing at that time. But the next morning he called Cuffey and said, “I do not want to quarrel with you,

my man, but I'll have no praying on my premises—so you just drop it.” “Massa,” he said “me canna leave off praying. Me must pray.” “I'll teach you to pray, if you are going to keep on at it.” “Massa, me must keep on.” “Well, then, I'll give you 25 lashes a day till you leave off.” “Massa, if you give me fifty, I must pray.” “If that's the way you are saucy to your master, you shall have it directly.” So tying him up, he gave him 25 lashes and asked him if he would pray again. “Yes, Massa, me must pray always, me canna leave off.” The master looked astonished! He could not understand how a poor saint could keep on praying when it seemed to do no good, but only brought persecution upon him. He told his wife of it. His wife said, “Why can't you let the poor man pray? He does his work very well. You and I do not care about praying, but there's no harm in letting him pray if he gets on with his work.” “But I don't like it,” said the master, “he almost frightened me to death. You should see how he looked at me!” “Was he angry?” “No, I should not have minded that. But after I had beaten him, he looked at me with tears in his eyes and as if he pitied me more than himself.” That night the master could not sleep. He tossed to and fro on his bed. His sins were brought to his remembrance. He remembered he had persecuted a saint of God. Rising in his bed, he said, “Wife, will you pray for me?” “I never prayed in my life” she said, “I cannot pray for you.” “I am lost,” he said, “if somebody does not pray for me. I cannot pray for myself.” “I don't know anyone on the estate that knows how to pray, except Cuffey,” said his wife. The bell was rung and Cuffey was brought in. Taking hold of his black servant's hand, the master said, “Cuffey, can you pray for your master?” “Massa” he said, “me been praying for you ever since you flogged me and me means to pray always for you.” Down went Cuffey on his knees and poured out his soul in tears—and both husband and wife were converted. That slave could not have done this without faith! Without faith he would have gone away, directly, and said, “Massa, me leave off praying. Me no like de white man's whip.” But because he persevered through his faith, the Lord honored him and gave him his master's soul for his hire!

III. And now in conclusion, THE QUESTION, the vital question. Dear Hearer have you faith? Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart? If so, you may hope to be saved! Yes, you may conclude with absolute certainty that you shall never see Hell. Have you faith? Shall I help you to answer that question? I will give you three tests, as briefly as ever I can, not to weary you and then, farewell, this morning. He who has faith, has renounced his own righteousness. If you put one atom of trust in yourself you have no faith! If you place even a particle of reliance upon anything else but what Christ did, you have no faith! If you trust in your works, then your works are anti-Christ and Christ and anti-Christ can

never go together! Christ will have all or nothing! He must be a whole Savior, or none at all. If, then, you have faith, you can say—

***“Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to the Cross I cling.”***

Then true faith may be known by this—it begets a great esteem for the Person of Christ. Do you love Christ? Could you die for Him? Do you seek to serve Him? Do you love His people? Can you say—

***“Jesus, I love Your charming name,
‘Tis music to my ear.”***

Oh, if you do not love Christ, you do not believe in Him, for to believe in Christ begets love. And yet more—he that has true faith will have true *obedience*. If a man says he has faith and has no works, he lies! If any man declares that he believes in Christ and yet does not lead a holy life, he lies! While we do not trust in good works, we know that faith always begets good works! Faith is the father of holiness and he has not the parent who loves not the child. God’s blessings are blessings with both His hands. In the one hand, He gives pardon. But in the other hand, He always gives holiness—and no man can have the one, unless he has the other!

And now, dear Hearers, shall I get down upon my knees and entreat you for Christ’s sake to answer this question in your own silent chamber—Have you faith? Oh, answer it—Yes, or No? Leave off saying, “I do not know,” or, “I do not care.” Ah, you will care, one day, when the earth is reeling and the world is tossing to and fro! You will care when God shall summon you to judgment and when He shall condemn the faithless and the unbelieving! Oh, that you were wise—that you would care, now, and if any of you feel your need of Christ, let me beg of you, for Christ’s sake, now, to seek faith in Him who is exalted on high to give repentance and remission and who, if He has given you repentance, will give you remission, too! Oh Sinners who know your sins! “Believe on the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved.” Cast yourselves upon His love and blood, His doing and His dying, His miseries and His merits—if you do this, you shall never fall but you shall be saved, now—and saved in that great day when not to be saved will be horrible, indeed! “Turn you, turn you! Why will you die, O house of Israel?” Lay hold on Him, touch the hem of His garment and you shall be healed. May God help you to do so. For Christ’s sake. Amen and Amen.

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

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

FAITH ESSENTIAL TO PLEASING GOD

NO. 2100

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 18, 1889,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”
Hebrews 11:6.***

MEN have lived who have pleased God—Enoch was one of them but he was not the only one. In all ages certain persons have been well-pleasing to God, and their walk in life has been such as was His delight. It should be the aim of everyone of us to please God. The thing is possible, notwithstanding all our imperfections and infirmities—let us aim at it in the power of the Holy Spirit. What has been worked in one man may be worked in another. We, too, may be well-pleasing unto God. Therefore let us seek after it with hopefulness. If we so live as to please the Lord, we shall only be acting as we ought to act. For we ought to please Him who made us and sustains us in being. He is our God and Lord—and obedience to Him is the highest Law of our being.

Moreover, the glorious Jehovah is so perfectly good, so supremely holy, that the conduct which pleases Him must be of the best and noblest sort, and therefore we should seek after it. Should we not aspire to that character upon which God Himself can smile?

The approbation of our fellow men is pleasant in its way. But they are always imperfect and often mistaken. And so we may be well-pleasing to them and yet may be far removed from righteousness. It may be a calamity to be commended in error, for it may prevent our becoming really commendable. But God makes no mistake. The Infinitely Holy knows no imperfection. And if it is possible for us to be pleasing to Him, it should be our one object to reach that condition.

As Enoch, in a darker age, was pleasing to Him, why should not we, upon whom the Gospel day has dawned? God grant us to find Divine Grace in His sight! If we please God, we shall have realized the object of our being. It is written concerning all things, “For His pleasure they are and were created.” And we miss the end of creation if we are not pleasing to the Lord. To fulfill God’s end in our creation is to obtain the highest joy.

If we are pleasing to God, although we shall not escape trial—for even the highest qualities must be tested—yet we shall find great peace and special happiness. He is not an unhappy man who is pleasing to God—God has blessed him, yes, and he shall be blessed. By pleasing God we shall become the means of good to others—our example will rebuke and stimulate. Our peace will convince and invite.

Being himself well-pleasing to God, the godly man will teach transgressors God's way and sinners shall be converted unto Him. I therefore, without the slightest hesitancy, set it before you as a thing to be desired by us all, that we should win this testimony—that we are pleasing unto God.

Here the Apostle comes in with needed instruction. He asserts that faith is absolutely needful, if we would please God. Then, to help us still further, he mentions two essential points of faith—"He that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." When I have spoken on these two points, I shall close, as God shall help me, by showing that He then teaches us many valuable lessons.

I. First, then, THE APOSTLE ASSERTS THAT FAITH IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO THE PLEASING OF GOD. Take, as a keyword, the strong word "impossible." "Without faith it is *impossible* to please God." He does not say it is difficult, or so needful that without it success is barely possible. He declares it to be "impossible." When the Holy Spirit says that a thing is impossible, it is so in a very absolute sense. Let us not attempt the impossible. To attempt a difficulty may be laudable, but to rush upon an impossibility is madness. We must not, therefore, hope to please God by any invention of our own, however clever, nor by any labor of our own, however ardent—since infallible Inspiration declares that, "without faith it is impossible to please God."

We are bound to believe this statement, because we have it in the Sacred Volume, stated upon Divine authority. But, for your help, I would invite you to think of some few matters which may show you how impossible it is to please God without faith in Him.

For, first, without faith there is no capacity for communion with God at all. The things of God are spiritual and invisible—without faith we cannot recognize such things but must be dead to them. Faith is the eye which sees. But without that eye we are blind and can have no fellowship with God in those Sacred Truths which only faith can perceive. Faith is the hand of the soul, and without it, we have no grasp of eternal things.

If I were to mention all the images by which faith is set forth, each one would help you to see that you must have faith in order to know God and enter into converse with Him. It is only by faith that we can recognize God, approach Him, speak to Him, hear Him, feel His Presence and be delighted with His perfections. He that has not faith is toward God as one dead. And Jehovah is not the God of the dead, but of the living. The communion of the living God goes not forth toward death and corruption. His fellowship is with those who have spiritual life, a life akin to His own. Where there is no faith, there has been no quickening of the Holy Spirit, for faith is of the very essence of spiritual life. And so the man who has no faith can no more commune with the living God and give Him pleasure, than can a stick or a stone, a horse or an ox, hold converse with the human mind.

Again, without faith the man himself is not pleasing to God. We read, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." But the Revision has it bet-

ter—"Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto God." The way of acceptance described in Scripture is, first, the man is accepted—and then what that man does is accepted. It is written—"And he shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

First God is pleased with the person, and then with the gift, or the work. The unaccepted person offers of necessity an unacceptable sacrifice. If a man is your enemy, you will not value a present which he sends you. If you know that he has no confidence in you, but counts you a liar, his praises are lost upon you. They are empty, deceptive, things which cannot possibly please you.

O my Hearers, in your natural state you are so sinful that God cannot look upon you with complacency! Concerning our race it is written—"It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth and it grieved Him at His heart." Concerning many, God has said, "My soul loathed them and their soul also abhorred Me." Is this true of us? "You must be born again," or you cannot be pleasing to the Lord. You must believe in Jesus. For only to as many as receive Him does He give power to become the sons of God. When we believe in the Lord Jesus, the Lord God accepts us for His Beloved's sake and in Him we are made kings and priests and permitted to bring an offering which pleases God. As the man is, such is his work.

The stream is of the nature of the spring from which it flows. He who is a rebel, outlawed and proclaimed, cannot gratify his prince by any fashion of service. He must first submit himself to the law. All the actions of rebels are acts done in rebellion. We must first be reconciled to God, or it is a mockery to bring an offering to His altar. Reconciliation can only be effected through the death of the Lord Jesus and if we have no faith in that way of reconciliation we cannot please God. Faith in Christ makes a total change in our position towards God—we who were enemies are reconciled. And from this comes towards God a distinct change in the nature of all our actions—imperfect though they are, they spring from a loyal heart—and they are pleasing to God.

Remember, that in human associations, want of confidence would prevent a man's being well-pleasing to another. If a man has no confidence in you, you can have no pleasure in him. If you had a child and he had no trust in his father, no belief in his father's kindness, no reliance on his father's word—it would be most painful and it would be quite impossible that you should take any pleasure in such a child. If you had a servant in your house who always suspected your every action and believed in nothing that you said or did but put a wrong construction upon everything, it would make the house very miserable and you would be well rid of such an employee. How can I take pleasure in a man who associates with me and pretends to serve me, but all the while thinks me a sheer impostor and gives me no credit for truthfulness? Such a person would be an eyesore to me.

It is clear that want of confidence would destroy any pleasure which one man might have in another. When the creature dares to doubt his Creator, how can the Creator be pleased? When the Word which worked creation is not enough for a man to rest upon, he may pretend what he will of righteousness and obedience, but the whole affair is rotten at the core—and God can take no pleasure in it.

Note again—unbelief takes away the common ground upon which God and man can meet. Two persons who are pleasant to one another must have certain common views and objects. God's great object is the glorification of His Son. And how can we be pleasing to Him if we dishonor that Son? The Father delights in Jesus—the very thought of Him is a pleasure to God. He said, as if to Himself only, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This He said, afterwards, to others, that they might regard it, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him."

He delights in what His Son has done—He smells a sweet savor of rest in His glorious sacrifice. If you and I believe in God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, we have a common ground of sympathy with God. But if not, we are not in harmony. How can two walk together except they are agreed? If we have thoughts of Jesus such as the Father has, we can live together and work together. But if we are opposed to Him on a point which is as the apple of His eye, we cannot be well-pleasing to Him. If Jesus is despised, rejected, distrusted, or even neglected, it is not possible for us to be pleasing to God.

According to the well-worn fable, two persons who are totally different in their pursuits cannot well live together—the fuller and the charcoal-burner were obliged to part. For whatever the fuller had made white, the collier blackened with his finger. If differing pursuits divide, much more will differing feelings upon a vital point. It is Jesus whom Jehovah delights to honor. And if you will not even trust Jesus with your soul's salvation, you grieve the heart of God and He can have no pleasure in you. Unbelief deprives the soul of the Divinely appointed meeting place at the Mercy Seat, which is the Person of the Lord Jesus, where God and man unite in one Mediator and the Lord shines forth on the suppliant.

Assuredly, again, want of faith destroys all prospect of love. Although we may not perhaps see it, there lies at the bottom of all love a belief in the object loved, as to its loveliness, its merit, or its capacity to make us happy. If I do not believe in a person, I cannot love him. If I cannot trust God, I cannot love Him. If I do not believe that He loves me, I shall feel but slight emotions of love to Him. If I refuse to see anything in the greatest display of His love—if I do not value the gift of His dear Son—I cannot love Him.

We love Him because He first loved us. But if we will not believe in His love, the motive power is gone. If we reject the Word which says, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life," then we have put from out of the heart the grand incentive to love. But love on our part is essential to our pleasing God—how can He be pleased with an unloving

heart? Is not the Lord's chief demand of men that we love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength? Without faith love is *impossible*, and God's pleasure in us must be impossible.

Again, dear Friends, want of faith will create positive variance on many points. Note a few. If I trust God and believe in Him, I shall submit myself to His will. Even when it becomes very painful to me, I shall say, "It is the Lord: let Him do what seems Him good." But if I do not believe that He is God and that He is aiming at my good, then I shall resent His chastisements and shall kick against His will. What He wills me to suffer, I shall not be willing to suffer. I shall rebel and murmur, and proudly accuse my Maker of injustice, or want of love. I shall be in a rebellious state towards Him and then He cannot have pleasure in me. "The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy." But He will walk contrary to us, if we walk contrary to Him by refusing to bow ourselves before His hand.

Without faith, moreover, I get to be at variance with God in another way—for inasmuch as I desire to be saved, I shall seek salvation in my *own* way—and go about to establish a righteousness of my own. Whatever it may be, whether it is by ceremonies, or by good works, or by feelings, or what not, I shall, in some way or other, set up a way of salvation other than that which God has appointed through Christ Jesus. God's love to Christ is supreme and He will not endure that a rival should be set up in opposition to Him.

Another way of salvation is Antichrist and this provokes the Lord to jealousy. If you are laboring to be saved in one way, while God declares that through His Son is the only way of salvation, you are acting in distinct opposition to the Lord in a matter which does not admit of any compromise. Rejecters of Christ are enemies to God. If you pretend that you are God's servants, you are convicted of falsehood if you refuse to honor His Son by trusting in Him. If you believe in Christ, whom He has sent, you work the work of God. But no way else. Self-righteousness is an insult to Christ and a distinct revolt from God. He who has no faith, seeks salvation by a way that is derogatory to the Lord Jesus—and it is impossible for him to please God.

We must be at variance with God if we are without faith. It is a solemn truth that, "He that believes not, God has made him a liar. Because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son." This is the crime of the Unbeliever—so is it stated by the Holy Spirit speaking by the beloved John. Could you take any pleasure in a man who made you out to be a liar? Perhaps with great patience you could bear with him, but you could not be pleased with him—that would be out of the question. Does a man daily, by the mode of his life and by the evident drift of his actions, proclaim you to be a liar? How can he talk of giving you pleasure? Nothing he could do would please you while he calls you a liar.

He that makes God to be a liar, makes him to be no God. To the best of his ability he undeifies the Deity. He uncrowns the Lord of All and even stabs at the heart of the Eternal. To talk of being well-pleasing to God in such a case is absurd.

Let me conclude this point by asking, by what means can we hope to please God, apart from faith in Him? By keeping all His commandments? Alas, you have not done so. You have already broken those commands. And what is more, you still break them and are in a chronic state of disobedience. If you do not believe in Him, you are not obedient to Him. For true obedience commands the understanding as well as every other power and faculty. We are bound to obey with the mind by believing, as well as with the hand by acting. The spiritual part of our being is in revolt against God until we believe. And, while the very life and glory of our being is in revolt, how can we please God?

But what will you bring to the Lord to please Him? Do you propose to bribe Him with your money? Surely you are not so foolish! Is the Lord to be bought with a row of almshouses, or a Chapel, or a Cathedral? To most of you, it would be impossible to try the plan for lack of means. But if you were wealthy enough to lavish gold out of the bag, would this please Him? The silver and the gold are His and the cattle on a thousand hills. If He were hungry, He would not tell you. What can you give to Him to whom all things belong?

Truly, you can assist in an ornate worship, or build a gorgeous Church, or embroider the furniture of an altar, or emblazon the windows of a Church. But are you so weak as to believe that such trifles as these can cause any delight to the mind of the Infinite? Solomon built Him a house, but “the Most High dwells not in temples made with hands.” To what shall I liken the most glorious erections of human genius but to the anthills of the tropics, which are wonderful as the fabrication of ants, even as our cathedrals are marvelous as the handicraft of men?

But what are anthills or cathedrals when measured with the Infinite? What are all our works to the Lord? He who with a single arch has spanned the world, cares little for our carved capitals and groined arches. The prettinesses of architecture are as much beneath the glory of Jehovah as the dolls and boxes of bricks of our children would be beneath the dignity of a Solomon. God is not a man that He should take delight in these things. “Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

It is not this that He asks of you, but to walk humbly with Him, never daring arrogantly to doubt His Truth and mistrust His faithfulness. Go not about by a thousand inventions to aim at what you will never compass, but believe your God and be established. So much upon that painful point. Remember the impossibility of pleasing the Lord without faith—and do not dash your ship upon this iron-bound coast.

II. Now, secondly, THE APOSTLE MENTIONS TWO ESSENTIAL POINTS OF FAITH.

He begins by saying, "He that comes to God must believe that He is." Note the keyword "must"—it is an immovable, insatiable necessity. Before we can walk with God, it is clear that we must *come to* God. Naturally, we are at a distance from Him and we must end that distance by coming to Him, or else we cannot walk with Him, nor be pleasing to Him. That we may come to Him, we must first believe that there is a God to come to. More—we must not only believe that there is a God—for only a fool doubts that—"The fool has said in his heart, There is no God"—but we must believe that Jehovah is God and God, alone.

This was Enoch's faith—he believed that Jehovah was the living and true God. You are to believe, and must believe, in order to be pleasing with God, that He is God, that He is the only God, and that there can be none other than He. You must also accept Jehovah as He reveals Himself. You are not to have a God of your own making, nor a God reasoned out, but a God such as He has been pleased to reveal Himself to you. Believe that Jehovah is, whoever else may be or may not be.

But the devils believe, and tremble, and yet they are *not* pleasing to God, for more is wanted. Believe that God is, in reference to yourself. That He has to do with your life and your ways. Many believe that there is a hazy, imaginary power which they call God. But they never think of Him as a Person, nor do they suspect that He thinks of them, or that His existence is of any consequence to them one way or another. Believe that God is as truly as you are. And let Him be real to you. Let the consideration of Him enter into everything that concerns you.

Believe that He is approachable by yourself and is to be pleased or displeased by you. Believe in Him as you believe in your wife or your child whom you try to please. Believe in God beyond everything, that "He is," in a sense more sure than that in which anyone else exists. Believe that He is to be approached, to be realized, to be, in fact, the great practical factor of your life. Hold this as the primary Truth of God, that God is most influential upon you. And then believe that it is your business to come to Him.

But there is only one way of coming to Him and you must have faith to use that way. He that died and lives forever says, "I am the Way. No man comes unto the Father but by Me." He that comes to God must believe in God as He is revealed and must come to God as God reveals the way of approach. And this is an exertion of faith. Faith as to this point is essential. You cannot come to Him in whom you do not believe. Are not many hearers of the Word really as far from God as infidels? Let me ask you, how many atheists are now in this house?

Perhaps not a single one of you would accept the title and yet, if you live from Monday morning to Saturday night in the same way as you would live if there were no God, you are practical atheists. And as actions speak more loudly than words, you are more atheists than those doctrinal Unbelievers who disavow God with their mouths and, after all, are secretly afraid of Him. A life without God is as bad as a creed without God. You

cannot come to God unless you believe in Him as the All in All, the Lord God beside whom there is none else.

Yet all this would be nothing without the second point of belief. We must believe that, "He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." How do we seek Him, then? Well, we seek Him, first, when we begin by prayer, by trusting Jesus and by calling upon the sacred name, to seek salvation. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." That is a grand promise and it teaches how we come to God—namely, by calling upon His name. Afterwards we seek God by aiming at His glory, by making Him the great Object for which we live.

One man seeks money, another seeks reputation, another seeks pleasure. But he that is pleasing to God seeks God as his Object and End. "Seek you first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And all these things shall be added unto you." The man with whom God is pleased, is pleased with God. He sets the Lord always before him and seeks to live for Him. This he would not do unless he believed that God would reward him in so doing. Take this as a certainty—we must believe that "God is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him," or we shall not seek Him.

We are sure that, somehow or other, it will be to our highest benefit to honor the Lord and trust Him. Albeit we deserve nothing at His hands but wrath, yet we perceive from the Gospel that if we seek Him through His Son, we shall be so well-pleasing to Him as to get a reward from His hands. This must be of Divine Grace—Free, Sovereign Grace! And what a reward it is! Free pardon, graciously bestowed. A change of heart, graciously worked. Perseverance, graciously maintained. Comfort, graciously poured in, and privilege, graciously awarded. The reward of godliness, even in this world, is immeasurable—and in the world to come it is infinite. We may have respect unto the recompense of the reward. Indeed, we should have respect to it, and therefore boldly seek God and seek nothing else.

The Lord is "a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." That is not quite an exact translation—the Greek word means not only seek Him but, "seek Him out." That is, seek Him till they find Him and seek Him above all others. It is a very strong word. We hardly know how to transfer its meaning into English, for though it does not say "diligently," it implies it. We must seek, and seek out. That is, seek till we really find. Those who with their hearts follow after God, shall not be losers if they believe that He will reward them. You have to believe God so as to seek His Glory.

Even when you do not obtain any present reward for it, you are to say, "I shall have a reward ultimately, even if I am for a while a loser through His service. If I lose money, respect, friendship, or even life from following God, yet He will be a Rewarder and I shall be repaid ten thousand-fold, not of debt but according to His Divine Grace." He, then, that would please God, must first believe that He is. And then, dedicating himself to God, must be firmly assured that this is the right, the wise, the prudent thing to do. Be certain that to serve God is in itself gain—it is wealth to be

holy. It is happiness to be pleasing to God. To us it is life to live to God—to know Him, to adore Him, to commune with Him, to become like He is.

It is glory to us to make Him glorious among the sons of men. For us to live is Christ. This, we are persuaded, is the best pursuit for us. In fact, it is the *only* one which can satisfy our hearts. God is our shield and our exceedingly great reward. And in the teeth of everything that happens, we hold to this—that to serve God is gain. If God helps us to trust Him, and therefore to live unto Him and seek to be well-pleasing in His sight, we shall succeed in pleasing Him. We cannot conceive that the heavenly Father sees, without pleasure, a man struggling against sin, battling against evil, enduring sorrow contentedly through a simple faith, and laboring daily to draw nearer and nearer to Him.

God is not displeased with those who, by faith, live to please Him and are content to take their reward from His hand. He must be pleased with the work of His own Grace. The desire to come to God, the way to come to God, the power to come to God, the actual coming to God—these are all *gifts* of Sovereign Grace. Coming to God, however feebly we come—and seeking Him, however much else we miss, must be well-pleasing in His sight. For it is the result of His own purpose and Grace which He gave us in Christ Jesus before the world began. But all this hangs upon faith. Without faith there is no coming to God who is and no seeking of God who is a Rewarder. And therefore without faith it is impossible to please God.

III. WE WILL NOW GATHER A FEW LESSONS FROM WHAT THE APOSTLE HAS TAUGHT US. Help us, O gracious Spirit!

First, then, the Apostle teaches us here, by implication, that God is pleased with those that have faith. The negative is often the most plain way of suggesting the positive. If we are so carefully warned that without faith it is impossible to please God, we infer that *with* faith it *is* possible to please God. If you believe that He is and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. If you are willing to believe all that He teaches you because He teaches it, and are really a believer in Himself and in all that He is pleased to reveal, then are you pleasing to Him.

He that believes in God believes in all the Words that God speaks and he surrenders himself to all that God does. And such a man must be pleasing to God. We believe in one God and in one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. We trust in the Lord as He thus draws near to us—thus are we in the way of pleasing God. By faith we, ourselves, have become pleasing to God, and our actions performed with a view to His honor are pleasing to Him. What a joy is this! It is bliss to think that I, who, in my unregenerate state, grieved the Holy Spirit and vexed Him day by day, am now the object of pleasure to Him.

I, whose actions were contrary to the Law of God and the bent of whose mind was against the Gospel of Christ, I, even I, who was once obnoxious to Divine anger, an heir of wrath, even as others, have now, through faith, become to God an object of His complacency! This is very wonderful. If the

Holy Spirit leads you to feel the full sweetness of this Truth of God, you will rejoice with joy unspeakable. I feel like singing rather than preaching.

Oh, guilty One, will you not now believe your God? This is the way to come back to Him. When the prodigal said, "In my father's house there is bread enough and to spare," he believed in his father's power to supply all his needs. When he thought in his heart that his father would receive him, he said, "I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned."

You must have so much belief in God as to believe Him to have the heart of a father towards you, or you will never come back to Him. But when you begin to trust your God, your face is already towards the heavenly home, and before long your head will be on your Father's bosom. If faith can make the vilest and guiltiest pleasing to God, will they not believe in Him? What a transformation this would work in them! Oh, that this morning all of us may stand out in the clear sunlight of Jehovah's good pleasure and know ourselves to be well-pleasing to Him through Jesus Christ!

Learn, next, that those who have faith make it the great object of their life to please God. Am I speaking the truth? Will each one ask whether it is true about himself? Do I, as a Believer, live to please God? We need personal heart-searching on this point. The believer in the invisible God delights to act as in His sight and in secret to serve Him. I take a choice pleasure in rendering to my God a service unknown to others, not done for the sake of my fellows but distinctly that I may do something for my Lord. It is sweet to give or do simply to please Him, without respect to the public eye.

Even such actions as must come under the gaze of others are not to be done with the view of winning *their* approbation, but only to please God. The doing of such actions is a singular fountain of strength to a man's mind. It is ennobling to feel that you have only one Master and that you live to please Him, even God. To please men is poor work. To live to follow everybody's whim is slavery. If you let one man pull you by the ear in his direction, another will tug at you from another direction and you will have very long ears before long. Happy is he who, pleasing God, feels that he has risen above seeking to please men. It is grand to say, "This is what God would have me do and I will do it in happy fellowship with others, or alone by myself, as the case may be. But do it I must."

This gives a man backbone, and at the same time removes the selfishness which is greedy of popular applause. It is a grand thing to be no longer looking down for cheer but to be distinctly looking up for it. The man who truly believes in God makes small account of men. Put them together, they are vanity. Heap them up in their thousands, they are altogether lighter than vanity. Nations upon nations, what are they but as grasshoppers? The lands in which they live, what are they before God? "He takes up the isles as a very little thing." To please God, even a little, is infinitely greater than to have the acclamations of all our race throughout the centuries.

The true Believer feels that God is, and that there is none beside Him—none that need to be thought of in comparison with Him. The theology of the present aims at the deification of man but the truth of all time magnifies God. We shall stand by the old paths, wherein we hear a voice which bids us worship Jehovah, our God, and serve Him, alone. He shall be All in All. Only as we see men loved of Him can we live for men. We seek their good in God, and for His glory—and regard them as capable of being made mirrors to reflect the glory of the Lord.

Note, next, the Apostle teaches us here, that they that have faith in God are always coming to God. For he speaks of the Believer as, “He that comes to God.” If you once learn to believe God and to please Him, you are coming to Him every day. You not only come to Him and go away from Him, as in acts of prayer and praise, but you are always coming. Your life is a march towards Him. The way of the Believer is toward God—by his faith he comes ever nearer and yet nearer to the eternal Throne. What is his reward? Why, He that sits on the Throne will say, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

Come! Come on! You have been coming, keep on coming forever. There is a gentle, constant, perpetual progress of the Believer’s heart and mind nearer and closer to God. I could not wonder at Enoch being translated after walking with God hundreds of years. For it is such a small step from close communion with God on earth to perfect communion with God in Heaven. A thin partition divides us which a sigh will remove. The breaking of a blood-vessel, the snapping of a cord, the staying of the breath, and he that had God with him shall be with God.

Sometimes the Believer could not tell whether he was in the body or out of the body but had to leave that question with God. He will soon be able to answer the question for himself—and *know* that he is absent from the body and present with the Lord. O Beloved, please God, please God! And as you please Him by your simple confidence and child-like trust, you are coming nearer to Him.

The next lesson is one I have already spoken of—God will see that those who practice faith in Him shall have a reward. I say, God will see to it, for the text says, “He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” The Lord will not leave the reward of faith to the choicest angel—He Himself will adjudge the recompense. Here we may get but scant reward from those whom we benefit—indeed, they usually return us base ingratitude. Joseph was a faithful servant to Potiphar. But Potiphar put him in prison on a groundless charge. Joseph helped the butler and interpreted his dream, yet he remembered not Joseph, but forgot him.

You may not reckon upon due returns from your fellow men, or you will be disappointed. Like David, you may guard Nabal’s sheep and when the sheep-shearing comes you may hope to be remembered and he will insult you with a churlish answer. Expect little from men, but much from God—for by nature and by office, He is a Rewarder. No work done for Him will

go unrewarded. In His service the wages are sure. Rise into the Abrahamic life which stays itself upon the Lord's word, "Fear not, Abraham: I am your shield and your exceedingly great reward."

It is reward enough to have such a God to be our God. What if He gives us neither vineyards nor olive gardens, neither sheep nor oxen? He Himself is ours, and this is a greater reward than if He gave us all the world! God Himself is enough for the Believer. If his faith is true, and deep, and intelligent, he cries, "Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside You."

The last lesson we gather from it is this—those who have no faith are in a fearful case. I speak not of the heathen but of Unbelievers who reject the Gospel. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Some of you are always fashioning fresh nets of doubt for your own entanglement. You invent snares for your own feet and are greedy to lay more and more of them. You are mariners who seek the rocks, soldiers who court the point of the bayonet. It is an unprofitable business. Practically, morally, mentally, spiritually—doubting is an evil trade.

You are like a smith, wearing out his arm in making chains with which to bind himself. Doubt is sterile, a desert without water. Doubt discovers difficulties which it never solves. It creates hesitancy, despondency, despair. Its progress is the decay of comfort, the death of peace. "Believe!" is the word which speaks life into a man—doubt nails down his coffin. If you can believe, O guilty One, that Jesus Christ bore the guilt of sin upon the Cross and by His death has made atonement to the insulted government of God. If you can so believe in Him as to cast yourself, just as you are, at His dear feet, you shall be pleasing to God.

I entreat you to look up and see the pierced hands and feet and side of the dear Redeemer and read eternal mercy there! Read full forgiveness there, and then go your way in peace, for you are well-pleasing to God. The sinner who believes God's testimony concerning His Son has begun to please Him and is himself well-pleasing to the Lord. Oh that you would now trust Him who justifies the ungodly and passes by the iniquities of sinful men! He will receive you graciously and love you freely.

Oh, come to Him, for He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. God help you to do so at once. But without faith you cannot please Him. Do what you may, feel what you like—you will labor as in the very fire and nothing will come of it but eternal despair. The Lord help you to believe and live. Amen.

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HOW TO PLEASE GOD

NO. 2513

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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***“But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”
Hebrews 11:6.***

“Without faith,” says the text, “it is impossible to please God.” Yet all men have not faith. Even among those who have heard the Gospel, many have not obeyed it. Isaiah is not the only one who has had to cry, “Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” If it is so, that, “without faith it is impossible to please God,” what becomes of the multitude who have heard, but believed not, to whom the Word of this salvation has come, but who have rejected it? It is to be feared that God may again swear in His wrath, “They shall not enter into My rest.” The Israelites could not enter into Canaan because of unbelief—and men in this day cannot enter into the privileges of the Gospel because of unbelief. Let us pity and pray for those who have not faith. Oh, that God would hear the cries of His children and work faith in men, for this, also, is the gift of God! Not only the blessing which He promises, but even the hand whereby we receive it must come from Him!

There are some men who have a kind of faith, and these are, perhaps, in a more dangerous condition than those who have none at all because they are apt to deceive themselves and fancy that they are in a state of Grace, whereas they are still in a state of nature. The faith which pleases God is no mock faith, no dead faith, no false faith, no faith in a lie! It is faith in the Truth of God, it is true faith, it is spiritual faith. The faith that saves the soul and makes it pleasing before God is real faith. Many say that they believe a thing, but they do not truly believe it—it is not real to them. They say, “Yes, such-and-such a doctrine is true,” and they write it down in their creed and then put the creed away on the top shelf of their bookcase—and it lies there covered with dust. A man only believes that which affects his life. If it is an important Truth of God, if he has *really* believed it, it will touch every nerve of his being. It will often hold him back from one course and, with equal force, impel him to another. True faith is the most active motive power in the whole world! “Faith, which works by love,” works all sorts of marvels, and where there is this true faith, it will prove its reality by its practicalness. The faith of God’s elect is not a dead faith. “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” Neither is He the God of dead faith, but He is the God of living

faith. God grant that we may, each one of us, possess this real God-given blessing! But if we have merely a notional, nominal, historical faith which does not affect our lives at all, we are in the same condition as those who have no faith—and we come under the description of the text, “without faith”—and “without faith it is impossible to please God.”

Before I enter upon the consideration of the text, I should like to make a sort of search through this place to find out any who are without faith. Without faith, you are without God, for God is only apprehended by faith. Without faith, you are without hope, for a true hope can only spring out of a true faith. And you are without Christ—consequently, without a Savior, without the means of the removal of your sin, without a help with which to daily fight the battle of life against sin. Without Christ? Oh, it were infinitely better to be without your eyes, without your hearing, without wealth, without bread, without garments, without a home rather than to be without the faith which brings everything that the soul requires! Without faith we are, indeed, spiritually naked, poor, miserable, lost and condemned—and without a hope of escape. “Without faith.” Could that be written as a correct label and hung upon your back, you might not, perhaps, be ashamed to wear it. But if an angel can see it on your brow as the description of your character, I am sure that he is greatly concerned about you. But your brother man, who would gladly speak that you shall not leave this place without faith, feels troubled that there should be anyone in this land of Bibles, this land of Sabbaths, this land of revivals, this land of the Gospel who should have come to years of discretion and yet should be so dolefully indiscreet as to live “without faith.”

The text says, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” And I am going to keep to the text. So note, first, dear Friends, the *necessity of faith asserted*. After we have asserted it, we shall pass onto *the necessity of faith proven*, that you may see, each one with his own mental eye, that it must be so, that, “without faith it is impossible to please God.” And then, we will close with *the necessity of faith used for profit*—we will try to gather some lessons from it for our own practical guidance.

I. First, then, here is THE NECESSITY OF FAITH ASSERTED—“Without faith it is impossible to please God.”

You notice that there is no limit put to this assertion, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” *This Law applies universally to every person under the Gospel dispensation.* There are a great many people who are very anxious to know about the future of the heathen, but we may well leave them to the great Judge of All, earnestly desiring to bring them to the faith which is in Christ Jesus. It is much more practical for us to think of those to whom faith is *possible*, because the Gospel has come to them and they have heard it. The declaration of our text, “without faith it is impossible to please God,” applies to every person, whoever that person may be! See how men are buried nowadays. A man has been a king, so, of course, he must be, “his most religious majesty.” And though his soul, loaded with a thousand crimes, has sunk deep into the pit of woe,

yet there are many who suppose that it must be well with him because he was a king!

And if a man is a poet and can write fine verses, though they are steeped in lust, yet there are some who suppose that such a “cultured” person cannot be lost! “Surely,” said a profane man once, “God will think twice before He damns such a gentleman as that.” And what the skeptic spoke sarcastically is, no doubt, a common notion of many people, that if men happen to be in what are called the higher ranks of society, or happen to be largely gifted with a certain faculty, or happen to have been eminently successful in life, or to have been great inventors and so forth, it must be well with them! But be it known to one and all that “without faith it is impossible to please God.”

“But,” says someone, “men have been very sincere in the pursuit of external religion and they have been moral and amiable and benevolent—have not these pleased God?” It is not for me to use flattering speeches, for my text is very sweeping. “Without *faith* it is impossible to please God.” He who has missed this faith has missed the vital point—had he begun with that, his amiability, his morality, his benevolence would had been acceptable, because in them there would have been the flower of life, the *faith* that makes them live! But without this, they are cold, soulless, dead, mere carcasses of virtue, devoid of life. “Without faith,” in any case, and in *every* case, “it is impossible to please God.”

And as the text is universal as to persons, so is it universal as to every form of work and worship. No matter what is done, “without faith it is impossible to please God.” It was a fine row of alms houses that sprang out of that man’s munificent bequest, but those alms houses never pleased God, for they were not built with any faith in him. It was a generous gift that was bestowed upon the church—yes, and those who received it were grateful for such help—but God never accepted it, for he who gave it hoped to buy pardon, thereby, or purchase a place in Heaven, or make some atonement for his oppressions of the poor. Without faith, though it were millions that were poured into the treasury of the church, “without faith, it is impossible to please God.” I may say of faith what Paul said of love, “Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not faith, it profits me nothing.” The most self-sacrificing and most heroic deeds, whenever they have been performed from any other motive than that of pleasing God and without confidence in God, have remained outside His acceptance.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God.” This is not popular teaching, but we never wish to teach a popular theology. It is not one that will commend itself to the natural mind of men—we never thought it would—we would have been thunderstruck if our preaching had been admired by such persons! And we would have gone home and felt that we were not sent of God to preach at all. But, nevertheless, this is true, “without faith it is impossible to please God.”

Observe that the text mentions two things. It says, “He that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that dili-

gently seek Him.” That is to say, in coming to God and in seeking out God, there must be *faith*. In coming to God, if there is prayer, what is that prayer worth which is offered without any faith in God? If a man prays to a God whom he does not know as really existing, is he not, even from his own point of view, engaged in a very senseless exercise? And to God, Himself, it must be a piece of dreadful mockery! O Sirs, there must be faith, or else prayer certainly becomes the most meaningless waste of time!

And as to praise, how can we praise an unknown God? If we have no faith that there is a God, how can we praise Him? How can our lives extol a Being about whose very existence we raise a question? No, more than that, I cannot praise God unless I know that He is *mine*. How can I bless another man’s God? How can I offer to another man’s God thanksgivings for mercies that I have never tasted and for favors in which I have never had a share? There must be a sense of *personal relationship* to God, personal obligation and personal confidence—and laying hold upon Him—or else in vain is the Psalm sung even to the noblest music!

And I believe, dear Friends, that if I come to God in the matter of preaching and bearing testimony, yet if I do it without faith, my work cannot be acceptable to God! I do not think that it would long be acceptable to you, either. To me, it would seem a *slavery* to have to preach what I did not believe! If I had a shadow of a doubt about it, I would hide myself until I had something to say about which I felt sure. How can we expect the blessing of God upon the testimony of His Son, even though it should be in the very words of Scripture and be doctrinally correct to a hair’s breadth, unless faith is mixed with it by him who preaches it and by him who hears it? “Without faith” in any act whatever, however religious, devout and self-denying, “it is impossible to please God.”

Further, dear Friends, notice that while the text is thus sweeping in its universality, it is also *very positive in its assertion*. It does not say, “Without faith it is *difficult* to please God,” or, “Without faith it must require great monastic self-denial, rigid discipline, austerity and misery in order to please God.” No, for those things do not please Him at all! It says, “Without faith *it is impossible* to please God.” It does not, as I have sometimes seen it done in the country, put a five-barred gate across the road and paint on it the word, “Private.” No, but it bricks the road right up, or it digs a gulf across this wrong road and says, “*It is impossible.*” “Without faith it is impossible.” Our Savior speaks of what is nearly impossible—the difficulty of a rich man entering the Kingdom of Heaven—and compares it to a camel going through the eye of a needle. And then He says, “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.” But our text deals with something which is an *impossibility with God Himself*. “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” It is a *double* impossibility—for an unbelieving man to please God and for God to be pleased with an unbelieving man. It is not possible that He should be pleased with works done in unbelief or with men abiding in unbelief!

Notice, also, that there is another strong word in the text, an imperative word—“for he that comes to God *must—must* believe.” It is not, “He

that comes to God *should* believe and in proportion as he believes he will get a blessing, but if he is unbelieving he will only get a smaller blessing.” No, but it is, “He that comes to God must.” “Must” is the word of a king, or an emperor—it is an imperial Truth of God and an imperious Truth that—“he that comes to God” must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” We are sometimes styled dogmatic—is there any dogmatism that can be more intense than we have it in our text? It says, “impossible.” It says, “must.” These are words that are not to be bent and twisted! Some men have a great gift in wresting words and twisting expressions—they seem to bend them across their knee and snap their meaning in two—but this text does not go to be bent or snapped! “Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that comes to God must believe.”

Further, observe that the text not only makes this positive assertion, but it is intended to be *a message perpetually in force*. “Without faith it is impossible to please God,” evidently refers to the past. Read the previous verse and you will see that it is so. “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him.” It was always so, under all that ancient dispensation—with those mighty Patriarchs, kings and Prophets—it was impossible to please God without faith! So is it now and so it always will be till time shall be no more. Still stands the immutable decree, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned”—that being the Gospel equivalent of this Apostolic declaration, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” It is always so, dear Friends, and it always will be so—there is no hope of any other gate ever being opened for those who refuse to enter the door of faith!

Yet once more, the text speaks *most instructively*. It tells us that there are certain things that really are and certain things which are imperative. “He that comes to God must believe that *He is*.” If you would come to God, you must believe that there is a God and yes, must believe that God is what He says He is. Otherwise, if you make God to be other than He says He is, you make God to be an idol—your god is an imaginary being! You must accept God as He is revealed in Scripture. What He says He is, that He is! And what He is, you must believe, believing that He is, and that He is *God*. Oh, but how easy it is for a man to get away from that elementary Truth of God and to say, “Oh, yes, I believe in God!” But do you believe in inflexible justice? Do you believe in infinite mercy? Do you believe in an Omniscience that cannot fail to see? Do you believe in the Omnipresence that can never fail to be where you are? Do you believe all this? Because if not, you do not believe in God! You may believe in *your own idea* of God, but you do not really believe in God. If you would come to God, you must believe that He is what He says He is. In His Word, He reveals Himself as one God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—will you accept His statements about Himself? Then, when you pray, will you cease delivering an oration to the air and speak into God’s ear, believing that He

hears every word you utter, and more, that He is reading the thoughts that lie at the back of your words? That is the way to seek Him aright—to come to Him we must come to Him as the living God, having a real existence, a true personality—otherwise we cannot come to Him at all.

And, further, we must believe that “he is a rewarder of them that seek Him”—for that is the meaning of the Greek word. We must believe that God will reward the man who seeks Him and that, therefore, God is worth seeking! We must believe that although it may be costly to follow after God, and do His bidding, yet it will pay you—that there is a great reward in keeping His Commandments—that He does hear prayer, that He does grant great blessings to those who truly seek Him. We must believe this or else there is no real seeking of Him! It is imperative, if we would come to God, that we must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that seek Him.

God cannot reward them that seek Him on the ground of their merit, for they have none. It must, therefore, be upon the ground of Grace. This introduces into our faith, as a point of necessary belief, that we believe in Jesus Christ by whose merit we are accepted—that diligently seeking God, we find *Him in Christ*—and this brings to us the great Gospel reward. God bestows upon us His favor, His Grace and the blessings of His Covenant as a gracious reward, not because of *our* merit, but because of the merit of His Son, Jesus Christ! This we must believe, or we have not really come to God aright. That is the doctrine asserted in our text, “without faith it is impossible to please God.”

II. Now I want to dwell for a few minutes upon THE NECESSITY of faith proven. What is the reason why there is such a necessity for faith in order to please God?

Our answer is, first, God has said so. Let it be enough that these are the Words of Inspiration, supported by many other similar Words throughout the sacred and Infallible Book. Here it stands—“Without faith it is impossible to please God.” God says so. He knows what is the Truth. He can speak about what pleases Him and we are, therefore, not to doubt what He declares.

Still, as a confirmation of our faith, be it observed that *in the nature of things it must be so*. No man can be pleased with another who does not believe in him. If a person does not give you credit for uprightness and honesty, he may profess to do your will and wish to please you, but you feel at once that whatever he does, he misses the cardinal necessity for really pleasing you. Let a person have the conviction upon him that you are unkind and unjust. Let him feel that he could not trust you—well, I do not see how he can be a pleasing person to you, or how you are likely to get on with him in your household, whatever he may do! Distrust has divided men and women whose hearts seemed one—where trust has died out, love has always died out, too. And a more intolerable misery than for a man and woman who have no trust in one another, to be bound together, I can hardly conceive. In the very nature of things, if we are to be united with God by His Grace, one of the essential terms of the union must be, on our part, the fullest belief in God! I do not see how we can

ever hope to be on speaking terms with God, how we can run on the same lines with God, how we can at all be reconciled to God unless as a very preliminary step, we are resolved that we will believe God and that we will trust Him. "Without faith, it is," in the nature of things, "impossible to please God."

And, dear Friends, *the person who has no faith is unaccepted with God.* All through Scripture faith is spoken of as the great method of justification. We are justified by faith through Jesus Christ. If, then, I have no faith, I am not accounted just before God—and all the works of an unaccepted man must be unaccepted. If that man is an enemy to God, what matters it what he does, for how can he please God? You cannot expect that God should receive anything at your hands when you begin by declaring that you will not trust Him! It cannot be. However much you multiply your good works with a view of saving yourself and thereby pleasing God, you are distinctly aiming at a purpose which God has declared is not according to His mind. "By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." If, then, you persist in *working* with a view to salvation, you are pursuing a plan which God has declared He will never accept. You must come to Him as sinners to be justified by *another righteousness better than your own*, or else it will happen to you as happened unto ancient Israel. They had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge—and going about to establish themselves by their own righteousness, they did not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God. And hence they stumbled over that stone of stumbling and rock of offense—and were broken in pieces and perished! God save us from attempting to do what He says cannot be done! "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

Observe, further, that the man who is without faith in God *puts a gross slight upon God* and, therefore, cannot be pleasing to Him. He does, in effect, deny God's truthfulness. "He that believes not God has made Him a liar." So says John, the softest-speaking and most tender-hearted of all the Apostles. "He that believes not God has made Him a liar; because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son." Now, if a man begins by making God a liar, how can God be pleased with him?

Perhaps you say, "I do not doubt the truthfulness of God, but I question His power to fulfill His promise to such a sinner as I am." But, my Friend, do you not see that you have committed a gross insult against the Lord by such a statement? He claims to be Omnipotent! He asks, "Is there anything too hard for Me?" He says, "Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and there is none else." Yet you *dare* to say that He cannot save you? You have insulted His power, how can you please Him?

"Oh, but," you say, "I—I have no doubt that God can keep His promise and that God will. But still, I cannot think that He could forgive such a sinner as I am." Now you have insulted His *goodness*. He is so good that you cannot suppose Him to be better? He is so ready to forgive that He swears with an oath that He has no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but that he turn unto Him and live! You must know that you dare

not mistrust the Truth, the Power, or the Goodness of God, or, if you do, then you cannot please Him! What would you think of a child who was always doubting his father saying, "Father said so-and-so, but I do not suppose it will come true. My father promised to give me such-and-such, but I do not expect that he will."

If a child stands up and says, "I find it hard work to believe my father—oh, dear, dear, dear—God save us from having such children as that! I do not see how they could possibly please us! They would be in a state of mind which would be radically displeasing because radically unjust and wrong! How dare you distrust your God! How dare you say that His testimony is not true! Let Him say what He will, here is one who is ready to believe Him. God grant that I may never doubt Him in the slightest degree! I feel that of all sins that I could ever commit against the Majesty of Heaven, one of the most heinous would be that of doubting one single syllable that comes from those Divine lips. "Let God be true, and every man a liar." He *must* keep His promise! There is no, "if," or, "but," about it! Otherwise, He would cease to be God—

***"As well might He, His Being quit
As break His promise, or forget!"***

He must be true.

***"His very Word of Grace is strong
As that which built the skies.
The voice that rolls the stars along
Speaks all the promises"***

and we must not dare to doubt anything that He says!

Brothers and Sisters, in a word, faith is so much the root, the source, the mother of every good, that he *who is without faith is without anything that can please God*. How shall I love Him in whom I do not believe? How can I be patient under the rod of Him whom I do not trust? How can I have zeal for Him whose veracity I doubt? How can I rejoice in Him whose promise I mistrust? No, this would lay the axe at the root of the fruit-bearing tree and utterly destroy it. "If you will not believe, neither shall you be established." There are no good works except those that spring from a living, loving, lasting faith in God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

III. Now, lastly, we are to consider THE NECESSITY OF FAITH USED FOR PROFIT. What are the lessons this Truth of God should teach us? When we have spoken of them, we have done, only may God bless our testimony to your hearts!

The first lesson is, I think, *let us look carefully to our faith*. Is it the faith of God's elect? Is it child-like faith? Is it really faith in God, or is it faith in our own knowledge, or our own judgment? Is it confidence in God's Word, or is it confidence in our own thoughts and inventions? I do not quarrel with modern theology merely because of what it teaches. I believe that it teaches a lie from top to bottom, but I have another quarrel with it, that it teaches a false principle. It takes man away from what is written to what is *thought*—it does not allow the Sovereign Authority of Revelation and in disallowing that, the very foundations are removed. And much of the abounding vice of this day is, I believe, the direct result

of this abounding unbelief of God, this philosophical mistrust of Infinite Wisdom! Is it philosophy? It is philosophy falsely so-called—mere madness put into some sort of shape. As for us, let us come “to the Law and to the Testimony,” to God and to His Spirit, and test and try everything by what is here spoken and by our personal proving of it before God in our own experience, making that to be true to ourselves which God says is true to His chosen!

The next lesson I would give you is, *let us mix faith with all that we do*. “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” So, dear Friend, you are going to teach in your Sunday school class next Lord’s-Day. Well, then, teach with faith! Brother-minister, you are going to preach next Lord’s-Day. Then say to yourself, “By God’s Grace, I will try to preach in faith,” because preaching in doubt does not come to much. You remember the story I have often told you, of my very first student going out to preach. He came to me and said that he had preached earnestly, several times, and yet he had not seen any conversions. I said to him, “And do you suppose that God is going to bless the people every time you choose to open your mouth?” He answered, “Oh, no, Sir! I don’t expect that.” “Ah, then,” I replied, “*that* is why God did not bless you—because you had not faith in Him. You have confessed it!” I had caught him with guile. So, dear Brother, you *should* believe that if you preach the Gospel, God must bless you! That it is not a maybe or a mere possibility that He will, but that, if you deliver His message in the full conviction that somebody or other is going to get a blessing, there will be a blessing for someone! Very often, just in proportion to our faith, is it done unto us. Oh, how many churches there are that I know of where they hope that they may have some conversions and, dear souls, if they have two or three converts in a year, some of the old members are frightened at the quantity! They are afraid they cannot be all right because so many are coming in! If they were ever to hear a Brother preach so that 3,000 were converted at once, these dear old saints would rise up and say, “Now Peter, you are a regular revivalist sort of preacher! You are as bad as Moody and Sankey! Why, look at all these people brought in—we cannot possibly think of receiving so many into the church!” I am afraid that their god is a little god but, oh, to believe in a great God and to preach in faith! When everything is done in faith, it will be accepted.

A Sister says, “Oh, that my dear children were converted!” She does not at all expect that they will be—she is sure they will all grow up bad—and she is teaching them with a view to their turning back when they get to be 50 years old. Ah, my dear Friend, perhaps it will be so, but if you had faith and would believe that those dear children of yours need never go out into the world of sin at all, but by God’s Grace might be brought to Him while they are yet at your knee, would not that be a great deal better? Without faith, you see, in bringing up your children, it will be impossible for you to please God by the way that you talk. Let us put plenty of faith into all we do! There is a good prescription in the Old Testament, you can look for it when you are at home—“Salt, without prescribing how much.” That is, you may put as much of the salt of faith as ever you like

into all your work and you will never overdo it! But it is leaving the salt out that prevents it from being pleasing to God. Oh, for more true confidence in God who deserves to be confided in to the uttermost!

And, lastly, *let us take care to trust God most when the weather is worst.* There is a Brother here who is in a world of trouble. All his money is gradually melting away, he does not know how he is to make ends meet. Now, Brother, whatever you lose, say, "If I do not please anybody else, or do not please myself, I will please my Master." Walk with God, as Enoch did! How are you to do this? Listen—"without faith it is impossible to please God." You had not any room for faith about temporal things, once, they came in so regularly. Now there is an opportunity for you to exercise your faith—now you can trust in God—you now have elbow-room! Young fellows who enter the army or the navy rather like getting into a skirmish, or even a great battle. There is no chance of rising, they say, if there is no war. And you who enter Christ's service may justifiably say the same. If I have no troubles, where is room for my faith? How can I trust if I have nothing to trust about? You cannot swim, you know, when the water is only up to your ankles. You may go paddling about, but there can be no swimming. But plunge into deep water and then strike out like a man—*now* you will learn what faith is, when the last foot is off the ground—and you are just trusting in the eternal God. This will make a man of you! This will educate you for higher and grander doings in times to come! It will make you more fit to sing the song of angels before the eternal Throne of God!

I remember, before I came to London, a man praying a very extraordinary prayer for me. I did not understand it at the time and I hardly think that he ought to have prayed it in public in that shape. He prayed that I might be able to swallow bundles of twigs cross-ways. It was a very strange prayer, but I have many a time done just what he asked that I might, and it has cleared my throat wonderfully! And there is many a man who cannot now speak out for God who will be obliged to have some of those bundles thrust down his throat, yet. And when those great troubles come and he is obliged to swallow them, then he will grow to be a man in Christ Jesus!

Thus have I tried, as well as I can, to show you God's remedy for sin's malady. And although I always feel as if this talking about faith in Christ was saying the same thing over and over again, yet we must keep to this one theme. You know that when men tell us that they have fifty cures for a disease, we shake our heads and say, "Is there one specific? Because, if you will give me one thing that will cure me, you may keep the other 49 if you please." So is it with the Gospel of the Grace of God. According to what some say, there are a great *many* ways of being saved—but is there one *sure* way? Because, if there is, you may, if you will, have the doubtful ones—I will be content with the one that is not doubtful! I like that cry of the monk who had, somehow or other, found out the Gospel even in his cell—when his mind could not get consolation from extreme unction, and from all the paraphernalia of the Roman church, he was heard to cry, "Tua vulnera, Jesu! Tua vulnera, Jesu!"—"Your wounds, Jesus! Your

wounds, Jesus!" With that cry upon his lips and that doctrine in his heart, he could die in peace—and he could find comfort nowhere else!

Someone has contemptuously said that this is the Gospel for old women and children. Well, I am quite willing to be classed with them in this matter, for it exactly suits me. Somebody wrote to me, the other day, to say that he had met with some Negroes who had read and enjoyed my sermons. And he evidently thought it was no compliment to me when he added, "I should think that uneducated black people are just the sort that you are fit to preach to." I felt so glad to have such a compliment as that! I like to preach to uneducated black people, because, if the Gospel can save them, it can also save the white-faced people who are so wonderfully well-instructed! Is it not still true, that often, simple souls find their way to Heaven while others are fumbling for the latch? But whatever men say or do not say, this is the Truth of God, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Get away from all trust in yourself! You are full of sin and you will never find any remedy in the disease. Go your way to Christ and to none but Christ, for in Him and in Him, alone, is salvation provided for you!

Human nature's way of salvation is, "Do, do, do!" God's way of salvation is, "Done, done! It is all done!" You have but to rely by faith upon the Atonement which Christ accomplished on the Cross. You have but to accept God's way of salvation and then Christ has saved you—and you may go in peace and rejoice forever. The Lord will give Grace to that man who looks to Christ upon the Cross and trusts alone in Him. There are hundreds of us here who can, at this moment, say, "He is all my salvation and all my desire." The great Searcher of hearts knows that we have not a shadow of a shade of confidence anywhere but in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, and who rose again and ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high. I am sure it is so and it may be so with you, also, dear Friends!

A good man was once explaining to a poor humble Christian that in that precious text, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you," there are five negatives. He said, "The Lord seems to say, five times over, 'I will not, not, not, leave you. I will never, never forsake you.' There," said the learned Divine, "is not that delightful, to find God saying that five times over?" "Yes," said the listener, "so it is. But I would have believed it if He had only said it once." What a blessed thing it is to have a faith that takes God at His first Word and does not need Him to say it over five times, but is perfectly satisfied that what He has promised He is able to perform! And what He is able to perform He will perform to the praise and glory of His Grace wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved!

Is not this a sensible course which I am commending to you? Is not this a reasonable thing to say to a rational man? One might have supposed that if men once believed the Bible to be God's Word, and Jesus Christ to be God's atoning Sacrifice, they would be eager to have Christ as their Savior. But it is not so. And often, as I preach, I am driven back to this conclusion at which I arrived long ago—It is not *your* power, Sir Preacher, that can save men. You may preach and argue, and reason as

best you can, but until the arm of the Lord is revealed, and the Power of the Holy Spirit sends home the argument, that which is a mere matter of argument would be irresistible to a *rational* man, yet, as a spiritual force, fails to have any influence over the carnal mind. It is not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord that the work of salvation is accomplished! O Spirit of the living God, send home the Truth of God by Your own almighty Power, for Jesus' sake!

I have heard of a doctor who was somewhat severe in his method of treating his patients, but he healed a great many persons. A man who had a bad leg came to him. "Well," said the doctor, "I will adopt such-and-such a course with that leg, and I will restore the use of it to you, so that you shall go away from this place perfectly whole." He told the patient what he was going to do, but the man said, "No! I could not bear to have that done, I shall have to go to someone else." "Just so," said the doctor, "you are not bad enough for me to cure you, yet. When you get bad enough for me, you will come back and say, 'Do what you like with me, Doctor, so long as you guarantee my restoration.'" There is many a soul that is not, in this sense, bad enough for Christ yet. That is to say, he thinks himself still too good to be saved in Christ's way! I have heard of a swimmer who went to rescue a man who was drowning. The man was sinking and the spectators wondered why he did not strike out at once and lay hold of the man. He swam near him, but kept clear of him, and let him go down a second time and, after that, he swam to him and brought him out.

Someone asked him, "Why did you let the man sink?" He answered, "He was too strong for me to rescue him at the first. While he was strong, he would have pulled me down with himself, so I let him begin to sink and lose all strength—and then I knew that I could get him ashore." In like manner, some of you will have to go down again a second time before you get weak enough to be saved. It is not your strength, it is your weakness! It is not your righteousness, it is your *sin* that qualifies you for Christ! I mean this—that just as poverty is the best qualification for alms, as misery is the best qualification for mercy—so, the lower you are lying before Christ's Cross, the more sure may you be that the Grace of God will come to you as soon as you trust in Christ's atoning work!

May God bless you all with this faith which pleases Him, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

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

WHAT IS ESSENTIAL IN COMING TO GOD? NO. 2740

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, AUGUST 18, 1901.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, DECEMBER 12, 1880.

*“Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”
Hebrews 11:6.*

THE Apostle had put Enoch down among the heroes of faith and, to prove that Enoch was a man of faith, he says, “Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” “Then,” argues Paul, “if he pleased God, he must have been a believing man, for the very lowest form of approach to God needs faith—‘He that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.’ So, if the very lowest grade of approach to God needs faith, much more does that highest form of it in which a man walks with God so as to obtain the testimony that he pleases God.” The argument of the Apostle is clear and convincing. If any man shall be pleasing to God, as Enoch was, it must be the result of faith, since, even to come to God at all, in the very first steps that we take, we must have a measure of faith in Him, we must at least believe that God is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

I. I am not going into the argument so far as it relates to Enoch, but I want you to join with me in examining Paul’s statement concerning what is essential in coming to God. That will be my first division, THE ESSENTIALS OF FAITH IN OUR COMING TO GOD.

The first essential is that *we must believe “that He is,”* we must believe that there is a God—that these things, which we see, do not spring of themselves, or come by chance, or in any way whatever except that there is a personal God who created all things and by whom all things consist. If you do not believe that, you certainly will never come to God. How is it possible for a man to come to One whose very existence he doubts? That matter must be settled or there cannot be any real coming to God. More than that, he that would come to God must believe that there is but one God—that the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob is the only living and true God. If we are to come to God—to the God of the Old and the New Testament—we must accept Him as He is there pleased to reveal Himself. We must not try to fashion a god such as we would like to have, for that would be idolatry—but we must accept God as He is made known in the Scriptures—and especially as He has manifested Himself in

Christ Jesus, for it is in Him that God has revealed Himself to us for the practical purpose of our reconciliation. If we really wish to come to God it must be by the way in which He has come to us—that is, through His Son, Jesus Christ. Neither, let me add, shall we ever come to God aright unless we ask for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the blessed Trinity in Unity.

To believe that God is, means, however, much more than this. It means that when I pray, I believe that He is where I am. I do not know whether any of us have yet been able to really get a grip of this first thought, that God is, for there is something wonderful about that Truth of God, for, if God is, then God is everywhere! So, with what awe and reverence ought we to spend every moment of our lives! There is no place to sin in, for God is there. There is no place in which to trifle, for God is there. There is no place for blasphemy, for God is there—will you blaspheme Him to His face? There is no place for rebellion, for God is there—will you rebel against the King in His own courts? This makes all space most solemn and all time truly sacred. Of every spot of ground whereon we stand, we may say, with Jacob, “How dreadful is this place!” Though it was a place abounding in stones, which served for his pillows, he said, when he awoke, “Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven.”

I passed a church, the other day, and I saw on one of its doors the words, “The House of God.” I thought, “Is it?” On the next door, I saw the words, “The Gate of Heaven.” And I said to myself, “It is not so, any more than any other door is.” Is this Tabernacle God’s House? While we worship Him here, it is—but it is not any more holy than our own house is. One place is as sacred as another, for God’s Presence has consecrated it all. “The Most High dwells not in temples made with hands.” Every part of my garden, as I meditate upon God in it, is as holy as the aisles of the most venerable cathedral. Your bedchamber, as you kneel in prayer before you lie down to sleep, is as sacred as the temple of Solomon. Every spot where there is a devout worshipper, is the abode of Deity—it is no more and no less so in one place than in another.

If you begin to fancy that one place is sacred above others, you will tread there with superstitious reverence. You will scarcely dare to put your feet upon the chancel pavement, and you will bow to the East, as I have seen some do, as if there were something more holy in that direction than at other points of the compass. Ugh! This is idolatry and nothing more! The right thing is to look upon the street pavements as too sacred for you to sin there, and to turn to the East or West, to the North or South, and to say concerning every place, “God is before my eyes there, so that is a sacred spot. God is everywhere and, therefore, I must not dare to offend Him anywhere.”

They who would come to God must believe that He is everywhere and that He is specially where they are praying to Him. When we pray aright, we speak into God’s ear—into His very heart, for He is wherever there is a praying soul. And when you truly praise Him, you are not singing to the wind, for God is there and He hears you. How solemn would our praise be and how intense would our prayers be if we always realized

God's Presence! Yet, perhaps, when you go to bed, you drop down on your knees and wearily repeat a few sentences—but you have not really prayed unless you have been conscious that God was there and you have communed with Him. Then, in the morning, if you are late in rising, you hurry over what you call your devotions, but there is no devotion in them unless you believe that God is there and you really draw near to Him in prayer.

We should pray, dear Friends, in the same spirit as that in which the angels worship before the Throne of God—with covered faces and in lowly adoration—and thus we would pray if we did really believe in God's Presence with us. But for anyone to say, "Yes, I know that there is a God, but I do not realize that He is here—when I am at my work, or at my recreation, I do not feel that He is especially with me," is a sort of atheism from which may God, in His great mercy, deliver all of us! If there is a place where God is not, you may go there and sin—but there is no such spot in the whole universe! Remember what David says—"Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your Presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, You are there: if I make my bed in Hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Your hand lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me."

The belief that God is, moreover, seems to me to involve not only that He exists and is everywhere present, but that He knows what we are doing—that He perceives the wishes of our heart—that He is aware of all that we say and all that we think. The Epicureans held the theory that God had a great many things to do of far more importance than listening to the prayers of men and women, yet that is not the teaching of the Scriptures. He counts the hairs on our head and notices the falling of a sparrow to the ground—and He is as truly great in looking upon the lilies of the field as in ordering the revolutions of the ponderous orbs of Heaven.

It is not believing that God is when you say, "Oh, yes, there is a God, and God is everywhere, but, still, He does not concern Himself about us and no practical end will be served by prayer, for He will not interfere in our affairs." Ah, no! You will never come to Him in that way and I do not see any inducement for you to try. I do not want to approach a dead god—there are sufficient dead things in the world to sorrow over without a dead Deity! I do not care for the Pantheist's god. What is he? An insensible, impalpable, something or nothing? I need a personal God, a living Person, a sympathetic Person, a Divine Person and I find Him in that blessed One who is the Son of God, and who, with the Father and the Spirit, is the one living and true God! I hope, dear Friends, that you have come as far as this even if you have not yet actually come to God. I hope you know, in the senses that I have mentioned, that, "He is."

But, according to our text, there is a second thing to be believed before we can come to God—that is, "*that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*" By which I understand the Apostle to mean that we must believe that God hears prayer and answers it, too. You will not pray unless you believe that. At least you will be very foolish if you do. I suppose

there are persons who think that the mere repetition of a certain form of words may do them good, but their intellect must be on a level with that of those who used to think that the word, "*abracadabra*," could cure diseases or keep ghosts and witches away. I am afraid there is a kind of religion which is only on a level with witchcraft when people think a particular place is sacred and that a man is holy because he has certain clothes on and reads out of a holy book, on a holy day, and performs with holy water and a holy cup to hold it in and holy this, and holy that—I know not what—it is all a mass of silly superstition! Let us stay clear of all that nonsense and feel that when we speak with God, there is reality in it and that God hears us just as surely as we hear one another—and that He is prepared to answer our petitions—I mean, literally to do so, not in some mysterious, unreal fashion, but actually and truly to give us that which is fitting for Him to bestow and right for us to ask. We cannot pray as we ought unless we believe that.

If we are to come to God, we must also believe that He will bless those who endeavor thus to come to Him and, further, that it is a good thing to know God, to love God, to be reconciled to God, to be under the operations of God's Spirit, to be saved by God's Son. If we do not really believe all this—if we fancy that it is a mere matter of form and has no vitality in it, we shall not care to come to God, for sensible men do not wish to deal in counterfeits and shams—they need realities.

To put the matter very plainly, he who would truly come to God must believe that a life of godliness will pay—that it will answer his purpose to come to God, because, "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." A man with any sense will not follow after that which he conceives has no advantage in it. But when a man can honestly say, "The best interests of my highest nature depend upon my getting to God, becoming His servant and having Him as my Father and my Friend," then it is that he diligently seeks Him. Dear Friends, I believe that if you would have the best of life, the highest bliss, the most supreme, noble, Divine joys of which our mortal nature is capable, you cannot find all this anywhere but in coming to God through Jesus Christ, His Son, and yielding yourselves up entirely to Him and becoming His faithful followers forever! We must believe that diligently to seek Him is the most profitable thing possible to us, or we shall never rightly come to God.

Some will say, "To be moderately religious is a good thing, no doubt, but to be too righteous would be a very bad thing." Ah, you will never come to God if that is what you think, for, depend upon this, of all the miserable things in the world, a little religion is about the worst of all! I know some men who have just about enough religion not to be able to comfortably sin, but they have no comfort in Christ. The joys of the world—and it has its delusions which worldlings call joys—they dare not go after! And for want of faith they dare not claim the joys of the Spirit of God—so they are wretched. They are like bats which fly by night, or which, in the twilight, come out and get a little exercise. They are between-ites—if there is such a word—neither servants of God, nor yet out-and-out servants of Satan—a miserable crew! Let none of us belong to them. That man gets the most out of godliness who gives himself most to

it. He whom the world calls a fanatic is often just the one who is thorough, sincere and earnest. And he it is who finds that God is his rewarder because he diligently seeks Him—not only seeks Him, but seeks Him with all his heart, mind, soul and strength!

II. This brings me to my second division, which is this—COMING TO GOD SHOULD BE THE RESULT OF ANY MAN'S HAVING THESE ESSENTIALS. I thought, as I looked upon this great assembly, that there might be a few here who doubted whether there was a God, or whether God was “a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” But I know that almost everyone here says, “I believe there is a God, I never doubted it. And I believe that it is a good thing, a blessed thing, to serve Him.”

Very well, then, *as you believe that there is a God, seek Him.* If I am addressing any who have been delivered from infidelity in the head, I want you also to be delivered from practical infidelity of the heart. Reason itself says to you, “If there is a God and God is all around you, how can you continue to be His enemy?” Now, Friend, if you believe that there is a God, can you sit easily on your seat so long as the Omnipotent One is angry with you? Bow your head and confess your transgression to Him—pray to Him to forgive you for Christ's sake, to be reconciled to you and to reconcile you to Himself, for He has promised that He will forgive those who confess their transgressions to Him and who come unto Him through Christ Jesus, His Son. If there is a God, O you burdened ones, you weary ones, you feeble ones—ask Him to help you! You have no helper, perhaps, on earth—then cast yourself at His feet and see what He can do for you. If you do, indeed, believe that God is—that the Ever-Merciful lives, and hears and pities those who trust Him, rely upon His care and come to Him with your heartbreaking grief!

As there is a God and I am sure I do but reason rightly when I say that, *then let us serve Him.* Is it not right that He should be our Master, seeing that He made us and that His service is so glorious that He makes into kings all those who enter it? Come, my Soul, enlist afresh in the army of Emmanuel! And you who have not yet served Him, yield yourselves up to Him this very hour! As there is a God, we cannot be happy apart from Him and there is no happiness like that of having Him for our Friend and Helper. Come, then, dear Hearts, can you refuse this invitation? If you say, “There is no God,” I am not speaking to you, just now, but if you say, “Oh, yes! I know that God is, and that He is here, and I believe in Father, Son and Spirit—prove that you really believe in God by yielding to Him, by being reconciled to Him, by obeying Him, by trusting His Son and so finding eternal life! God grant you may!

Further, *if you believe that God is “a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him,” come to Him.* You say, “Oh, yes! I know that a Christian life is a happy life. I believe that the service of God is one that pays, that it is full of rewards and full of happiness.” Very well, then, will you not enter at once upon that service which has such gracious rewards attached to it? Will you not run away from your old master? You need not give him any notice—the prodigal did not. He was sent into the fields to feed swine, but he never gave his master a day's notice! If he had waited to do that, he would never have left. He slipped right off and left the swine to

eat all the husks. I advise you to act in the same fashion. “Steal away to Jesus,” without any delays, or hesitation, or questioning! I do not think that any man gets saved by thinking about it, and saying that it shall be, by-and-by. No—*now* is the all-important moment! Strike while the iron is hot and, by God’s Grace, that one blow shall break the chains and set the captive free!

As there is a God and He is “a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him,” it behooves us, who do seek Him, to seek Him with the utmost diligence. David said, “Verily there is a reward for the righteous.” And though it is not of debt, but of Grace, yet there is a reward and we find it to be so even now. Let us, therefore, give ourselves more than ever to prayer and to Christian service—and more than ever let us devote ourselves to His Glory whose we are, and whom we serve.

Let me pull you by the sleeve, my Brothers and Sisters—you who say, “I am a Christian.” You believe that God is “a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Do you seek Him diligently? How much of the Scriptures have you read during the last week? How many hours have you spent in prayer? “Hours?” you ask! “Say minutes.” How much have you lived for God during the past month? What have you done with a distinct view to His Glory? What souls have you tried to win? What Truths of God have you tried to teach? What virtues have you tried to set forth? You say that He is “a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him”—do you despise the reward? Are you content with having made a profession of religion?

Some professors remind me of the reply of the child who was asked at the Sunday school about her father, who never went to any place of worship. “Is your father a Christian, Jane?” “Yes,” she replied, “but he has not worked much at it lately.” There are many professors of that sort! They are like certain tradesmen who have a notice on their door to say that they have gone out for a fortnight. They will not make a fortune in that way, I am persuaded—such a method of doing business generally ends in bankruptcy. What can I say of some professedly Christian people? They have no stock, they are doing no business for their Master and their chief employment is that of asking—

“Do I love the Lord, or no?”

Just so, Brother—that is what I was thinking about you—

“Am I His, or am I not?”

Just so, Sister—it is quite right of you to ask that question, and there are a good many more who are asking it concerning you! But why should you and I live in such a way that we are obliged to ask these questions? He who is, by God’s Grace, bringing forth fruit to God’s Glory does not need to sing that sorrowful tune! So may God grant to all His professing people Grace to be thorough and to give themselves up to the utmost diligence in His holy service, for it can only be by His Grace that we shall do this!

III. Now I close by bearing testimony to the fact that THE RESULT OF COMING TO GOD WILL JUSTIFY THE ACT OF COMING—AND THE FAITH WHICH WAS ESSENTIAL TO THE COMING.

First, *many have come to God*, so they must have had faith in Him, for no man can come to God without believing “that He is, and that He is a

rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” There have been men who have believed this, who have not come to God, but there have been others who have come to God because they believed in Him. In the olden time, Abraham rose up early in the morning and went to a certain place where He prayed and where God met with Him and spoke with Him in words which Abraham could hear. God does not now utter words which our ears can hear, yet there are men—and they are honest, upright, truthful men—who will tell you solemnly that they have often met with God and have been as certain of His special Presence as of their own existence. There have been times when our fellowship with the Father and with the Son has been as real to us as the atmosphere which we cannot see, but which we breathe! We cannot see God—yet “in Him we live, and move, and have our being.” And we have been conscious of it. There is a mystic touch that comes not from any angelic hand. There is a sacred breathing upon the heart which comes not from mere wind. There is a whisper within the soul—a movement, a stirring, a brooding, an overshadowing—I cannot describe it, but I have often felt it, and so have many of you. And you have been sure that God has come to you and that you have come to God. I am bearing witness to what is as sure a fact to me as that I am speaking to you now—and it is not a fact to me, alone, but to hundreds and thousands of living men and women to whom this life is made happy because they dwell with God and abide in Christ Jesus!

Beside that, having come to God, *we have found that God is*. It has not been a dream, but a blessed reality! We have struggled to get to God. We have prayed to Him. We have cried to Him. We have longed for Him and we deliberately declare that God has come to us. When He has come to us, has there been any reality about it? Reality? Why, He has sometimes lifted us up out of the horrible pit of despair into unutterable ecstasies of joy! At times, when we have cried out to Him in our distress, He has walked over the waters and they have been like marble beneath His feet—and very soon all has been calm and peaceful within our spirit. Tell us that God is not real, when we have been almost on the verge of sin—one more step and we would have been over the precipice—but we have seen Him and we have started back, or, on the other hand, we were shirking a duty which seemed too hard for us, but we realized His Presence and then we shouldered the load—and though it seemed as heavy as the world, we became like Atlas, by God’s strength, and so we were able to bear the burden!

Do you think I talk too boldly? Perhaps you are a bigger man than I am. If so, talk according to your size, but, to me, it has been enough to have been helped of God in my little world. And it has been the same with many a poor widow with half-a-dozen children about her. You may say, “Her case is a very small affair.” It is not small to her! And when she has gone before the living God with that heavy load which to her is like a world, God has helped her, and has been the Advocate of the widow and the Father of the fatherless—and it has not been in a dream, or in sentimental fiction, but in sober reality! I could find you many who would

bear witness to such deliverances as this—and they would all declare that God is!

They have also found that *God rewards them*. Does He? I will answer in the name of them all—Yes, He does. How does He reward them? Well, sometimes, in a measure, in this life. He gives to His children, as He did to Abraham and to Isaac, happiness and prosperity, so that even in this life they feel that His ways are ways of pleasantness and all His paths are peace. But this is not the greatest reward He gives. He gives *Himself* to His children—He becomes their portion. They are poor, sick and heavy of heart, but He comes to them as He did to Abraham, and says, “Fear not. I am your shield and your exceeding great reward.” He Himself is their reward and, possessing Him as their God, they are happier without the riches of this world than the wealthiest man can be without God. Ask the Lord’s servants how they get on with their Master. There are so many of them that if He were not faithful, some one or other would tell the story. It is a thing that ought to be noticed, that, out of the millions of Christians who have died—and death-beds are places where people usually speak the truth—there has never been an instance of one person sitting up in his bed and saying, “I am sorry I ever served the Lord. I regret that I was so diligent in seeking Him, for I found no reward in it. My life would have been a great deal happier if I had served myself, or lived for the world—but I made a mistake—I lived for God.”

Now, surely, if this were the fact, there would have been one or two *somewhere* who would have said it! But the universal testimony—there is no exception—of all dying children of God has been this, “We wish we had sought Him earlier and loved Him more and served Him better. We wish we had been more consecrated to Him and had practiced more self-denial, and given more generously to His cause, for, after all, the reality of our life lies in what He did for us, and in what He enabled us to do for Him! All the rest was but the chaff of life. The best of our life is what we lived by faith upon the Son of God who loved us, and gave Himself for us.” They all say so and, therefore, we must accept their testimony.

If a mistress has a large number of maids, somebody might ask them, “What kind of mistress have you?” And they might all say, “Oh, she is a most delightful person,” and so on, because they were afraid to speak the truth. But if there should be a dozen of them, by-and-by, one would be found in the street who would say, “You heard what those maids said, but it was not true, for she is a quarrelsome woman.” The truth would ooze out somehow! And if our God were not faithful, one or other of His servants would be sure to say it! But we have, none of us, anything to complain of.

“But,” you say, “there are many of God’s people who serve Him faithfully and they do not get any reward—they are very poor and needy.” Yet they will tell you that they are more than satisfied with the way their Lord has treated them! And, moreover, they will tell you that they are strangers and pilgrims, here, and that their chief reward is yet to come! They are looking, by faith, for the everlasting remunerations that will follow the life of holiness when this poor world and all its joys shall have melted like the morning mist and gone forever. Eternity, eternity, eterni-

ty—we shall soon know, Brothers and Sisters, what it will be to be in eternity! There is not one of us who can live here forever. When a very few years have gone, we shall all have departed. Imagine yourselves in the future state—if you have not lived for God, but have lived for the world, for yourself—what is your portion? Endless darkness! Infinite despair! Unutterable woe!

But if you have lived for God—if, by His Grace, you have put your trust in Jesus Christ, what is your portion? On yonder glittering hills you stand, in the midst of the white-robed host and Christ is with you, and you are looking back upon what you suffered for His sake on earth and you say, “Oh, it was nothing at all! I wish I had suffered far more for Him who suffered so much for me!” As for what you did for Him, you will say, “That is not worth mentioning! Oh, that I had lived more intensely for Him!” As for what you gave for Him, “Oh!” you will say, “I never gave a thousandth part of what I would give now if I had it! I reckon that I wasted what was not spent upon His Kingdom. I reckon that I lost the time that I did not use for glorifying Him and only did I live as I ought to live, and as in Heaven I now wish I had lived, when I lived entirely to Him.” Then will you see, from before the Throne of God, that “He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”

So may it be with every one of us, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITIONS OF C. H. SPURGEON: HEBREWS 11.

These men, of whom we are now briefly to read, are a company of God’s witnesses. And the Apostle calls them, in the next chapter, “a cloud of witnesses,” who, from their lofty seats above, are watching us who are now running the Christian race.

Verses 1, 2. *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report.* Those of the olden time, who were men of noble character, won that character by their faith.

3. *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.* Things that we see were not made out of things that we see. They were brought out of the unseen by the word of God, so that, really, the word of God is the foundation of everything that has been formed by Him and, after all, things material—created and seen—are not truly substantial. They are but shadows! The real substance is that which never can be seen, even the ever-blessed God, whose voice—whose word—created the heavens and the earth.

4. *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it, he being dead yet speaks.* All down the ages, the faith of Abel has continued bearing witness to God. Oh, that we might have Abel’s faith and offer to God *the Lamb*—even Christ Jesus—that we also may be accepted for His sake!

5, 6. *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.* Mark that this holiest of men, whose walk with God was so close and unbroken that he was permitted to escape the pangs of death, nevertheless did not attain to this high position by his own works, but by faith.

7. *By faith Noah, being warned by God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.* See how faith within a man masters all his emotions? Noah, in preparing the ark, was “moved with fear,” but that fear, instead of hampering him, was yoked with his faith, and so was turned to practical account. Oh, for an overcoming faith which shall hold our entire nature in check, or which shall employ every part of our being for its own high and noble purposes!

8. *By faith Abraham.* To whom Paul devotes a long passage, because he is the father of the faithful, the greatest exponent of faith that we have ever met with. “By faith Abraham”—

8, 9. *When he was called to go out into a place which he should afar receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing where he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles. That is, in tents—*

9, 10. *With Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. And he was content to be a pilgrim and wanderer till he should reach that city. He was quite willing to dispense with all present comfort for the sake of that glorious future which God set before the eyes of his faith!*

11-13. *Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang from one man, and he as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. What a sweet word that is, “embraced them!” First, they were sure the promises were true—they “were persuaded of them.” But, next, they laid hold of them, pressed them to their hearts, they, “embraced them.” And then, further, they practically showed the fruit of their faith by confessing that “they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”*

14-15. *For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from which they came out of, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But, now, faith has no thought of going back—her face is set like a flint to go towards the heavenly city, forsaking every earthly joy for the sake of the eternal future.*

16. *But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He has prepared for them a city.* For they are not ashamed to look forward to the future for their chief joy and God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared that chief joy for them!

17-19. *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall your seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.* See how Abraham spied out the great Doctrine of the Resurrection? Though almost driven to desperation, he would not give up his faith in God. He was bidden to believe two apparently opposite things—first, that in Isaac should his seed be called and, secondly, that he must offer up Isaac—but he bridged the two by believing another grand Truth of God—that God was able to raise up Isaac, “even from the dead.” Whenever there are two things revealed to you in Scripture which you cannot quite reconcile, you may always believe that, between them, there lies something still more glorious which your dim eyes as yet are scarcely able to perceive!

20. *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.* It was blundering faith, for Jacob deceived his father and Isaac made mistakes in giving his blessing—yet even his mistakes were all right in God’s sight. It was by faith that he blessed both his sons and, therefore, I gather that a faith which blunders, if it is faith in God, is an acceptable faith.

21. *By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.* Grasping that memorable staff with which he “passed over this Jordan”—that staff on which he leaned so heavily when the wrestling Angel made him go limping over Peniel—that staff which was a memorial of the breaking down which he had suffered when he gained the name of Israel by prevailing with his God—on that staff he leaned as he “blessed both the sons of Joseph.”

22. *By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.* A sure proof that he believed they would come out of Egypt, for he would not be buried among the Pharaohs, though a prominent place would have been assigned to him there! But he would have his bones lie with those of his ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

23-33. *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents because they saw he was a proper child, and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest He that destroyed the first-born should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyp-*

tians essaying to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; also of David, and Samuel, and of the Prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness.—Which is quite as great a thing as subduing kingdoms.

33. *Obtained promises.* Which, by being put in this connection, seems to be as blessed a thing as working righteousness.

33-35. *Stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured.* Is this also a feat of faith? Yes. Instead of showing their faith by putting their enemies to flight, they prove it by enduring all manner of tortures without shrinking!

35-39. *Not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mocking and scourging, yes, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented, (of whom the world was not worthy). They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.* Christ did not come in their day—the hour for the fulfillment of the great promise had not then struck.

40. *God having provided some better thing for us, that they.* Even they, great as they are—

40. *Without us should not be made perfect.* There is a something for us, whose lot is cast in these latter days, to bring, which shall complete the circle and choir of the Church of Christ, for they without us could not be made perfect. The Lord grant us Grace to be ready for our share in that glorious consummation, for Christ's sake. Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—191, 997, 993, 846.

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NOAH'S FAITH, FEAR, OBEDIENCE AND SALVATION NO. 2147

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 1, 1890,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”
Hebrews 11:7.*

THE Apostle could not avoid mentioning Noah, for in him faith shone forth eminently. He has placed him in due order of time after Abel and Enoch but he had also another reason for the arrangement. These three ancient Believers are declared in Holy Writ to have pleased God. Of Abel it is said that God testified of his gifts. Enoch, before his translation, had this testimony, that he pleased God—and “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” Again, it was meet that Noah should follow close upon Enoch, as one of two who are described as having “walked with God.” “Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” And we read in the sixth chapter of Genesis, verse eight, that Noah also “walked with God.”

These two spent their lives in such constant communion with the Most High that they could be fully described as walking with God. Oh, that we may, through almighty Grace, be so pleasing unto the Lord that we may abide in fellowship with Him! We may take pleasure in thinking of Noah as a kind of contrast to Enoch. Enoch was taken away from the evil to come—he did not see the Flood, nor hear the wailing of those who were swept away by the Flood. His was a delightful deliverance from the harvest of wrath which followed the universal godlessness of the race. It was not his to fight the battle of righteousness to the bitter end, but by a secret rapture he avoided death and escaped those evil days in which his grandson's lot was cast.

Noah is the picture of one who is the Lord's witness during evil days and lives through them faithfully, enduring unto the end. It was his to be delivered from death *by* death. The ark was, so to speak, a coffin to him—he entered it and became a dead man to the old world—and within its enclosure he was floated into a new world to become the founder and father of a new race. As in the figure of Baptism we see life by burial, so was it with this chosen Patriarch—he passed by burial in the ark into a new life.

In Enoch we see a type of those of God's people who will go home peacefully before the last closing struggle. Before the first clash of swords at Armageddon, such Enochs will be taken from the evil to come. But in Noah we see those who will engage in the conflict and bear themselves bravely amid backsliding and apostasy until they shall see the powers of

evil trod under their feet as straw is trod for the dunghill! The fire-flood will devour the wicked and only the righteous shall inherit the new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

Let these few words stand as the preface to my discourse and now let us carefully consider Noah's faith, trusting that the Holy Spirit may bless its teaching to our own souls.

I. First, notice that in Noah's case FAITH WAS THE FIRST PRINCIPLE. The text begins, "*By faith* Noah." We shall have to speak about his fear—being "moved by fear." We shall also remember his obedience, for he "prepared an ark to the saving of his house." But you must take distinct note that at the back of everything was his *faith* in God. His faith begat his fear—his faith and his fear produced his obedience. Nothing in Noah is held up before us as an example but that which grew out of his faith.

To begin with, we must look well to our faith. May I pass the question round these galleries and put it to you, also, in this vast area? Have you faith? Let each one hear the question in the singular number. "Have *you* faith? Do you believe on the Son of God? Are you resting in the promise of a faithful God?" If not, you are nothing as to *spiritual* things. Without faith you are out of the kingdom of Grace, a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel. You have neither part nor lot in this matter if you have no faith! But if you have even a *trembling* faith, you have the root of the matter within you. Even if other gracious things are not in you as yet, they will, before long, be produced by faith. Faith is the acorn from which the oak of holiness will grow. Faith is that handful of corn, the fruit of which shall shake like Lebanon. Without faith it is impossible to please God—but with faith we become "accepted in the Beloved."

Notice, first, that *Noah believed in God in his ordinary life*. Before the great test came—before he heard the Oracle from the secret place—Noah believed in God. We know that he did, for we read that he walked with God and in his common conduct he is described as being "a just man, and perfect in his generations." To be just in the sight of God is never possible apart from faith, for "the just shall live by faith." It is a great thing to have faith in the presence of a terrible trial, but the *first* essential is to have faith for ordinary everyday consumption. Have you faith in God as to your daily bread? Have you faith as to your children and your house? Have you faith about your trade and business? Have you faith in the God of Providence?—Faith in the God who answers prayer?

Is it habitual with you to roll your burden upon the Lord? If it is not so with you, what will you do when the floods break forth? Faith will not come to you all of a sudden—in the dark night—if you have shut it out through all the bright days. Faith must be a *constant* tenant, not an occasional guest. I have heard of Latter-Day Saints and I do not think much of them—I far more admire Every-Day Saints. You need faith this Sunday—have it and come to the Communion Table with it. But you need faith on Monday, when the shutters are taken down to begin another six days' trading. You will need faith the next day, for who can tell you what will

happen? To the end of the week you will need to look to the hills from where your help comes. You need faith anywhere and everywhere!

A man of God, alone in his chamber, still needs faith or solitude may be a nest for temptation. When the servant of Christ is at his ease and has no work pressing upon him, he has need of faith to keep him, lest, like David, he falls into temptation and commits grave sin. Rest days or work days, we alike need faith. By faith Noah did everything before he entered the ark. This is an important observation, though it may appear a very simple one. I could not omit it, for I feel that a practical work-day faith is what we most of all need. Men think that they need faith in building a temple, but faith is also needed in building a haystack. We need faith for plowing, for buying, for selling, for working quite as much as for praying, singing and preaching. We need faith in the market as well as in the Prayer Meeting. We wish everywhere to please God and we cannot do it anywhere unless we have unfeigned faith in Him. May the Lord teach us to have faith seven days in the week!

Note, next, that *Noah had faith in the warning and threats of God*. Faith is to be exercised about the commandments, for David says, "I have believed Your commandments." Faith is to be exercised upon the promises, for there its sweetest business lies. But, believe me, you cannot have faith in the promises unless you are prepared to have faith in the threats, also. If you truly believe a man, you believe all that he says. He who does not believe that God will punish sin will not believe that God will pardon it through the atoning blood. He who does not believe that God will cast unbelievers into Hell will not be sure that He will take Believers into Heaven! If we doubt God's Word about one thing, we shall have small confidence in it upon another. Sincere faith in God must treat all God's Word alike, for the faith which accepts one Word of God and rejects another is evidently not faith in God, but faith in our own judgment—faith in our own tastes.

Only that is true faith which believes everything that is revealed by the Holy Spirit, whether it is joyous or distressing. Noah had, in this case, received a promise, but, as the dark background to it, he had listened to the terrible threats that God would destroy all living things with a flood—his faith believed both the warning *and* the promise. If he had not believed the threat, he would not have prepared an ark and so would not have received the promise. Men do not prepare an ark to escape from a flood unless they believe that there will be a flood!

I charge you who profess to be the Lord's not to be unbelieving with regard to the terrible threats of God to the ungodly. Believe the threat, even though it should chill your blood! Believe, though Nature shrinks from the overwhelming doom, for if you do not believe, the act of disbelieving God about one point will drive you to disbelieve Him upon other parts of revealed Truth and you will never come to that true, childlike faith which God will accept and honor. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark." With solemn awe believe the bitter word of judgment, that the word of mercy may be sweet to you!

Furthermore, *Noah believed what seemed highly improbable, if not absolutely impossible*. There was no sea where Noah laid the keel of his ark—I do not even know that there was a *river* there! He was to prepare a sea-going vessel and construct it on dry land! How could water be brought there to float it? O mad old man, how can you play the fool on so huge a scale as to build a three-decked vessel of vast dimensions where no waters can ever come? Yet he was bid of the Lord to do it and he was persuaded that the Lord's command involved no blunder. The floods would fill the valley, rise up the hills and prevail above the tops of the mountains. He believed all this although it seemed an unlikely thing.

That faith which believes in the *probable* is anybody's faith—publicans and sinners can so believe. The faith which believes that which is barely possible is in better form—but that faith which cares nothing for probability or possibility, but rests alone in the Word of the Lord—that is the faith of God's elect! God deserves such faith, “for with God all things are possible.” Not probability, but certainty is the groundwork of faith when God has spoken. Noah believed firmly and therefore prepared his ship on dry land quite as cheerfully as he would have built it by the sea.

At times you and I are assailed as to our faith in the Bible by people who say, “How do you make that out? It is in the Scriptures, certainly, but how do you reconcile it with *science*?” Let your reply be—“We no longer live in the region of argument as to the Word of the Lord—we dwell in the realm of faith. We are not quarrelers, itching to prove our superiority in reasoning—we are children of light, worshipping our God by bowing our whole minds to the obedience of faith. We would be humble and learn to believe what we cannot altogether comprehend—and to expect what we should never have looked for had not the Lord declared it. It is our ambition to be great believers, rather than great thinkers—to be child-like in faith, rather than subtle in intellect. We are sure that God is true! Like Noah, we stagger not at the Word of God because of evident improbability and apparent impossibility. What the Lord has spoken He is able to make good—and none of His Words shall fall to the ground.”

Note well *that Noah believed alone and preached on though none followed him*. There were no other Believers, with the exception of his wife and his sons and daughters. There were eight in all, but I am afraid that some of these rather believed in father Noah than in the living God. Noah shone as a lone star. He stood like yonder solitary column in the midst of a ruined temple. He believed with an unsupported faith. How pleasant it is to associate with our fellow Believers! It is a great refreshment for a solitary Christian to get into a large congregation and to feel in unison with the child's hymn—

**“Lord, how delightful 'tis to see
A great assembly worship You!
At once they sing, at once they pray,
They hear of Heaven and learn the way.
I have been there, and still would go,
'Tis like a little Heaven below.”**

But how would you fare if you were alone, or were surrounded by those who called you a fool for believing in the Lord? To dwell where everybody is skeptical is as injurious to faith as for a man to live where the yellow fever is raging. To have your faith pulled to pieces and held up to ridicule is an ordeal which some cannot stand. What if you should be like Noah, a preacher of righteousness—how stern the duty of being a solitary witness! He preached for 120 years and at the end of it not *one* person was ready to go with him into the ark! His own family was saved, but nobody else—not a solitary one! What a trial! How it has made my heart glad, during the month of May, to see and propose for Church fellowship no less than sixty-nine!

But if I had to preach for a year with no converts, what should I do? I hope I should persevere, in the name of the Lord God, but what a trial! What if life were prolonged for 120 years and after all that preaching nobody believed your word! That would be an infliction, indeed! Many people may have been converted under Noah and may have died before the deluge came—but he had not one convert in the ark with him. His wife had not even a servant to help her in domestic work—and his sons' wives had to wait on themselves. There was not even a boy to clean the shoes, or help feed the animals. Many were called, but only the eight were chosen. Noah had preached, apparently, in vain and yet he believed with none the less of dogged resolve. The old man was not to be moved. That ark of his would float. He knew it would. The world would be destroyed. He was sure of it—as sure as if he had seen it. “Things not seen as yet” were to his faith substantial and evident.

Noah believed through a 120 solitary years! It was a long martyrdom. Our life is quite long enough for the trial of faith. Even if a man lives to be 80 and has 60 years of that life spent in the exercise of faith, it is only by almighty Grace that he holds out. Noah lived two of our lives in this way. If a little flood had happened and moved his ark a little, he would have had some evidence for his faith—but there was no flood at all—and his ark lay high and dry for a century and a quarter! How few could endure this! Yonder dear friend has been praying for the last six months and the Lord has not heard him. He begins to doubt whether the Lord hears prayer at all. You are not much like Noah. You can hardly believe for 120 days. “Alas!” says one, “I have prayed for my husband these 20 years!” It is a long time to wait. But what would you do with 100 added on to it? Years made Noah's faith more mature—not more feeble. This gray father of the age went on with his preaching, went on with his intercession and, without a doubt, waited for God in His own time to justify His servant before the eyes of men.

Once more—*Noah believed even to separation from the world.* See Noah and his family entering the ark! I do not think I should have selected the ark as a place of residence, myself, nor would you have chosen to live in a place covered within and without with pitch—with only one door and one window to it—and a great menagerie of birds, beasts and reptiles inside it! Whether that window ran all round the top just under the roof, so as to let

light into the whole structure, I cannot tell. But I have no doubt that the jeering world said to Noah, "Well, old man, you have built a prison for yourself and the sooner you go inside and shut yourself in, the better! We have had enough of your preaching!" When the good man and his family went in and the Lord shut the door, they were dead to the world. Had Mrs. Noah been like some of you she would have said, "The girls cannot go out to any more parties and our sons are shut out from all society. We are out of the world and shall soon be forgotten."

Yes, yes, and Noah was glad of it, since it was the Lord that shut him in. When the Lord shuts you off from the world, you are best alone. Nowadays professors have not faith enough to dwell alone. They want two or three doors in the back of the ark so that they may slip out, every now and then, and have a little pleasure with the world and then glide back again and look like saints. As to being shut in with God and separated from the world—religious and irreligious—how few will endure it?! How little is ever heard of that cry—"Come out from among them and be you separate!" "You might as well be dead," cries one, "as be out of society." Exactly so—and that is what the child of God looks for!

"You are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God." "Buried with Him by Baptism into death." "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." That separation which Noah took upon himself so willingly was involved in his *salvation*, for if he had lived with the world he would have died with the world! Only in separation is salvation! Thus have I worked out the idea that the first principle which actuated Noah's heart was faith in the living God.

II. Secondly, FEAR WAS THE MOVING FORCE. Faith was the living principle, but fear was the moving power, for the text puts it, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, *moved with fear.*" Faith molded him, but fear moved him. How was this? "I thought," says one, "that perfect love casts out fear." Yes, fear of a certain sort. But there is another fear which perfect love embraces and nourishes. *Noah had no evil fear.* He had not a *servile* fear—he was not *afraid* of God as a culprit is afraid of a judge, or a convict of the hangman. He knew whom he believed and was persuaded that he had a favor towards Him.

Noah had not a careless fear, as some here have. Fools say, "We shall never be saved and therefore it would be useless to care about it. We may as well gather the rosebuds while we may. There is no Heaven for us hereafter—let us make the best of the present." No, Noah was a witness against such sensual carelessness. He so believed that fear came upon him and that fear made him act as God bade him. Beware of the unbelief which enables you to trifle, for trifling with eternal things is the suicide of the soul. Noah, on the other hand, had not a despairing fear as some have. They say, "There is no hope. We have gone too far in sin already to dream of pardon and favor. We may as well let things take their course." Beware of the poison cup of despair. While life lasts, hope lasts, and we

beseech you not to lie down in sullen hopelessness. Noah was a stranger to this paralyzing fear—he bestirred himself and built an ark.

Some allow a presuming fear: “If I am to be saved,” they say, “I shall be saved. And if I am to be lost, I shall be lost. I may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb—and so I will have my fling and go into sin as I please.” Noah never spoke like that, for with his fear he had a good hope. He prepared an ark. He knew that none could save him but God, but as God bade him prepare an ark, an ark he prepared and thus he was saved, and his house! What kind of fear was that of Noah? Well, *Noah had a loyal reverence of God*. He feared Him as the King of kings and Lord of lords and when he went about through the wicked world Noah often said to himself, “I wonder why the Judge of all the earth does not destroy these rebels who dare to be so vile and violent.”

When he saw their gluttony, their infidelity, their lasciviousness, their oppression of one another, *the preacher of righteousness had a holy fear of judgment*. Often his righteous spirit indignantly cried, “Cut it down! Why cumpers it the ground?” He wondered how God could be so longsuffering. When it was revealed to him that God was going to destroy the whole race from off the face of the earth by a flood, he said to himself, “I thought He would.” He felt exceedingly afraid, for he knew that when God once makes bare His arm for vengeance, the pillars of the earth must shake and the stars of Heaven cease their shining. Thus the holy man of God passed the time of his sojourning here in fear. Who among us would not fear if we were to consider, at this time, the holiness of God and the provocations inflicted upon Him by our guilty race? What sin defiles this earth! Oh, the wrath to come! How awful will the judgment be!

It has not come yet. It may not come for years, but when the Lord begins to deal with men in justice, how will that day burn as an oven! “Who may abide the day of His coming?” Noah, by faith, heard the cries of men and women swept from their feet by the torrent. He heard the cries of strong swimmers in their agony yielding to the overflowing death and sinking to their doom! Do you wonder that his heart sank within him and that he was moved with fear? He had a holy awe of God and a solemn dread of the judgments which sin was drawing down upon the giddy world.

Noah had a very humble distrust of himself. I wish we all had such a fear. Let us fear God because of His greatness! Let us fear ourselves because of our sinfulness! Let us fear lest we should fall into sin and perish with the rest of the sinners. Let no man say, “I shall never fall.” Alas, those are the most likely to slip! Did you ever note that those who seem least likely to fall into a sin are the very people who do? You would not have dreamed that sober Noah should be found drunk—nor that righteous Lot should commit incest—nor that David, whose heart smote him when he only cut off the hem of Saul’s garment, should be guilty of murder! Who would have thought that Peter, who said, “Though all men should forsake You, yet will not I,” would have denied his Master with oaths and cursing?

Ah, Friends! We may not trust ourselves, but we ought to stand in daily fear lest we are guilty before God! Here was Noah filled with such a holy fear of himself that he took care to do what the Lord bade him even to the most minute particular. He did not choose another sort of wood, nor alter the shape of the vessel, nor make more stories, nor more windows, nor more doors—he distrusted his own judgment and leaned not to his own understanding! He did *exactly* what he was told to do and thus left the consequences with the Lord who commanded him. He feared his own wisdom, for he knew that man is like to vanity and no more to be relied upon than the mist of the morning. Fear made Noah hew the trees and square the timbers and wield the axe and the hammer. Fear worked in him diligence and speed. It made him despise the observations of onlookers and build for his life in brave defiance of the spirit of the age and the judgment of the wise.

Perhaps I speak to persons who are in fear of the wrath to come. I rejoice that you have faith enough to fear. By the way of that faith which brings you unto fear you will be brought out of it. Believe God in justice till you tremble—then see that justice vindicated in the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus and rest in the mercy of God which, through the Cross, comes justly down to guilty men! A holy fear will put wings upon your heels and help you to fly to Jesus! Moved by fear, may you be drawn and driven to the Lord Jesus!

III. Thirdly, OBEDIENCE WAS THE GRACIOUS FRUIT. Faith and fear together led Noah to do as God commanded him. When fear is grafted upon faith, it brings forth good fruit as in this case. *Noah obeyed the Lord exactly.* How often does the Scripture say, “Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so he did”! See again and again, “Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him.” Those who have faith in God should show it by a holy fear which makes them zealous to leave nothing undone which is commanded of the Lord—and to add nothing of will-worship to the perfect Law of God. “Whatever He says unto you, do it,” was the wise word of the Virgin.

Obey the Lord with all your mind and all your heart, in the way of faith, if you would find salvation. Prove that you have Divine Grace by your accurate obedience. *Noah obeyed the Lord very carefully.* God said to him, “Make an ark” and we read in answer that he *prepared an ark.* There was careful preparation—not hurried, thoughtless activity. He prepared the right materials. He prepared the different parts so as to fit together—he prepared his mind and then prepared his work. In seeking the Lord, let us exercise our best thoughts. People do not go to Heaven in the fashion of “hop, skip, and jump.” Carelessness cannot tread the highway of holiness. If you would know the way to Hell, you may shut your eyes and find it—a little matter of neglect will surely ruin you—“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?”

But if you desire to go to Heaven, I beg you to remember that “the kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force.” There must be determination, thought, care, attention—and *faith* must work

with all these to produce obedience to the will of the Lord. Men are never right by accident nor obedient to the Lord by chance—preparation of heart is needed and this the *Lord must give*. Alas, I fear some of you will miss eternal life, for you trifle about it! If you had a business to settle which involved the gain or loss of 10,000 pounds, how particular you would be! But when your whole *soul* is at stake, how many take up such matters haphazardly and risk eternal destruction!

Not so Noah—he was precise in his obedience—and careful to remain so. *Noah obeyed at all costs*. To build the huge vessel called “the ark” must have cost Noah a great deal of money and labor. He could not get everybody to work at the absurd task of building a vessel on dry land. As they would be laughed at, his workmen would be sure to demand extra pay. Possibly he had to pay double wages to every man employed on the ark. The Patriarch was content to sink all his capital and all his income in this singular venture. It was a poor speculation—so everybody told him—and yet he was quite willing to put all his eggs into that one basket. God had told him to build and build he would, feeling that the Divine command insured him against risk. Can we do the same?

Noah went on obeying under daily scorn. The men of that generation mocked him. He went out and preached to them, but many would not hear him, for they thought him mad. Those who did listen to him said to each other, “He is building a vessel upon dry land—is he sane? We are scientific and therefore we know how absurd his preaching is, for none ever heard of the world being drowned by a flood.” They called his warning “an old wives’ tale,” and he himself was “an old fossil.” Doubtless he was the frequent subject of sarcastic remarks. I cannot reproduce the letters that were written about the sturdy Patriarch, nor can I recount the spiteful things which were said by the gossips—but I have no doubt they were very clever and very sarcastic.

Those productions of genius are all forgotten now, but Noah is still remembered! For all the scorning of many he went on obeying his God—he stuck to the lines on which God had placed him—and he could not be turned to the right hand or to the left because he had a real faith in God. *Noah's obedience followed the command as he learned it*. I admire his going into the ark without a question. All the cattle and the beasts and flying things are in the ark with him and he does not pray to be let out. We may equally admire him for coming out again when called upon to do so. After we have once been shut in, some of us had rather stay in. We are not fond of changes. We grow accustomed to a certain line of things and find in use a second nature—and we wish to remain as we are. It is so safe in the ark and we are so peaceful, so conscious of being in the hollow of God's hand that we fear to come forth into a world so lately cursed.

Noah came out without a question and the first thing he did was to build an altar to the Lord and so prove that he was at home with God. Oh, for faith that will obey God anyhow and anywhere! You remember how God said to Elijah, “Hide yourself,” and away went the Prophet to the brook Cherith where none saw him but the fowls of Heaven. A brave

Prophet like Elijah finds it hard to be in hiding yet he does not disobey. Presently comes the command, "Go, show yourself," and out he comes from his exile and stands before King Ahab, according to the Word of the Lord. Whether God bids His true servants show themselves or hide themselves, they do His will at once—

***"Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die."***

The will of the Lord is to be done by His servants whether on earth or in Heaven. If He says, "Go," they go. If he says, "Stay," they abide in their places. Oh, for such a faith as this! It was easier for Noah to build the ark than to render so complete an obedience, but the Lord worked in him by His Grace.

IV. And now I come to my last point, upon which hear me patiently. RESULTS DID NOT FAIL TO COME. One hundred and twenty years preaching and no converts remaining! One hundred and twenty years building a ship and yet no water to float it! One hundred and twenty years warning people that God is about to destroy them and yet no flood! Surely, the good men's life is a failure! No doubt wise folks said of him, "He is a good old man, but he is uncharitable and has become an alarmist." Some style him a "pessimist." Others say, "He is a bigot." Others, again, affect to deplore that the good man has made such a great mistake and is wasting his influence under a delusion.

I hear fine gentlemen saying, "Do not take much notice of the old gentleman. No doubt he is a very good man, but at the same time he is only one and his views are very peculiar. He has gone on chopping this logic for 120 years and the world is not drowned yet—it is really too ridiculous." The wilder spirits meet him in the morning and they say, "Well, father Noah, when is this flood coming? The country would be improved by a good soaking. You have raised our expectations so long that it ought to pour when it does come! You ought to have minded the old saying, 'Never prophesy till you are sure.'" Thus would they jest at the preacher of righteousness, but Noah knew what he was doing and was not silenced. All that he did was simply to repeat his warning and go on with his ship-building. God's time was coming on—the storm was gathering and before long the deluge would end the mirth of the godless.

What did come of it? The first result was, *he was saved, and his house*. Oh, that God would give to every preacher of righteousness this full reward—himself and his house! O my Brothers in the ministry, there is no greater joy for us than to know that our children walk in the Truth of God! Perhaps some of you fear the Lord and yet He has never given you your Shem, Ham and Japheth. Alas, it may even happen that she that lies in your bosom does not yet know the Lord. Nevertheless be faithful to your God and to the souls of men. Hold the Truth of God even if you stand alone. Even if in your own house you find your worst foes, hold on and never doubt!

Do not come down a step or two as to holiness, nor seek a lower platform upon which to meet more cordially an ungodly world. Believe in the

Lord Jesus Christ and in the power of the ever-blessed Gospel. That is the *one* business of your life and I believe that if you have faith in the Lord as to your family, your beloved ones shall be given you as a prize. Remember the Philippian jailer, to whom Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, *and your house.*" Do not rest content with half the promise! Grasp firmly the words, "and your house"! Have you an Ishmael? Then get alone and, like Abraham, cry to God, "O that Ishmael might live before You!" God will hear your prayer and bless Ishmael, also. Oh, what a privilege it will be if you, yourself and all your house are saved!

The next result was *that he condemned the world.* Read, "By which he condemned the world." "Ha! Ha! Ha!" they said, "we judge the old man to be out of his mind." But *he* was their judge. The merriest jest that flashed forth at the banquet of wine was pointed with a sarcasm about old Noah and his dry-land ship—but all the while he was solemnly judging and condemning that ribald world! The Lord had made him serenely bear witness against iniquity. Yes, and even to sit on the throne and condemn the world! I do not read that Noah ever entered into any dispute with the men of his times. He never argued or debated, much less did he wish them ill—he simply believed and told them the Truth, kept his own faith intact and went on building his ark—thus practicing what he believed.

In this way he condemned those who criticized him. Ah, you may laugh, you worldlings, but the man of God is your master, after all! His preaching condemned them—they knew the way and wickedly refused to run in it. His warning condemned them—they would not regard it and escape. His life condemned them, for he walked with the God whom they despised. Most of all, the ark condemned them. Did none of them ever say, as he passed it in the morning, "This is the strangest thing that ever was! There is not, in all the world besides, such another thing as this. Yet Noah is no fool. He can make a bargain, as I found to my cost when he was buying nails and I tried to get double their value from him. The man is cool and calm, shrewd and sharp. He bought my wood upon the hill, but he first made an accurate estimate of the timber in it and its worth—he bought as well as any man could do. How is it that on this one particular point he is so strange?"

Did not such men at times think that there must be something in it, after all? If they did not think so, at any rate the fact that Noah carried out his principles to the fullest and invested all he had in the building of this strange ark would have forced them to conviction if they had not been hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. How Noah's faith condemned them! When the floods began to rise and the door was shut, how the sight of the ark condemned them! I can imagine, when the water began to get knee-deep, there would be frightened ones around the ark door, but it could not be opened since God had shut it. When the ark began to float, some of them fled to the sides of the mountains and what a condemnation the sight of the floating ark was to them!

Noah could not help them then. The day in which they might have entered was gone. If they ever saw Noah look out of the ark, how the face which once pleaded with them would condemn them! Oh, my Hearers, how often have *I* warned you to flee from the wrath to come? I have warned you of those dread waves of fire and of that horrible tempest which will sweep over all the earth and destroy ungodly men and their works! How often have I spoken of the pit which God has dug for the wicked—into which your feet will slide in due time unless you seek the Savior! Maybe, in those days of terror, the face of the preacher will condemn you as you remember how he looked at you with earnest love—but you would have none of his pleading and chose to perish in your sin. Your blood shall be upon your own heads. It is a solemn thought that one lone man condemned the world. It was one against millions! Yet the one condemned the millions. If God is with a man, though that man is only one, he is in the majority. Men of the world will soon become a weeping, wailing and despairing company—but he that stands alone for God shall be had in honor and shall both judge and condemn the guilty world.

The last thing Noah earned by his faith was this—*he became heir of the righteousness which is by faith*, for God said of him, when He bade him come into the ark, “You have I seen righteous before Me in this generation.” God declared him righteous—not righteous by his works, although his works, following upon his faith, proved him to be righteous— but righteous by his *faith*. He believed God and found Grace in the eyes of the Lord. He received the righteousness which God gives through Jesus Christ to all them that believe. Wrapped in this he stood before the Lord justified and approved. By faith he was adopted and became a son, an heir! For him the promise of the woman’s Seed, though it was all the Bible that he had, was quite enough.

The woman’s Seed and the Lamb’s sacrifice, which Abel had seen—these were almost all the Revelation he had known. He had no Pentateuch, no Psalms, no Gospels, no Epistles—but he so believed that little Bible of his that he expected that Christ in him would bruise the serpent in the world! God honored his faith and he condemned the world. He lived when the rest perished. He was secure in his ark when the myriads were sinking in the deluge—he became “heir of the righteousness which is by faith”—when others were condemned. May God make us all so and unto His name shall be the glory through Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—

Genesis 6:5-22; Hebrews 11:1-7.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—913, 652, 504.

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ABRAHAM'S PROMPT OBEDIENCE TO THE CALL OF GOD NO. 1242

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 27, 1875,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he would receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing where he went."
Hebrews 11:8.*

ONE is struck with the practical character of this verse. Abraham was called and he obeyed. There is no hint of hesitation, parleying, or delay—when he was called to go out, he went out. Would to God that such conduct were usual, yes, *universal*, for with many of our fellow men, and I fear with some now present, the call, alone, is not enough to produce obedience. "Many are called, but few are chosen." The Lord's complaint is, "I called and you refused." Such calls come again and again to many, but they turn a deaf ear to them. They are *hearers*, only, and not *doers* of the Word of God. And, worse still, some are of the same generation as that which Zechariah spoke of when he said, "They pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears that they should not hear."

Even among the most attentive hearers, there are many to whom the Word comes with small practical result in actual obedience. Here we are in midsummer again, and yet Felix has not found his convenient season. It was about midwinter when he said he should find one, but the chosen day has not arrived. The mother of Sisera thought he was long in coming, but what shall we say of this laggard season? We can see that the procrastinator waits, but it is hard to guess how long he will do so. Like the man who waited to cross the river until all the water was gone, he waits till all difficulties are removed and he is not one whit nearer that imaginary period than he was years ago!

Meanwhile, the delayer's case waxes worse and worse and, if there were difficulties before, they are now far more numerous and severe. The man who waits until he finds it more easy to bear the yoke of obedience is like the woodman who found his load too heavy for his idle shoulder and, placing it upon the ground, gathered more wood and added to the bundle, then tried it. But, finding it still an unpleasant load, repeated the experiment of heaping on more in the vain hope that, by-and-by, it might be of a more suitable *shape* for his shoulder!

How foolish to go on adding sin on sin, increasing the hardness of the heart, increasing the distance between the soul and Christ—and all the while fondly dreaming of some enchanted hour in which it will be more easy to yield to the Divine call and part with sin! Is it always going to be so? There are a few weeks and then comes harvest, will another harvest leave you where you are, and will you, again, have to say, "The harvest is

passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved"? Shall God's long-suffering mercy only afford you opportunities for multiplying transgressions? Will you always resist His Spirit? Will you always put Him off with promises to be redeemed *tomorrow*? Shall the tenderness and mercy of God be thus despised forever and forever? Our prayer is that God, of His Grace, may give you to imitate the example of Abraham, who, when he was called, obeyed at once.

The sad point about the refusals to obey the call of the Gospel is that men are losing a golden opportunity—an opportunity for being numbered among the choice spirits of the world—among those who shall be blessed among men and women! Abraham had an opportunity and he had Grace to grasp it. At this day there is not on the register of our race a nobler name than that of, "the father of the faithful." He obtained a supreme grandeur of rank among the truly great and good. He is far higher in the esteem of the right-minded than the conqueror blood-red from battle, or the emperor robed in purple.

Abraham was an imperial man, head and shoulders above his fellows. His heart was in Heaven. The light of God bathed his forehead and his soul was filled with Divine influences, so that he saw the day of the Lord Jesus and was glad. He was blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth, and was made a blessing to all nations. Some of you will never gain such honor. You will live and die ignoble because you trifle with supreme calls, and yet, did you believe in God, did you but live by *faith*, there would be before you, also, a course of immortal honor which would lead you to eternal glory!

Instead, however, choosing the way of unbelief, neglect and delay, you will, I fear, one day awake to shame and to everlasting contempt! And then you will know, to your eternal confusion, how bright a crown you have lost. I am in hopes that there are some among you who would not be losers of the crown of life—who desire, in fact, above all things, to obtain the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus and to them I shall speak.

And while I speak, may the Holy Spirit cause every word to fall with power. To help you, we shall consider, first, *what was Abraham's special experience which led to his being what he became?* And, secondly, *what was there peculiar in Abraham's conduct?* And then, thirdly, *what was the result of that conduct?*

I. WHAT WAS ABRAHAM'S SPECIAL EXPERIENCE which led to his becoming so remarkable a saint? The secret lies in three things—he had a call, he obeyed it—and he obeyed it because he had faith. First, then, *he had a call*. How that call came, we are not told. Whether it reached him through a dream, or by an audible Voice from Heaven, or by some unmentioned Prophet, we cannot tell. Most probably he heard a Voice from Heaven speaking audibly to him and saying, "Get you out from your kindred and from your father's house."

We, too, have had many calls, but perhaps we have said, "If I heard a voice speaking from the sky I would obey it." But the form in which your call has come has been *better* than that, for Peter, in his second Epistle, tells us that he himself, heard a voice out of the excellent Glory when he

was with our Lord on the holy mountain. But he adds, "We have, also, a more sure word of prophecy," as if the testimony which is *written*—the light that shines in a dark place which beams forth from the Word of God—was more sure than even the voice which he heard from Heaven! I will show you that it is so, for, if I should hear a voice, how am I to know that it is Divine?

Might it not, even if it *were* Divine, be suggested to me, for many reasons, that I was mistaken? That it was most unlikely that God should speak to a man at all, and more unlikely, still, that He should speak to *me*? Might not a hundred difficulties and doubts be suggested to lead me to question whether God had spoken to me at all? But most of you believe the Bible to be Inspired by the Spirit of God and to be the Voice of God. Now, in this Book you have the call—"Come you out from among them, be you separate, touch not the unclean thing; and I will be a Father unto you and you shall be My sons and daughters."

Do not say that you would accept *that* call if it were spoken with a voice rather than written—you know that it is not so in daily life. If a man receives a written letter from his father or a friend, does he attach less importance to it than he would have done to a spoken communication? By no means! I reckon that many of you in business are quite content to get written orders for goods. And when you get them, you do not require a purchaser to ask you in person—you would just as soon that he would not—in fact, you commonly say that you like to have it in black and white. Is it not so? Well, then, you have your wish—here is the call in black and white! I do but speak according to common sense when I say that if the Lord's call to you is written in the Bible, and it certainly is, you do not speak the truth when you say, "I would listen to it if it were spoken, but I cannot listen to it because it is written." The call, as given by the Book of Inspiration, ought to have over your minds a masterly power, and if your hearts were right before God, the Word spoken in the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit would be at once obeyed! Moreover, my undecided Hearers, you have had other calls beside those from the Book. There have been calls through the living ministry, when the minister has spoken as pointedly to you as if he were a Prophet, and you have known that the Lord spoke by him, for he has depicted your circumstances, described your condition and the Word has come to you, and you have, with astonishment, admitted that it found you out.

The message has also been spoken to you by a mother's tender love and by a father's earnest advice. You have had the call, too, in the form of sickness and trouble. In the silence of the night, when you could not sleep, your conscience has demanded to be heard—the inward strivings of the Holy Spirit have been with you and loud have been the knocks at your door! Who among us has not known this? But, alas, the Lord has called and has been refused! He has stretched out His hands and has not been regarded! Is it not so with many of you? You have not been like Samuel who said, "Here am I, for You did call me," but like the adder which shuts her ears to the voice of the charmer. This is not to be done without incurring great guilt and involving the offender in heavy pun-

ishment. Abraham had a call, so have we, but here was the difference, *Abraham obeyed*.

Well does Paul say, "They have not all obeyed the Gospel," for, to many, the call comes as a common call, and the common call falls on sealed ears. But to Abraham and to those who, by Grace, have become the children of faithful Abraham, to whom are the blessings of Grace and with whom God has entered into league and covenant, to such it comes as a special call—a call attended with a sacred power which subdues their wills and secures their obedience. Abraham was prepared for instant obedience to any command from God—his journey was appointed and he went. He was bid to leave his country, and he left it. He was told to leave his friends, and he left them all.

Gathering together such substance as he had, he exiled himself that he might be a sojourner with his God. He took a journey in an age when traveling was infinitely more laborious than now. He knew not the road that he had to take, nor the place to which his journey would conduct him—it was enough for him that the Lord had given him the summons. Like a good soldier, he obeyed his marching orders, asking no questions. Towards God a blind obedience is the truest wisdom and Abraham felt so and, therefore, followed the path that God marked out for him from day to day, feeling that sufficient for the day would be God's guidance. Thus Abraham obeyed!

Alas, there are some here present, some, too, to whom we have preached now for *years*, who have not obeyed! Oh Sirs, some of you do not require more *knowledge*—you need far more than that to put in practice what you already know! Would you wonder if I should grow weary of telling some of you the way of salvation any longer? Do you not, yourselves, weary of persuading those who will not yield? So far as I have reason to fear that my task is hopeless, it becomes a heavy one. Again, and again, and again have I explained the demands of the Gospel—and described the blessings of it—and yet I see its demands neglected and its blessings refused.

Ah, Sirs, there will be an end to this before long! One way or the other, which shall it be? O that you were wise and would yield obedience to the Truth of God! The Gospel has about it a Divine Authority and is not to be trifled with! Notwithstanding that, Grace is its main characteristic even though it has all the authority of a command. Have you not read of those who "stumbled at the Word, being disobedient"? Surely there must be a command and a duty, or else there could not be disobedience! It is awful work when, through disobedience to the command of the Gospel, it becomes a savor of death unto death instead of life unto life! And instead of a cornerstone, it becomes a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. Remember, upon whomever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. Christ Himself has said it, and so it must be. O Lord, in Your infinite mercy give us willing and obedient minds that we may not pervert Your Gospel to our own destruction!

But I reminded you that the main point concerning Abraham was this, *he obeyed the call because he believed God*. Faith was the secret reason of his obedience. We read of certain persons that, "The Word preached

did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." And again we read that, "Some, when they had heard, did provoke." But in Abraham's case there was neither misbelief nor provocation, he believed God with a childlike faith. His faith, I suppose, lay in the following items—when the Lord spoke, he believed that it was the living God who addressed him. Believing that God spoke, he judged Him worthy of his earnest heed and he felt that it was imperative upon him to do as he was bid.

This settled, he desired nothing more to influence his course—he felt that the will of God must be right and that his highest wisdom was to yield to it. Though he did not know where he was to go, he was certain that his God knew, and though he could hardly comprehend the reward promised to him, he was sure that the bounteous God never mocked His servants with deceitful gifts. He did not know the land of Canaan, but he was sure if it was a country chosen by God as a peculiar gift to His called servant, it must be no ordinary land. He left all such matters with his heavenly Friend, being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able to perform.

What a mighty sway faith has over a man and how greatly it strengthens him! Faith was to the Patriarch his authority for starting upon his strange journey, an authority which enabled him to defy, alike, the worldly wisdom which advises and the worldly folly which scoffs. Perhaps they said to him, "Why will you leave your kinsfolk, Abraham?" But he replied, "God bids me." That was for him a sufficient reason. He needed no further argument. This also became to him the guide of his steps. If any said, "But, strange old man, how can you journey when you know not the way?" He replied, "I go where the Lord bids me."

Faith found in God chart, compass and pole star, all in one! The Word of the Lord also became the nourishment for his journey. If any said, "How will you be supplied, Abraham, in those wild lands? Where will you find your daily bread?" He replied, "God bids me go—it is not possible that He should desert me. He can spread a table in the wilderness, or make me live upon the Word which comes out of His mouth, if bread should fail." Probably these suggestions of trial may never have occurred to Abraham, but if they did, his faith swept them aside from his path as so many cobwebs.

Perhaps some even dared to say, "But where are you going? There is no such country, it is an enthusiast's dream—a land which flows with milk and honey! Where will you find it? Oh, graybeard, you are in your dotage, 75 years have bewildered you." But he replied, "I shall find it, for the Lord has given it to me and leads me to it." He believed God and took firm hold and, therefore, he endured as seeing Him that is invisible.

See, then, dear Friends, what *we* must have if we are to be numbered with the seed of Abraham—we must have faith in God and a consequent *obedience* to His commands! Have we obtained these gifts of the Spirit? I hope that many of us have the living faith which walks by love and, if so, we shall rejoice in the will of the Lord, let it be what it may! If we know anything to be right, we shall delight to do it. But as for doubtful or sinful deeds, we renounce them. For us, from now on, our leader is the Lord

alone! But is it so with all of you? Let the personal question go round and cause great searching of heart, for I fear that in many instances precious faith is absent.

Many have heard, but they have not believed. The sound of the Gospel has entered into their ears, but its inner sense and sacred power have not been felt in their hearts. Remember, that "without faith it is impossible to please God," so that you are displeasing to the Lord. How long shall it be so? How long shall unbelief lodge within you and grieve the Holy Spirit? May the Lord convince you, yes, at this moment may He lead you to decision and enable you, from now on, to live by faith. It may be now or never with you. God grant it may be now!

II. This brings me to the second part of our subject, WHAT WAS THERE PECULIAR IN ABRAHAM'S CONDUCT? Whatever was essential in his conduct, there must be the same in *us* if we are to be true children of the father of the faithful. The points of peculiarity in Abraham's case seem to me to have been five. The first was this, *that he was willing to be separated from his kindred*. It is a hard task to a man of loving soul to put long leagues of distance between himself and those he loves, or to become a banished man.

Yet in order to salvation, Brothers and Sisters, we must be separated from this untoward generation. Not that we have to take our journey into a far country, or to forsake our kindred—perhaps it would be an easier task to walk with God if we could do so—but our calling is to be separate from *sinners* and yet to live among them. We are to be a stranger and a pilgrim in their cities and homes. We must be separate in character from those with whom we may be called to grind at the same mill, or sleep in the same bed. And this, I guarantee you, is by no means an easier task than that which fell to the Patriarch's lot!

If Believers could form a secluded settlement where no tempters could intrude, they would, perhaps, find the separated life far more easy, though I am not very sure about it, for all experiments in that direction have failed. There is, however, for us no "garden walled around," no, "island of saints," no Utopia. We sojourn among those whose ungodly lives cause us frequent grief and the Lord Jesus meant it to be so, for He said, "Behold I send you forth as sheep among wolves." Come, now, my Hearer, are you willing to be one of the separated?

I mean this—Will you dare to begin to think for yourself? You have let your grandmother's religion come to you with the old arm chair and the antique china, as heirlooms of the family, and you go to a certain place of worship because your family have always attended there. You have a sort of hereditary religion in the same way you have a display of family pottery—pretty battered it is, no doubt, and rather light in weight by this time—but still you cling to it. Now, young man, dare you think for yourself? Or do you put out your thinking to be done for you, like your washing?

I believe it to be one of the essentials of a Christian man that he should have the courage to use his own mental faculties and search the Bible for himself. God has not committed our religious life to the guidance of the brain in our neighbor's head, but He has bestowed on each of

us a conscience and an understanding which He expects us to use. Do your own thinking, my Friend, on such a business as this.

Now, if the Grace of God helps you rightly to think for yourself, you will judge very differently from your ungodly friends. Your views and theirs will differ, your motives will differ, the objects of your pursuit will differ. There are some things which are quite customary with them which you will not endure. You will soon become a speckled bird among them. The Jews, in all time, have been very different from all other nations, and although other races have become permanently united, the Jewish people have always been a family by themselves. Though now residing in the midst of all nations, it is still true, "the people shall dwell alone, they shall not be reckoned among the nations."

In all the cities of Europe there are places of the "Jews' quarter," and we in London had our, "Old Jewry," the Jews being evermore a peculiar people. We Christians are to be equally distinct, not in meats, drinks, garments and holy days, but as to spirituality of mind and holiness of life. We are to be strangers and foreigners in the land in which we sojourn. We are not resident traders in this Vanity Fair—we pass through it because it lies on our way home—but we are ill at ease in it. In no tent of all the fair can we rest.

O traders in this hubbub of trifles, we have small esteem for your great bargains and tempting cheats! We are not buyers in the Roman row nor in the French row—we would give all that we have to leave your polluted streets and be no more annoyed by Beelzebub, the lord of the fair. Our journey is towards the Celestial City and when the sons of earth cry to us, "What do you buy?" we answer, "We buy the Truth of God." O young man, can you take up in the warehouse the position of being a Christian though there is no other Believer in the house? Come, good woman, dare you serve the Lord, though husband and children ridicule you?

Man of business, dare you do the right thing in business and play the Christian, though around you the various methods of trading render it hard for you to be unflinchingly honest? This singularity is demanded of every Believer in Jesus. You cannot be blessed with Abraham unless, like he, you come out and stand forth as true men—

***"Dare to be a Daniel
Dare to stand alone!
Dare to have a purpose true,
Dare to make it known."***

May God grant to us Grace to be Daniels, even if the lions' den should threaten us!

A second peculiarity of Abraham's conduct is seen in the fact that *he was ready for all the losses and risks that might be involved in obedience to the call of God*. He was to leave his native country, as we have already said. To some of us that would be a hard task and I doubt not it was such to him. The smoke out of my own chimney is better than the fire on another man's hearth. There is no place like home wherever we may wander. The home feeling was probably as sure in Abraham as in us, but he was never to have a home on earth any more, except that he was to

realize what Moses afterwards sung, "Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations."

For him there was no roofter and paternal estate. He owned no portion of the land in which he sojourned. His sole alcove was a frail tent which he removed from day to day as his flocks required fresh pasture. He could say to his God, "I am a stranger and a sojourner with You." He had to leave those whom he loved, for, though they accompanied him part of the way, they would not go further. If he followed the Lord fully he must go alone. The Patriarch knew nothing of half measures, he went through with his obedience and left all his kindred to go to Canaan, to which he had been summoned.

Those who wished to stop at Haran might stop there. Canaan was his destination and he could not stop short of it. No doubt he had many risks to encounter on his journey and when he entered the country. The Canaanite was still in the land and they were a fierce and cruel set of heathen who would have utterly destroyed the wanderer if the Lord had not put a spell upon them, and said, "Touch not My anointed, and do my Prophets no harm." It was a country swarming with little tribes who were continually at war. Abraham, himself, was, for Lot's sake, to gird on his sword and go forth to fight, lover of peace as he was. Of all discomforts and dangers, loss of property and parting with friends, Abraham made small account. God commanded and Abraham went.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, can you and I do the same? Oh, you who desire to be saved, I say, can you do this? Have you counted the cost and determined to pay it? You must not expect that you will wear silver slippers and walk on green rolled turf all the way to Heaven. The road was rough which your Lord traversed and, if you walk with Him, yours will be rough, too. Can you bear, for Jesus' sake, all earthly loss? Can you bear the scoff, the cold shoulder, the cutting jest, the innuendo, the sarcasm, the sneer? Could you go further and bear loss of property and suffering in purse? Do not say that it may not occur, for many Believers lose all by having to leave the ill pursuits by which they once earned their bread.

You must, in your *intention*, give all up *for* Jesus, and in *act* you must give up all *to* Jesus. If He is yours, you must, from now on, have all things in common with Him. You must be joint heirs together, His, yours and yours, His. You may be well content to make joint stock when you have so little and He has so much! Oh, can you stand to it, and give up all for Him? Well, if you cannot, do not pretend to do it! Yet, unless you take up your cross, you cannot be His disciples. Unless you can give up everything for Him, do not pretend to follow Him.

Listen to this. If you think Heaven worth nothing and Christ worth nothing. If you consider worldly gain to be everything, and comfort everything, and honor everything—if you could not die a martyr's death for Christ—your love to Him is not worth much and the Abraham spirit is not in you. May God enable us to take our places in the battle in the front of the foe, where the fight is most furious. May Grace make us sing—

***"Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow You,
Destitute, despised, forsaken,***

You, from hence, my All shall be.

If that is said in truth, it is well, my Brethren! You are fair to be in all things a partaker with faithful Abraham! You also shall find much blessing in the separated life.

Thirdly, one great peculiarity in Abraham was that *he waived the present for the future*. He went out to go into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance. He left the inheritance he then had to receive one which was yet to come. This is not the way of the world. The proverb says, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," and especially in such a bush as Abraham saw before him. It did not seem very likely he would ever obtain that land—but still he let his bird in the hand go and took to the bird in the bush, being fully persuaded that he should have it in God's good time.

Mr. Bunyan sets this forth in his picture of two children, Passion and Patience. Passion would have all his good things *now* and he sat among his toys and joys, and laughed and rejoiced. Patience had to bear to see his brother Passion full of mirth, and to hear his scoffing. But then, as Master Bunyan beautifully says, Patience came in last for his portion, and it lasted forever, for there is nothing after the last! So, then, if we are to have our Heaven last, it will last, and no cloud shall mar it, no calamity bring it to an end.

He is the wise man who lets go of the shadow to grasp the substance, even though he should have to wait 20, 30, or 40 years for it! He is blessed who leaves earth's wind and bubble and feeds on more substantial meat. God grant us Grace to live more for the future than we have been accustomed to do. Oh you ungodly ones, you do not care about the future, for you have never realized death and judgement. You are afraid to look over the edge of this narrow life. As to death, nothing frightens you so much. As for Hell, if you are warned to escape from it, instead of thanking the preacher for being honest enough to warn you of it, you straightway call him a, "Hell-fire" preacher, or give him some other ugly name.

Alas, you little know how pained he is to speak to you on so terrible a subject! You little dream how true a lover of your soul he is, or he would not warn you of the wrath to come. Do you want to have flatterers about you? Such are to be had in plenty if you desire them. As for Heaven, you seem to have no regard for it! At any rate you are not making your title to it sure or clear by caring about Divine things. If you would have the birthright, you must let the present mess of pottage go! The eternal future must come before the fleeting trifles of today! You must let the things which are seen sink and bid the "things not seen as yet" rise in all their matchless grandeur and reality before your eyes. You must give up chasing butterflies and shadows, and pursue eternal things.

My immortal soul pines only for immortal joys. I leave my present lot to be appointed of the Lord as He wills, so long as He will shed His love abroad in my heart. We must be prepared for eternity, and for that purpose we should concentrate our faculties upon Divine Truth and personal religion, that we may be ready to meet our God. This, then, was the third excellence in Abraham's walk, that he waived present comfort for

the sake of the future blessing. Fourthly, and this is the main point, *Abraham committed himself to God by faith*. From that day forward Abraham had nothing but his God for a portion, nothing but his God for a protector.

No squadron of soldiers accompanied the good man's march. His safeguard lay in Him who had said, "Fear not, Abraham, I am your shield and your exceedingly great reward." He had to trust the Lord for his daily bread and daily guidance, for he was to march on and not know half a mile before him. He was ignorant when to stop and when to journey on, except as the Lord God guided him hour by hour. I must not say that Abraham became a poor pensioner upon the daily provision of God, but I will use a better term and describe him as "a gentleman commoner upon the royal bounty of his heavenly King."

His lot was to have nothing but to be heir of Heaven and earth. Can you walk, thus, by faith? Has the Grace of God brought you who have been hesitating, to resolve, from now on, to believe God and trust Him? If He has, you are saved, for faith is the deciding matter. To realize the existence of God and to trust in Him, especially to trust in His mercy, through Jesus Christ, is the essential matter. As for the life and walk of faith, they are the most singular things in the world. I seem, myself, to have been climbing a series of mysterious staircases, light as air and yet as solid as granite! I cannot see a single step before me and often there seems to the eye to be nothing, whatever, to form a foothold for the next step.

I look down and wonder how I came where I am, but still I climb on, and He who has brought me so far supplies me with confidence for that which lies before me! High into things invisible the ethereal ladder has borne me and onward and forward to Glory its rounds will yet conduct me! What I have seen has often failed me, but what I have not seen, and yet have believed, has always held me stably. Have not you found it so, all you children of God? Let us pray that the Lord may lead others to tread the same mystic ascent by beginning, today, the life of faith!

The last specialty in Abraham's procedure was *what he did was done at once*. There were no, "ifs," no debating, no considering and delays. He needed no forcing and driving—

***"God drew him and he followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice Divine."***

At once, I say, he went. Promptness is one of the brightest excellencies in faith's acts. Delay spoils all. Someone asked Alexander to what he owed his conquests, and he said, "I have conquered because I never delayed." While the enemy was preparing, he had begun the battle—and they were routed before they knew where they were. After that fashion faith overcomes temptation. She runs in the way of obedience, or rather she mounts on the wings of eagles and so speeds on her way! With regard to the things of God, our first thoughts are best—considerations of difficulty entangle us. Whenever you feel a prompting to do a good thing, do not ask anybody whether you should do it or not—no one ever repents of doing good. Ask your friends afterwards, rather than beforehand, for it is ill consulting with flesh and blood when duty is plain.

If the Lord has given you substance and you are prompted to be generous to the cause of God, do not count every sixpence over and calculate what others would give—count it *after* you have given it, if it must be counted at all! But it would be better, still, not to let your left hand know what your right hand does. It cannot be wrong to do the right thing at once! No, in matters of duty, every moment of delay is a sin. Thus we have Abraham before us. May the Holy Spirit make us like he. Now, this morning, who will listen to the call of God? Who, like Abraham, will quit the world, with all its folly, and resolve, from now on, to be upon the Lord's side? Oh, Spirit of the living God, cause many a hidden Abraham to come forth!

III. We have to close with two or three words about what was THE RESULT OF ABRAHAM'S ACTION. The question of many will be, *did it pay?* That is the inquiry of most people and within proper bounds it is not a wrong question. Did it answer Abraham's purpose? Our reply is, it did so gloriously! True, it brought him into a world of trouble and no wonder—such a noble course as his was not likely to be an easy one! What grand life was ever easy? Who wants to be a child and do easy things?

Yet we read in Abraham's life, after a whole host of troubles, "And Abraham was old and well stricken in years, and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things." That is a splendid conclusion—God had blessed Abraham in all things! Whatever happened, he had always been under the Divine smile and all things had worked for his good. He was parted from his friends, but he had the sweet society of his God and was treated as the friend of the Most High! He was allowed to intercede for others and clothed with great power on their behalf. I almost envy Abraham. I should do so altogether if I did not know that all saints are permitted to enjoy the same privileges!

What a glorious degree Abraham took when he was called "the friend of God"! Was not his loss of earthly friendships abundantly made up to him? What honor, also, the Patriarch had among his contemporaries! He was a great man and held in high esteem. How splendidly he bore himself—no king ever behaved more royally. That pettifogging king of Sodom wanted to make a bargain with him, but the grand old man replied, "I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-lace, lest you should say, 'I have made Abraham rich.'"

Those sons of Heth, also, were willing to make him a present of a piece of land around the cave of Machpelah, but he did not want a present from Canaanites and so, he said, "No, I will pay you every penny. I will weigh out the price to you, whatever you may demand." In noble independence, no man could excel the father of the faithful! His contemporaries look small before him and no man seems to be his equal, save Melchizedek. His image passes across the page of history rather like that of a spirit from the supernal realms than that of a mere man—he is so thorough, so childlike and, therefore, so heroic. He lived *in* God and *on* God and *with* God! Such a sublime life recompensed a thousand-fold all the sacrifice he was led to make.

Was not his life a happy one? One might wisely say, "Let my life be like that of Abraham." As to temporal things the Lord enriched him and in spiritual things he was richer still! He was wealthier in heart than in substance, though great even, in that respect. And now Abraham is the father of the faithful, Patriarch of the whole family of Believers, and to him, alone, of all mortal men God said, "In you shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This very day, through his matchless Seed, to whom be glory forever and ever, even Jesus Christ of the seed of Abraham, all tribes of men are blessed! His life was both for time and for eternity, a great success—both for temporals and for spirituals the path of faith was the best that he could have followed!

And now may we all be led to imitate his example! If we never have done so, may we, this morning, be led to give God His due by trusting Him, to give the blood of Christ its due by relying upon it, to give the Spirit of God His due by yielding ourselves to Him! Will you do so, or not? I pause for your reply. The call is given again—will you obey it or not? Nobody here will actually declare that he will not, but many will reply that *they hope they shall*. Alas, my sermon is a failure to those who so speak! If that is your answer, I am foiled again!

When Napoleon was attacking the Egyptians he had powerful artillery. But he could not reach the enemy, for they were in a mud fort. It made Napoleon very angry, because, if they had been behind granite walls, he could have battered them down, but their earthworks could not be blown to pieces, every ball stuck in the mud, and made the wall stronger! Your hopes and delays are just such a mud wall! I would a good deal sooner have people say, "There, now, we do not believe in God nor in His Christ," and speak out straightforwardly, than go on forever behind this mud wall of, "We will by-and-by," and, "We hope it will be so one day."

The fact is, you do not mean to obey the Lord at all! You are deceiving yourselves if you think so. If God is God tomorrow, He is God today! If Christ is worth having next week, He is worth having today! If there is anything in religion at all, it demands a present surrender to its claims and a present obedience to its laws! But if you judge it to be a lie, say so, and we shall know where you are. If Baal is God, serve him! But if God is God, I charge you by Jesus Christ, fly to Him as He is revealed—come forth from the sin of the world and be separate—and walk by faith in God. To this end may the Spirit of God enable you. Amen and amen!

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Hebrews 11:1 to 13;
Genesis 11:27 to end; 12:1 to 9.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—174, 655, 658.**

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THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

NO. 2195

A SERMON DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 21, 1890,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing where he went.
Hebrews 11:8.*

THE part of the text to which I shall call your attention lies in these words, *“By faith Abraham obeyed.”* Obedience—what a blessing it would be if we were all trained to it by the Holy Spirit! How fully should we be restored if we were perfect in it! If all the world would obey the Lord, what a Heaven on earth there would be! Perfect obedience to God would mean love among men, justice to all classes and peace in every land! Our will brings envy, malice, war—but the Lord’s will would bring us love, joy, rest, bliss. Obedience—let us pray for it for ourselves and others!—

***“Is there a heart that will not bend
To Your Divine control?
Descend, O Sovereign Love, descend,
And melt that stubborn soul.”***

Surely, though we have had to mourn our disobedience with many tears and sighs, we now find joy in yielding ourselves as servants of the Lord—our deepest desire is to do the Lord’s will in all things. Oh, for obedience! It has been supposed by many ill-instructed people that the Doctrine of Justification by Faith is opposed to the teaching of good works, or obedience. There is no truth in the supposition! We preach the *obedience* of faith. Faith is the fountain, the foundation and the fosterer of *obedience*! Men will not obey God till they believe Him. We preach faith in order that men may be brought to obedience. To disbelieve is to disobey! One of the first signs of practical obedience is found in the obedience of the mind, the understanding and the heart—and this is expressed in *believing* the teaching of Christ, trusting to His work and resting in His salvation.

Faith is the morning star of obedience. If we would work the work of God, we must believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Brothers and Sisters, we do not give a secondary place to obedience, as some suppose. We look upon the obedience of the heart to the will of God as salvation! The attainment of perfect obedience would mean perfect salvation. We regard sanctification, or *obedience*, as the great design for which the Savior died. He shed His blood that He might cleanse us from dead works and purify unto Himself a people zealous for good works. It is for this that we were chosen—we are “elect unto holiness.” We know nothing of election to

continue in sin! It is for this that we have been called—we are “called to be saints.” Obedience is the grand objective of the work of Divine Grace in the hearts of those who are chosen and called—they are to become obedient children—conformed to the image of the Elder Brother, with whom the Father is well pleased.

The obedience that comes of faith is of a noble sort. The obedience of a slave ranks a little higher than the obedience of a well-trained horse or dog, for it is tuned to the crack of the whip. Obedience which is not cheerfully rendered is not the obedience of the heart and, consequently, is of little worth before God. If the man obeys because he has no opportunity of doing otherwise and if, were he free, he would at once become a rebel—there is nothing in his obedience. The obedience of faith springs from a principle within and not from compulsion without. It is sustained by the mind’s soberest reasoning and the heart’s warmest passion. The man reasons with himself that he ought to obey his Redeemer, his Father, his God and, at the same time, the love of Christ constrains him to do so, and thus, what argument *suggests* affection, *performs*!

A sense of great obligation, an apprehension of the fitness of obedience and spiritual renewal of heart work an obedience which becomes essential to the sanctified soul. Therefore, it is not relaxed in the time of temptation, nor destroyed in the hour of losses and sufferings. Life has no trial which can turn the gracious soul from its passion for obedience! Death, itself, does but enable it to render an obedience which shall be as blissful as it will be complete. Yes, this is a chief ingredient of Heaven—that we shall see the face of our Lord and serve Him day and night in His Temple. Meanwhile, the more fully we obey at this present, the nearer we shall be to His Temple gate. May the Holy Spirit work in us, so that, by faith—like Abraham—we may obey!

I preach to you, at this time, obedience—absolute obedience to the Lord God! But I preach the obedience of a child, not the obedience of a slave; the obedience of love, not of terror; the obedience of faith, not of dread. I shall urge you, as God shall help me, in order that you may come to this obedience, that you should seek after stronger faith—“For by faith Abraham obeyed.” In every case where the father of the faithful obeyed, it was the result of his faith—and in every case in which you and I shall render true obedience—it will be the product of our faith. Obedience, such as God can accept, never comes out of a heart which thinks God a liar, but is worked in us by the Spirit of the Lord, through our believing in the Truth, Love and Grace of our God in Christ Jesus. If any of you are now disobedient, or have been so, the road to a better state of things is trust in God. You cannot hope to render obedience by the mere forging of conduct into a certain groove, or by a personal, unaided effort of the resolution. There is a Free-Grace road to obedience and that is receiving, by faith, the Lord Jesus who is the Gift of God and is made of God unto us, sanctification.

We accept the Lord Jesus by faith and He teaches us obedience and creates it in us. The more of faith in Him you have, the more of obedience to Him will you manifest. I was about to say that that obedience naturally

flows out of faith—and I would not have spoken amiss—for as a man believes so is he—and, in proportion to the strength and purity of his faith in God, as He is revealed in Christ Jesus, will be the holy obedience of his life. That our meditation may be profitable, we will first think a little of *the kind of faith which produces obedience*. And then, secondly, we will treat of *the kind of obedience which faith produces*. And then we will advance another step and consider *the kind of life which comes out of this faith and obedience*.

I will be as brief as I can upon each point. Let us look up to the Holy Spirit for His gracious illumination.

I. First, consider THE KIND OF FAITH WHICH PRODUCES OBEDIENCE.

It is, manifestly, *faith in God as having the right to command our obedience*. Beloved in the Lord, you know that He is Sovereign and that His will is law. You feel that God, your Maker, your Preserver, your Redeemer and your Father should have your unswerving service. We unite, also, in confessing that we are not our own, we are bought with a price. The Lord our God has a right to us which we would not wish to question. He has a greater claim upon our ardent service than He has upon the services of angels, for, while they were created as we have been, yet they have never been *redeemed* by precious blood! Our glorious Incarnate God has an unquestioned right to every breath we breathe, to every thought we think, to every moment of our lives and to every capacity of our being! We believe in Jehovah as rightful Lawgiver and, as most fitly, our Ruler. This loyalty of our mind is based on *faith* and is a chief prompter to *obedience*. Always cultivate this feeling. The Lord is our Father, but He is, “our Father which are in Heaven.” He draws near to us in condescension, but it is condescension and we must not presume to think of Him as though He were such a one as ourselves. There is a holy familiarity with God which cannot be too much enjoyed, but there is a flippant familiarity with God which cannot be too much abhorred! The Lord is King. His will is not to be questioned. His every Word is Law. Let us never question His Sovereign right to decree what He pleases and to fulfill the decree—to command what He pleases and to punish every shortcoming. Because we have faith in God as Lord of All, we gladly pay Him our homage and desire in all things to say, “Your will be done in earth, as it is done in Heaven.”

Next, we must have *faith in the rightness of all that God says or does*. I hope, Beloved, you do not think of God’s Sovereignty as tyranny or imagine that He ever could or would will anything but that which is right. Neither will we admit into our minds a suspicion of the incorrectness of the Word of God in any matter whatever, as though the Lord, Himself, could err. We will not have it that God, in His Holy Book, makes mistakes about matters of history, or of science, any more than He does upon the great Truths of salvation! If the Lord is God, He must be Infallible! And if He can be described as in error in the little respects of human history and science, He cannot be trusted in the greater matters!

My Brothers and Sisters, Jehovah never errs in deed, or in Word—and when you find His Law written either in the Ten Commandments, or anywhere else, you believe that there is not a precept too many, or too few. Whatever may be the precepts of the Law, or of the Gospel, they are, altogether, pure and holy. The Words of the Lord are like fine gold—pure, precious, and weighty—not one of them may be neglected! We hear people talk about, “minor points,” and so on, but we must not consider any Word of our God as a minor thing, if by that expression is implied that it is of small importance. We must accept every single Word of precept, or prohibition, or instruction as being what it ought to be—and neither to be diminished nor increased. We should not reason about a command of God as though it might be set aside or amended. He bids—we obey. May we enter into that true spirit of obedience which is the unshaken belief that the Lord is right! Nothing short of this is the obedience of the inner man—the obedience which the Lord desires.

Furthermore, we must have *faith in the Lord's call upon us to obey*. Abraham went out from his father's house because he felt that whatever God said to others, He had spoken to him, and said, “Get you out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house.” Whatever the Lord may have said to the Chaldeans, or to other families in Ur, Abraham was not so much concerned with that as with the special word of command which the Lord had sent to his own soul. Oh, that we were, most of all, earnest to render *personal* obedience! It is very easy to offer unto God a sort of “other people's obedience”—to fancy that we are serving God when we are finding fault with our neighbors and lamenting that they are not so godly as they ought to be!

Truly, we cannot help seeing their shortcomings, but we should do well to be less observant of them than we are. Let us turn our magnifying glasses upon *ourselves*. It is not so much our business to be weeding other people's gardens as to keep our own vineyard. To the Lord each one should cry, “Lord, what will You have me to do?” We, who are His chosen, redeemed from among men, called out from the rest of mankind, ought to feel that if no other ears hear the Divine call, our ears must hear it and, if no other heart obeys, our soul rejoices to do so. We are bound with cords to the horns of the Altar! The strongest ties of gratitude hold us to the service of Jesus—we must be obedient in life to Him who, for our sakes, was obedient unto death. Our service to our Lord is freedom—we will to yield to His will! To delight Him is our delight! It is a blessed thing when the inmost nature yearns to obey God; when obedience grows into a habit and becomes the very element in which the spirit breathes. Surely it should be so with every one of the blood-washed children of the Host High—and their lives will prove that it is so. Others are bound to obey, but we should attend most to our own personal obligation and set our own houses in order. Our obedience should begin at home—it will find its hands full enough there.

Obedience arises out of a *faith which is to us the paramount principle of action*. The kind of faith which produces obedience is lord of the under-

standing, a royal faith. The true Believer believes in God beyond all his belief in anything else and everything else. He can say, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." His faith in God has become to him the crown of all his believing, the most assured of all his confidences. As gold is to the inferior metals, such is our trust in God to all our other trusts. To the genuine Believer, the eternal is as much above the temporal as the heavens are above the earth. The Infinite rolls, like Noah's flood, over the tops of the hills of the present and the finite. To the Believer, let a Truth of God be tinctured with the Glory of God and he values it. But if God and eternity are not there, he will leave these trifles to those who choose them. You must have a paramount faith in God, or else the will of God will not be a paramount rule to you.

Only a reigning faith will make us subject to its power, so as to be in all things obedient to the Lord. The chief thought in life with the true Believer is, "How can I obey God?" His great anxiety is to do the will of God, or acceptably to *suffer* that will. And if he can obey, he will make no terms with God and stand upon no reservations. He will pray, "Refine me from the dross of rebellion and let the furnace be as fierce as You will." His choice is neither wealth, nor ease, nor honor, but that he may glorify God in his body and his spirit, which are the Lord's. Obedience has become as much his rule as self-will is the rule of others. His cry unto the Lord is, "By Your command I stay or go. Your will is my will. Your pleasure is my pleasure. Your Law is my love."

God grant us a supreme, over-mastering faith, for this is the kind of faith which we must have if we are to lead obedient lives! We must have faith in God's right to rule, faith in the rightness of His commands, faith in our personal obligation to obey and faith that the command must be the paramount authority of our being. With this faith of God's elect, we shall realize the object of our election—namely, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

Dear Friend, have you this kind of faith? I will withdraw the question as directed to you—and I will ask it of myself—Have I that faith which leads me to obey my God? Obedience, if it is of the kind we are speaking of, is faith in action—faith walking with God, or, shall I say, walking before the Lord in the land of the living? If we have a faith which is greedy in hearing, severe in judging and rapid in self-congratulation, but not inclined to obedience, we have the faith of hypocrites. If our faith enables us to set ourselves up as patterns of sound doctrine—and qualifies us to crack the heads of all who differ from us—and yet lacks the fruit of obedience, it will leave us among the "dogs" who are "without." The faith that makes us obey is the *only* faith which marks the children of God. It is better to have the faith that obeys than the faith which moves mountains. I would sooner have the faith which obeys than the faith which heaps the altar of God with sacrifices and perfumes His courts with incense. I would rather obey God than rule an empire, for, after all, the loftiest sovereignty a soul can inherit is to have dominion over *self* by rendering believing obedience to the Most High.

Thus much upon faith. “By faith Abraham obeyed.” And only by *faith* can you and I obey.

II. Let us consider, secondly, THE KIND OF OBEDIENCE WHICH FAITH PRODUCES. This I shall illustrate from the whole of the verse.

Genuine faith in God creates a prompt obedience. “By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed.” There was an immediate response to the command. Delayed obedience is disobedience! I wish some Christians, who put off duty, would remember this. Continued delay of duty is a continuous sin. If I do not obey the Divine Command, I sin—and every moment that I continue in that condition—I repeat the sin. This is a serious matter. If a certain act is my duty at this hour and I leave it undone, I have sinned. But it will be equally incumbent upon me during the next hour—and if I still refuse, I disobey again—and so on till I *do* obey. Neglect of a standing command must grow very grievous if it is persisted in for years. In proportion as the conscience becomes callous upon the subject, the guilt becomes the more provoking to the Lord! To refuse to do right is a great evil, but to *continue* in that refusal till conscience grows numb upon the matter is far worse.

I remember a person coming to be baptized, who said that he had been a Believer in the Lord Jesus for 40 years and that he had always seen the ordinance to be Scriptural. I felt grieved that he had so long been disobedient to a known duty and I proposed to him that he should be baptized at once. It was in a village and he said that there were no conveniences. I offered to go with him to the brook and baptize him, but he said, “No, he that believes shall not make haste.” Here was one who had willfully disobeyed his Lord—for as many years as the Israelites in the wilderness, upon a matter so easy of performance and yet, after confessing his fault, he was not willing to amend it, but perverted a passage of Scripture to excuse him in further delay! David says, “I made haste and delayed not to keep Your Commandments.” I give this case as a typical illustration—there are a hundred spiritual, moral, domestic, business and religious duties which men put off in the same manner—as if they thought that any time would do for God and He must take His turn with the rest.

What would you say to your boy if you bade him go upon an errand and he answered you, “I will go tomorrow”? Surely you would “morrow” him in a style which would abide upon his memory! Your tone would be sharp and you would bid him go at once. If he, then, promised to run in an hour’s time, would you call that obedience? It would be impudence! Obedience is for the present tense—it must be prompt, or it is nothing. Obedience respects the time of the command as much as any other part of it. To hesitate is to be disloyal. To stop and consider whether you will obey or not is rebellion in the germ! If you believe in the living God unto eternal life, you will be quick to do your Lord’s bidding, even as a maid hearkens to her mistress. You will not be as the horse, which needs whip and spur—your love will do more for you than compulsion could do for slaves. You will have wings to your heels to hasten you along the way of obedience. “Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.”

Next, *obedience should be exact*. Even Abraham's obedience failed somewhat in this, at first, for he started at once from Ur of the Chaldees, but he only went as far as Haran, and there he stayed till his father died. And then the precept came to him again and he set off for the land which the Lord had promised to show him. If any of you have only half obeyed, I pray that you may take heed of this—and do all that the Lord commands—carefully endeavoring to keep back no part of the revenue of obedience.

Yet the error of the great Patriarch was soon corrected, for we read that, "Abraham, *when he was called to go out . . . went out*." I have only omitted intermediate words which do not alter the sense—and that is exactly how we should obey. That which the Lord commands we should do—just that, and not another thing of our own devising. How very curiously people try to give God something else instead of what He asks for! The Lord says, "My son, give Me your heart," and they give Him ceremonies! He asks obedience of them and they give Him will-worship. He asks for faith, love and justice—and they offer 10,000 rivers of oil and the fat of fed beasts. They will give all except the one thing which He will be pleased with! "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." If the Lord has given you true faith in Himself, you will be *anxious* not so much to do a notable thing as to do *exactly* what God would have you to do. Mind your jots and tittles with the Lord's precepts. Attention to little things is a fine feature in obedience—it lies much more as to its essence in the little things than in the great ones. Few dare rush into great crimes and yet they will indulge in secret rebellion, for their heart is not right with God. Hence so many mar what they call obedience by forgetting that they serve a heart-searching, rein-trying God who observes thoughts and motives. He would have us obey Him with the heart and that will lead us not merely to regard a few pleasing commands, but to have respect unto all His will. Oh, for a tender conscience which will not willfully neglect, nor presumptuously transgress!

And next, mark well that Abraham rendered *practical obedience*. When the Lord commanded Abraham to quit his father's house, he did not say that he would think it over. He did not discuss it *pro and con* in an essay. He did not ask his father, Terah, and his neighbors to consider it, but, as he was called to go out, he went out. Alas, dear Friends, we have so much talk and so little obedience! The religion of mere brain and jaw does not amount to much. We need the religion of hands and feet! I remember a place in Yorkshire, years ago, where a good man said to me, "We have a real good minister." I said, "I am glad to hear it." "Yes," he said, "he is a fellow that preaches with his feet." Well, now, that is a capital thing if a preacher preaches with his feet, by walking *with* God, and with his hands by working *for* God. He does well who glorifies God by where he goes and by what he does—he will excel 50 others who only preach religion with their tongues. You, dear Hearers, are not good hearers so long as you are only hearers—but when the heart is affected by the ears and the hands

follows the heart, then your faith is proven! That kind of obedience which comes of faith in God is *real* obedience, since it shows itself by its *works*.

Next, *faith produces a far-seeing obedience*. Note this. "Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance." How great a company would obey God if they were paid for it on the spot! They have "respect unto the recompense of the reward," but they must have it in the palm of their hand. With them—"A bird in hand is better far than two which in the bushes are." They are told that there is Heaven to be had and they answer that if Heaven were to be had *here*, as an *immediate* freehold, they might look after it, but they cannot afford to wait. To inherit a country after this life is over is too like a fairy tale for their practical minds! Many there are who enquire, "Will religion pay? Is there anything to be made out of it? Shall I have to shut up my shop on Sundays? Must I alter my mode of dealing, and curtail my profits?" When they have totaled up the cost and have taken all things into consideration, they come to the conclusion that obedience to God is a luxury which they can dispense with—at least until near the end of life! Those who practice the obedience of faith look for the reward *hereafter* and set the greatest store by it. To their faith, alone, the profit is exceedingly great. To take up the cross will be to carry a burden, but it will also be to find rest. They know the words, "No cross, no crown," and they recognize the Truth of God that if there is no obedience here, there will be no reward hereafter! This needs a faith that has eyes which can see afar off—across the black torrent of death—and within the veil which parts us from the unseen. A man will not obey God unless he has learned to endure "as seeing Him who is invisible."

Yet, remember that *the obedience which comes of true faith is often bound to be altogether unreckoning and implicit*, for it is written, "He went out, not knowing where he went." God bade Abraham journey and he moved his camp at once. Into the unknown land he made his way. Through fertile regions, or across a wilderness—among friends, or through the midst of foes, he pursued his journey—he did not know where his way would take him, but he knew that the Lord had bid him go. Even bad men will obey God when they think fit—but good men will obey when they know not what to think of it. It is not ours to judge the Lord's command, but to follow it. I am weary with hearing men say, "Yes, we know that such a course would be right, but then the consequences might be painful—good men would be grieved, the cause would be weakened—and we ourselves should get into a world of trouble and put our hands into a hornet's nest." There is not much need to preach caution nowadays—those who would run any risk for the Truth of God's sake are few enough. Consciences, tender about the Lord's honor, have not been produced for the last few years in any great number. Prudent consideration of consequences is superabundant, but the spirit which obeys—and dares all things for Christ's sake—where is it?

The Abrahams of today will not go out from their kindred! They will put up with anything sooner than risk their livelihoods! If they do go out, they

must know where they are going and how much is to be picked up in the new country. I am not pronouncing any judgment upon their conduct, I am merely pointing out the fact. Our Puritan forefathers thought little of property or liberty when these stood in the way of conscience—they defied exile and danger sooner than give up a grain of the Truth of God! But their descendants prefer peace and worldly amusements—and pride themselves on “culture” rather than on heroic faith. The modern Believer must have no mysteries, but must have everything planed down to a scientific standard. Abraham “went out, not knowing where he went,” but the moderns must have every information with regard to the way—and then they will *not* go! If they obey at all, it is because their own superior judgments incline that way, but to go forth, not knowing where they go, and to go at all hazards, is not to their minds at all. They are so highly “cultured” that they prefer to be original and map out their own way.

Brothers and Sisters, having once discerned the voice of God, obey without question! If you have to stand alone and nobody will befriend you, stand alone and God will befriend you! If you should get the evil words of those you value most, bear it. What, after all, are evil words, or good words, as compared with the keeping of a clear conscience by walking in the way of the Lord? The line of the Truth of God is narrow as a razor’s edge—and he needs to wear the golden sandals of the peace of God who shall keep to such a line! Through Divine Grace may we, like Abraham, walk with our hand in the hand of the Lord, even where we cannot see our way!

The obedience which faith produces must be continuous. Having commenced the separated life, Abraham continued to dwell in tents and sojourn in the land which was far from the place of his birth. His whole life may be thus summed up—“By faith Abraham obeyed.” He believed and, therefore, walked before the Lord in a perfect way. He even offered up his son, Isaac. “Abraham’s mistake,” was it? Alas for those who dare to talk in that fashion! “By faith he obeyed,” and to the end of his life he was never an original speculator, or inventor of ways for self-will, but a submissive servant of that great Lord who deigned to call him, “Friend.” May it be said of everyone here that by faith he obeyed! Do not cultivate doubt or you will soon cultivate disobedience. Set this up as your standard and, from now on, be this the epitome of your life—“By faith he obeyed.”

III. Just a moment or two upon the third point. Let us consider THE SORT OF LIFE WHICH WILL COME OF THIS FAITH AND OBEDIENCE.

It will be, in the first place, *life without that great risk which otherwise holds us in peril.* A man runs a great risk when he steers himself. Rocks or no rocks, the peril lies in the *helmsman*. The Believer is no longer the helmsman of his own vessel—he has taken a Pilot on board. To believe in God and to do His bidding is a great escape from the hazards of personal weakness and folly. If we do as God commands and do not seem to succeed, it is no fault of ours. Failure, itself, would be success so long as we did not fail to obey! If we passed through life unrecognized, or were only acknowledged by a sneer from the worldly-wise—and if this were regarded

as a failure—it could be borne with joy so long as we knew that we had kept our faith towards God and our obedience to Him! Providence is God’s business, obedience is ours. What comes out of our life’s course must remain with the Lord—to obey is our sole concern. What harvest will come of our sowing, we must leave with the Lord of the Harvest, but we, ourselves, must look to the basket and the seed—and scatter our handfuls in the furrows without fail. We can win, “Well done, good and *faithful* servant”—to be a successful servant is not in our power, and we shall not be held responsible for it. Our greatest risk is over when we obey. God makes faith and obedience the way of safety.

In the next place, we shall enjoy a *life free from its heaviest cares*. If we were in the midst of the forest with Stanley, in the center of Africa, our pressing care would be to find our way out. But when we have nothing to do but to *obey*, our road is mapped out for us! Jesus says, “Follow Me,” and this makes our way plain and lifts from our shoulders a load of cares. To choose our course by policy is a way of thorns—to obey is as the King’s Highway. Policy has to tack about, to return upon its own courses and, often, to miss the port after all. But faith, like a steam vessel, steers straight for the harbor’s mouth and leaves a bright track of obedience behind her as she forges ahead. When our only care is to obey, a thousand other cares take their flight. If we sin in order to succeed, we have sown the seeds of care and sorrow—and the reaping will be a grievous one. If we will forsake the path and try shortcuts, we shall have to do a deal of wading through mire and slough—we shall bespatter ourselves from head to foot—we shall be wearied to find our way and all because we could not trust God and obey His bidding.

Obedience may appear difficult and it may bring with it sacrifice, but, after all, it is the nearest and the best road. Her ways are, in the long run, ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. He who, through the Holy Spirit, is always believingly obedient, has chosen the good part. He it is who can sing—

***“I have no cares, O blessed Lord,
For all my cares are Thine.
I live in triumph, too, for You
Have made Your triumphs mine.”***

Or, to change the verse, he is like Bunyan’s shepherd boy in the Valley of Humiliation, for that lowland is part of the great Plain of Obedience! And he can also sing—

***“He that is down, need fear no fall,
He that is low, no pride.
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his Guide.”***

Although he may not reach the heights of ambition, nor stand upon the giddy crags of presumption, yet he shall know superior joys. He has hit upon the happiest mode of living under Heaven—a mode of life akin to the perfect life above! He shall dwell in God’s house and be still praising Him.

The way of obedience is a *life of the highest honor*. Obedience is the glory of a human life—the glory which our Lord has given to His chosen,

even His own Glory. "He learned obedience." He never struck out an original course, but He always did the things which pleased the Father. Be this our glory! By faith we yield our intelligence to the highest Intelligence—we are led, guided, directed—and we follow where our Lord has gone. To us who believe, He is honor. To a soldier it is the greatest honor to have accomplished his sovereign's command. He does not debase his manhood who subjects it to honorable command. No, he is even exalted by obeying in the day of danger. It is no dishonor to have it said—

***"Theirs not to reason why;
Theirs but to dare and die."***

The bravest and the most honored of men are those who implicitly obey the command of the King of Kings. Among His children, they are best who best know their Father's mind and yield to it the happiest obedience. Should we have any other ambition, within the walls of our Father's house, than to be perfectly obedient children before Him and implicitly trustful towards Him?

And, Brothers and Sisters, this is a kind of *life which will bring communion with God*. God often hides His face behind the clouds of dust which His children make by their self-will. If we transgress against Him, we shall soon be in trouble. But a holy walk—the walk described by my text as faith working obedience—is Heaven beneath the stars! God comes down to walk with men who obey. If they walk with Him, He walks with them. The Lord can only have fellowship with His servants as they obey. Obedience is Heaven in us and it is the preface of our being in Heaven! Obedient faith is the way to eternal life—no, it is eternal life revealing itself!

The obedience of faith creates a form of *life which may be safely copied*. As parents, we wish so to live that our children may copy us to their lasting profit. Teachers should aspire to be what they would have their classes to be. If you go to school to the obedience of faith, you will be good teachers. Children usually exaggerate their models, but there will be no fear of their going too far in faith, or in obedience to the Lord! I like to hear a man say, when his father has gone, "My dear father was a man that feared God. And I would gladly follow him. When I was a boy, I thought him rather stiff and Puritanical, but now I see he had a good reason for it all. I feel much the same, myself, and, with God's help, would do nothing of which God would not approve."

The bringing up of families is a very great matter. This is too much neglected, nowadays, and yet it is the most profitable of all holy service and the hope of the future. Great men, in the best sense, are bred in holy households. God-fearing example at home is the most fruitful of religious agencies. I knew a little humble Dissenting Chapel of the strictest sect of our religion. There was no culture in the ministry, but the people were strong Believers. Five or six families, attending that despised ministry, learned to believe what they believed and to live upon it. It was by no means a liberal creed which they received, but what they held operated on

their lives. Five or six families came out of that place and became substantial in wealth and generous in liberality.

These all sprang from plain, humble men, who knew their Bibles and believed the Doctrines of Grace. They learned to fear God and to trust in Him—and to rest in the old faith—and even in worldly things they prospered. Their descendants of the third generation are not, all of them, of their way of thinking, but they have risen through God’s blessing on their grandfathers. These men were fed on substantial meat and they became sturdy old fellows, able to cope with the world and fight their way. I would to God that we had more men today who would maintain the Truth of God at all hazards. Alas, the rubbery backbone is common among Dissenters—and they take to politics, the new philosophy and, therefore, we are losing the force of our testimony—and are, I fear, decreasing in numbers, too. The Lord give us back those whose examples can be safely copied in all things, even though they are decried as being “rigid” or “too precise!” We serve a jealous God and a holy Savior—therefore let us mind that we do not grieve His Spirit and cause Him to withdraw from us.

Lastly, faith working obedience is a kind of *life which needs great Grace*. Every careless professor will not live in this fashion. It will need watchfulness, prayer and nearness to God to maintain the faith which obeys in everything. Beloved, “He gives more Grace.” The Lord will enable us to add to our faith all the virtues. Whenever you fail in any respect in your lives, do not sit down and question the goodness of God and the power of the Holy Spirit—that is *not* the way to increase the stream of obedience, but to diminish the source of it. Believe more, instead of less. Try, by God’s Grace, to believe more in the pardon of sin, more in the renovation by the Holy Spirit, more in the Everlasting Covenant, more in the Love that had no beginning and will never, never cease. Your hope does not lie in rushing into the darkness of doubt, but in *repentantly* returning into the still clearer light of a steadier faith. May you be helped to do so and may we, all of us, and the whole multitude of the Lord’s redeemed, by faith go on to obey our Lord in all things!

I leave this word with you. Remember, “By faith Abraham obeyed.” Have faith in God and then obey, obey, obey, and keep on obeying until the Lord shall call you Home! Obey on earth and then you will have learned to obey in Heaven. Obedience is the rehearsal of eternal bliss! Practice by obedience now the song which you will sing forever in glory. God grant His Grace to us! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 109:33-40.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN-BOOK”—649, 653, 650.**

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THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

NO. 261

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 10, 1859,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance obeyed. And he went out, not knowing where he went.”
Hebrews 11:8.***

ABRAHAM'S faith was of the most eminent order, for he is called the Father of the Faithful. Let us rest assured that nothing but repeated and fiery trials could have trained his faith to so great a strength as that which it exhibited in his preparation to slay his son at the command of God. This true Jerusalem blade was long annealed before it gained its marvelous edge and matchless temper. Men come not to their perfect stature except by years of growth. Stars cannot reach the zenith of the heavens by one sudden flash, no, even the sun himself must climb to his meridian. Trials are the winds which root the tree of our faith. They are the trainers, drilling God's young soldiers, and teaching their hands to war and their fingers to fight. Foremost among Abraham's trials was that of being called away to a land which he had never seen. As this may be our trial also, I pray that my words may be adapted to our present condition.

I. First, let us LOOK AT ABRAHAM. Abraham's family was originally an idolatrous one. Afterwards some beams of light shone in upon the household, and they became worshippers of the true God. But there was much ignorance mingled with their worship, and at least occasionally their old idolatrous habits returned. The Lord who had always fixed on Abraham to be His chosen servant and the father of His chosen people upon earth, made Abraham leave the society of his friends and relatives and go out of Ur of the Chaldees, and journey away to the land of Canaan, which He had promised afterwards to give him for an inheritance.

We shall notice first what Abraham left, and then where Abraham went. The trial is made up of these two things. What had he to leave? He had to leave behind him those who were exceedingly dear to him. It is true that just after his first call, his own father, Terah, died, having gone a part of the way with Abraham and detained Abraham a little while by sickness. Abraham then went on his way obedient to the Lord's command. Never-

theless, he left behind him all the association of his youth, the house in which he had been trained, the family with which he had been nursed, all those whom he had known and with whom he had taken sweet counsel. And he must go forth into exile from the family of his love.

He left behind him his native country, and to a patriot that is no small struggle—to leave all the associations of one's country, and bear with as one's native songs to be sung in distant valleys. Many a man has felt keenly enough the separation from home and kindred, and next to that, the sad banishment from his native land. Besides, we all know with what inconvenience Abraham must have removed. He had a considerable property in flocks and herds, and probably had the ancestral dwelling house in which to reside. He must leave all these, and he must also leave the fair pastures wherein his flocks and his father's flocks had been fed, and he must wend his way into the wilderness. He must give up all agricultural pursuits, renounce his vine and his fig tree, and go his way—he knew not where—to a land which to him was as unknown as the valley of the shadow of death. Who of you who have had to part from those you loved, who have had your hearts rent when loved ones have been torn away, can sympathize somewhat with Abraham's trial when he left home and family, and country, and all, to go forth into an unknown land? This is the place from which he went.

Now, let us turn to the place to which he journeyed. When men emigrate, they wish to know the nature of the country in which they are to live. If it is a richer country than their own, although it is with some reluctance, they spread the sail and speed across the waters. And it may be, after they have settled there a little while, their mother country is almost forgotten, and they find a settled dwelling place in their adopted land. But Abraham knew nothing of the country to which he was about to move. He had simply God's promise that it should be his inheritance. It was, it might be said, a wild goose chase, and the profane would deride it as a mad and idle dream. Doubtless, the prudent father cautioned him to avoid so great a risk, and the anxious mother bade him remember that, as a bird wanders from his nest, so is he that leaves his place.

But amidst all this, Abraham was wiser than the wisest, for he put aside all worldly maxims. He set the precept above the maxim and considered the promise more precious than the proverb. Well was it for Abraham that he knew that the wise things of men are often ignorance dressed out in its best clothes. It has been said by an acute old writer, that when Christ came into Jerusalem—and He was incarnate wisdom—He came riding upon an ass. But when Satan came into Paradise—and he is infernal folly—he came in the shape of a wise creature, the subtle serpent. Wisdom came riding upon stupidity, and folly came in the garments of

craftiness! We shall often find it so in our lives. Simplicities are next akin to revelations. Plain simple things, and especially a plain simple obedience, are next akin to the very wisdom of the seer. And he who knows how to read the precept need not be afraid that the prophecy will ever contradict it, or render obedience to the precept an act of folly.

Abraham then went forth, he knew not where. "The journey is a long one," say some timid ones. "It is so," said Abraham, "but God will help me on the way." "The end of your journey may be doleful," they say. "No," says Abraham, "it cannot be doleful. It may be disappointing to my worldly ambition, but not to my faith. I believe that God will be with me, and that take me where he may, I shall lack no good thing." So Abraham went on his way, and God did not desert him, but graciously provided for him.

I have spoken to you of what Abraham left, and where he went. Now I would have you observe for a moment how it was that Abraham went. It is said that when he was commanded, he obeyed. Before the precept had gone forth, obedience had come forth to meet it with rejoicing. God had scarcely spoken before Abraham replied. Just as the thunder follows the lightning's flash quicker when the storm is near, so when faith is near, the thunder of our obedience follows the mighty flash of God's influence in our hearts. If God bids us do, we should do at once. Abraham went without any hesitation. He did not say, "Lord give me a little time: I will go in a week. Suffer me first to go and bury my father." I do not find that he said, "Lord let me tarry till harvest be reaped." No, he was commanded to go, and he went without hesitation. There were no carnal arguments between God and Abraham, for God has not invited His people to reason with Him with human arguments. He has invited sinners to do it—"Come now and let us reason together," He has said. When men have no faith, God invites them to reason, but when they have faith, reasoning with God becomes a sin. Abraham asked no question. He was not like Moses: he did not say, "Who am I that You should send me." But when he was commanded to go, he went and he followed God without hesitation.

And then again, we have every reason to believe that he obeyed without reluctance. He went as cheerfully away from his father's house as he had ever gone into it. I know not that he was sent away with the voice of tabret and of harp, but I am sure there was the voice of music in his heart. He might have said, "I go as cheerfully today I know not where, as ever I have gone to the fat land of Egypt or the spice-bearing country of the Sabeans." Men said his journey was absurd and deplorable, but to him it was the happiest and the best, for God was with him. And if the star did not guide him as it did the wise men to Bethlehem, yet there was a star within his own soul that shone like a sun, and lightened his footsteps and cheered

his spirit, and sent him on his joyous way towards his appointed habitation. He went cheerfully, not knowing where he went, not starting and fretting like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, but running with willing footsteps in the way of God. The ancients pictured Mercury with wings upon its heels, and surely faith has them there.

***“Tis love that makes our willing feet
In swift obedience move.”***

Love may be the wings, but the wings are upon the feet of faith, and it flies to do the will of God while hearkening to His commands.

But, then, notice that when Abraham started he made no stipulations with his Lord. If God had commanded Abraham to go to the utmost bounds of the green earth, to “rivers unknown to song,” Abraham would have departed. If God had commanded him to ford the Atlantic, Abraham would have obeyed. His feet would have been willing to attempt a miracle, and the stormy billows would have been dry before his march. We may rest assured that when Abraham started he asked no questions concerning how far or to what place he was journeying. He left that all in the hands of God. His faith put its hand inside the hand of its Father, and he was content to be led wherever his Father would lead him.

Now, it is always foolish in us to be led by man, for then “the blind lead the blind, and both fall into the ditch.” But for the blind to be led by *God* is one of the best and wisest things. We sometimes put blinkers upon horses that they may not see too much. I fear we might wear such things ourselves to great advantage. In watching with the eyes of carnal reason for objections to God’s precept and Providence, it would be well if our eyes were burnt out, for better for us to enter into life having no eyes than having two eyes to follow our own devices and find our end destruction in Hell fire. Abraham’s faith, then, was a tried one. Add now I conclude this sketch of the Patriarch’s call by observing that Abraham’s faith was well rewarded.

I think with all the trials of Abraham, you and I might even envy his position. That tent of his was a royal tent. Never did the curtains of Solomon himself enshroud more true royalty, or kingly nobility, than this poor tent in which Abraham sojourned. What a blessed man was he! His very dreams were blessed. The Lord was his Shield and his exceedingly great Reward. A land was given to him, and was it a barren land? No. The Jews of old used to say that Canaan was the breast of the world. For there was always an abundance of milk and fatness. Other countries might have been the world’s extremities, but this was the world’s own breast, flowing with milk and honey. God gave him from the river of Egypt, even to the great river—the river Euphrates, and he looking from his starry height as an exalted Patriarch, saw a race as numerous as the sand of the sea in-

habiting the land. And he expects a mightier blessing yet. He looks for the day when the sons of Abraham shall at the second coming of Christ be assembled in their own land, and all the people shall walk in the light of Zion.

I think I have said enough about Abraham. Had my voice been strong enough, I could have enlarged, for it is a subject upon which much might be said extremely interesting to the spiritual mind.

II. But now I come to observe that YOU AND I MAY BE PLACED IN THE SAME POSITION. At their conversion very many of the people of God are called to pass through the precise trial which Abraham endured. Some of us, it is true, were born of pious parents and our conversion was a theme of joy to the home. It made jubilee. The fatted calf was killed, and there was music and dancing. But others were born as children of the Philistines. Our parents were haters of God. I may be addressing such. No sooner did you begin to attend the House of God than your father was the first to laugh at you, and when you were detected on your knees, mother, and brothers, and sisters, all assailed you with sneers and ridicule. It may be that you have suffered much household persecution for the sake of Christ's Cross, and the profession of it you have made.

Moreover, you may have been called to separate yourself from your whole ancestry. For in looking back you cannot detect on the family tree one branch that ever bore heavenly fruit. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. The whole family has been given up to Satan, and you have been called to bear a lonely protest to the Gospel of Christ. You have come out, you have blighted your own worldly prospects, you have drowned your own interest in crossing the river. You have suffered the loss of all things for Christ's sake, and perhaps at the time you may have been greatly staggered. No, even now you may be passing through the fiery trial. You may be staggering in your soul, and saying, "Can this be right? Shall I give up my religion, shall I put back into port, or shall I encounter these waves that threaten to submerge my vessel?"

Dear Brothers and Sisters, if father and mother forsake you, then the Lord will take you up. "He that loves father and mother, and house and lands, more than Me," said Christ, "is not worthy of Me." You must leave all for Christ's sake. Be prepared. If they will come with you, take their compliance gladly. If they will not, then come alone. "Come out from among them. Be separate, touch not the unclean thing." Be an Abraham! Leave everything, and if you do this in faith, verily you shall not lack your reward. He is able, and He has promised to give you in this life ten times more than you lose for Him, and in the world to come life everlasting!

Such Christians as I have referred to, who are not called in early life to endure this trial, frequently have to bear its counterpart at another stage

in their journey. All of a sudden their minds are enlightened with regard to the pure simplicity of the Gospel. Their family is professedly religious and they have been in the habit of attending a certain place of worship with their kindred and friends, till at length a change passes over their religious views. Perhaps it is a doctrinal change. They have imbibed the orthodox faith from the pure fountain of Revelation itself, unalloyed by the traditions and qualifications of men. They have cast away all the heterodox glossary of man and have determined to believe nothing but the Sovereign Grace of God.

Perhaps their views on Baptism may have changed, and seeing nothing in Scripture to warrant infant sprinkling, they have come out with a determination to practice Believer's Baptism. It may be that this entails the scoff and scorn of all who know them. This grieves the hearts of those who know and love Jesus, and the questions arise with them, "What shall I do? These matters may be nonessential, shall I keep them back? Shall I for charity's sake weaken my testimony? Shall I only bear testimony to points on which I may agree with other people, and hold my tongue about the rest?" Oh, my dear Friends, such carnal policy, if you practice it, will do you serious injury! Whatever you believe, carry it out. Depend upon it, a grain of the Truth of God is a grain of diamond dust, and it is precious. There may be Truths nonessential to our salvation. But there are no non-essential Truths with regard to our comfort. Every Truth of God is essential. We must keep back none, but follow the Lord wholly. Let this be your song—

***"Through floods and flames, if Jesus lead,
I'll follow where He goes,
'Hinder me not,' shall be my cry,
Though earth and Hell oppose."***

The tendency of the present age is to temporize. We are asked continually to qualify our testimony. To cut off some portion of the Truth we preach; to smooth down and polish our words. God forbid! We will not do so. Whatever we believe to be true, to the last jot and tittle we will speak it out. I hope so long as I live there will always be a straight road from my heart to my mouth, and that I shall be able to preach whatever I believe in my soul, and to keep nothing reserved. You do the same. Though you should forsake all, and should be by all forsaken, for the Truth's sake, with Abraham's trial and Abraham's faith, you shall have Abraham's honor and Abraham's reward.

How often has this temptation happened to the rich. When those who have moved in court circles have suddenly become the subjects of the enlightening Spirit of Divine Grace, what opposition they have had to encounter! Many have been the noble ladies and gentlemen who have sat in

this hall—yet, although I know many of them were impressed, how few of them have remained! Here and there one. They shine like the gleanings of the vintage. Here and there one upon the topmost boughs. And what is the reason? Is it that their consciences are incapable of conviction? Is it simply that the cares of this life, or the deceitfulness of riches chokes the Word, and by-and-by they are offended? It is not likely that the simple worship of our unendowed Meeting Houses is to win the palm of courtly applause. It is not likely that the name of Dissenter is to be held respectable. It is not likely that Calvinism is to become the court religion of England. It is not likely, at least at present, that a poor, simple, honest man's ministry will be a ministry that courtiers regard.

We never expected it. Nevertheless, there have been some, and God bless them, who have not been ashamed to come out and leave behind them their former associates and take part with the despised people of God, scarcely knowing where they went. Though they did know we were poor, and most of us uneducated and illiterate, they have taken their portion with us, and they have shown no signs of turning back but do even glory in that which some count to their shame. God bless them, and that abundantly.

Again—this trial of faith comes oftentimes in matters of Providence. We have been lining our nests very softly, and counting all the eggs that are laid there with the greatest cheerfulness and delight. We have had much goods laid up for many years, and all of a sudden, misfortune, like a wicked boy, has climbed the tree and pulled down the nests, and the birds had to fly, and we have said, "Where shall we go?" But God has comforted us, and we have said in our hearts, "Every tree in the forest of earth is doomed to the axe, why, therefore, should we build our nest here? Let us fly away and find our home in the Rock of Ages." And God has rewarded our faith.

Our business, though suddenly blighted when flourishing in one place, has been, when removed amidst sad misgivings and dark uncertainties even more flourishing in another. Or if not, if trials have multiplied and poverty has succeeded wealth, yet Grace has increased, and as our afflictions abounded, our consolations have much more abounded. I believe, dear Friends, that many and many a time you, in your Providential journey will have to go forth—not knowing where you are going. But it is good for you! Do not murmur at it. If the father of the faithful had to do it, why should the sons murmur? The father of the family must not know where he was going, and shall you, the sons and daughters, long to read the future with wistful curious eyes? No, wherever God in His Providence guides you, let it be your joy to know that He is too wise to err—too good to be unkind.

And, Beloved, this is what I feel at the present moment respecting the position of ourselves as a congregation. I was put to this test by considering the way in which God led us, especially in reference to this place. It is now nearly three years since Exeter Hall was shut against us, for reasons which I have never considered to be fully justifiable. Then it was we went forth not knowing where we went, and this place was prepared for us. It is more than probable that after two more Sabbaths have elapsed we must go forth again not knowing where we shall go. But my faith is fixed upon Him who has provided for us up to now. This congregation cannot be scattered. God has gathered it, and we will go forth assured that a place shall be discovered in which we shall meet, and this shall work for the furtherance of the Gospel, and for the glory of God. I feel that perhaps God has another host of sinners to be aroused and converted to Christ. We are getting old steady sort of folks here, and we have settled into a respectable concern.

We may be turned into the streets, but, God going with us, we care not where we go. Wherever it is we shall be kept together. We are not men whose attachment has been formed hastily. We love each other. Like Abraham, and Lot and his family, we will journey together. We have no cause to fear. Do not, I entreat you, betray the slightest distress about it. If God has done it, He has wise purposes, let us submit in silence, and believe it must and shall be well. Abraham went forth “not knowing where he went.” We will imitate him. While Abraham’s faith is our faith, Abraham’s God is our God. He speaks and every doubt is hushed—“Fear not Abraham, I am your Shield and your exceedingly great Reward.” So then we may boldly say, “The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”

And I thought, while meditating upon this text, that the time must come to each of us, when, in a certain sense, we must go forth from this world not knowing the place to which we are going. The hour is coming when you and I shall lie low upon our silent beds of languishing, and the message will come—“Arise and go forth from the house in which you have dwelt, from the city in which you have done business, from your wife, from your children, from your bed, and from your table. Arise and take your last journey.” And what do I know of the journey? A little have I read of it, and somewhat have been revisited by the Spirit to my soul.

But how little do we know of the realms of the future! We know there is a black and stormy river called “Death.” He bids me cross it. May He give me Grace to go through the stream! And, after death, what comes? No traveler has returned to tell. Some say it is a land of confusion and of the shadow of death. Well, be it what it may, we will go forth, not knowing where we go, but yet knowing that since He is with us, passing through

the gloomy vale, we need fear no evil. We must be going to our Father's House, be that where it may. We must be going to our heavenly Father's kindly Home, where Jesus is—to that royal city which has foundations whose Builder and Maker is God. This shall be our last removal, to dwell forever with Him whom we love, to dwell in the bosom of God! We will take our last journey, and we will not fear to take it, for God is our refuge and strength, our helper in the hour of trouble and of death.

III. And now, my voice almost fails me, and therefore I must come at once to the last point, which is that of EXHORTING YOU MOST CHEERFULLY TO FOLLOW THE GUIDE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND PRECEPT, LEAD IT WHEREVER IT MAY.

Let us follow the Shepherd, with a ready mind, because He has a perfect right to lead us wherever He pleases. We are not our own, we are bought with a price. If we were our own, we might repine at our circumstances, but since we are not, let this be our cry, "Do what You will, O Lord, and though You slay me, yet will I trust in You." We are not true to our profession of being Christians if we pick and choose for ourselves. Picking and choosing are great enemies to submission. In fact, they are not at all consistent with it. If we are really Christ's Christians, let us say, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seems good to Him."

And then in the next place we ought to submit because wherever He may lead us, if we know not where we go, we do know one thing, we know with *Whom* we go. We do not know the road, but we do know the Guide. We may feel that the journey is long, but we are quite sure that the everlasting arms that carry us are strong enough, be the journey ever so many leagues in length. We do not know what may be the inhabitants of the land into which we may come, Canaanites or not. But we do know that the Lord our God is with us, and he shall surely deliver them into our hands.

Another reason why we should follow with simplicity and faith all the commands of God is this—because we may be quite sure they shall all end well. They may not be well apparently while they are going on, but they will end well at last. You sometimes see in a factory the wheels running some this way, and some the other, and some crossways, and they seem to be playing all sorts of antics, but somehow or other the deviser brings them all to work for some settled object. And I know that come prosperity or come adversity, come sickness or come wealth, come foe, come friend, come popularity, or come contempt, His purpose shall be worked out, and that purpose shall be pure, unmingled good to every blood-bought heir of mercy on whom His heart is set.

And I may add, to conclude, let us as a congregation, above all others, put the most implicit trust in our wonder-working God. When we recollect

what He has already done for us, how He has made the wrath of man to praise Him! The contempt, the contumely, and the scorn has helped to bring to this place the willing thousands to hear the Word! The abuse of our enemies has been our best help, our grandest assistance. And in looking back day after day, and Sabbath after Sabbath. I can only hold up my hands and exclaim, "What has God wrought!" And shall we doubt for the future?

No—mariner, hoist the sail! Loose the rudder bands. Drag up the anchor! Once again to sea we go, with the flag of faith at the masthead, with Jehovah at the helm, to a sure port the vessel shall be guided, though the storm may howl, and Hell beneath shall be stirred. For God is with us, and the God of Abraham is our refuge. God give to everyone of you the firmest trust in His Providence, that you may go forth not knowing where you go.

As for you that believe not in God, may you be led to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as in your Redeemer, and afterwards to trust your God, and leave all your concerns in His hands.

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ABRAHAM, A PATTERN TO BELIEVERS

NO. 2292

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“By faith he (Abraham) sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.”
Hebrews 11:9, 10.

ABRAHAM'S life, taken literally, is full of instruction, but we shall be wise to take the spirit of it and endeavor to make it our own. We cannot live just as Abraham did, but we can carry out the great principles which lay at the root of Abraham's life and, if the Holy Spirit will work in us a like degree of faith to that of the holy Patriarch, we may glorify God by our lives, even as he did.

The first point in which we must follow him is that our life must be a life of faith. We cannot be children of believing Abraham unless we live by believing. If you follow your senses, you go by what you see. Now, by what this poor flesh would teach you to desire, you will know nothing of the life of Abraham. He was a man who saw what eyes can never see. He heard what ears can never hear and he was moved, guided, actuated by motives which men of the world can never feel. He was a great man, a very prince among men—first, chief and father of all believing men—but he owed the pre-eminence of his character to the greatness of his faith. We must have his faith and we must live by it, as he lived by it—and then God will be able to make something of even such poor, feeble creatures as we are.

Let me remind you of what we read in the sixth verse, “Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” If we would be like “faithful Abraham,” we must begin by being Believers.

Abraham is, in three things, a pattern to us who believe, and those three things will be the divisions of our subject tonight. He is a pattern to us, first, *in the mode of his living*—“He sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tents.” Secondly, Abraham is a pattern to Believers *in the company he kept*—“With Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.” And, thirdly, Abraham is a pattern to Believers *in the home he looked for*—“For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.”

I. First, dear Friends, it should be our anxious desire to imitate Abraham spiritually IN THE MODE OF HIS LIVING. How did he live?

Well, first, he lived as a man *cut off from old associations*. He had dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees, on “the other side of the flood,” as the Scripture

says, and he was called to leave his family, his estate, his country—and go to a land which he had never seen, and which God promised, ultimately, to give to his family to be an inheritance forever. Abraham was not disobedient. He left his country and he journeyed to the land pointed out to him. Now, dear Friends, we are not, as a rule, to leave our friends and kindred. We would be very ungenerous and ungrateful if we did. There may, however, be occasions when even *that* may have to be done, but we are really to leave our old associations, our *unspiritual, sinful, worldly* associations and to come right out. You who are born of Christian parents and live in godly families, do not know much about this coming out, for you are singularly shielded. But there are some here who, if they become Christians, will get “the cold shoulder” from everybody in the house. A man’s foes will, in their case, be they of his own household. They will have to quit their present business. They will have to cut the connection between them and many ungodly men and women. They will have to come right out from the old kith and kin of their ungodliness and each one of them will have to say—

**“I am on the Lord’s side—
My old companions, fare you well,
I cannot go with you to Hell.”**

Now, Abraham did this and he never went back again, as some do who run away from their old master for a little while, and then go back to his cruel service to their own destruction.

I suppose Abraham was called out from the place where he dwelt, to live a separated life, because his kinsfolk and acquaintances were idolaters. The Lord said to Israel, through Joshua, “Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.” Abraham must, therefore, be taken away from that connection, that he might serve the living and true God. “No,” you say, “but when he went to Palestine, he was among idolaters.” Yes, but it is one thing to walk up and down among idolaters, and quite another thing to be in the *same family* with them! Abraham was safe enough from idolatry when he moved about among the Canaanites and saw their obscene worship. But he was not safe from it in a decent, respectable household like that of his father, where the teraphim were slyly adored, and the worship of false gods was carried on without the disgusting abominations that were common in Canaan.

I think that more people are lost through half-way Christians than through profligates. Men seldom become drunkards through drunkards. They become drunkards through—well, we will say no more about that—you know what I mean. And I do not think that men often learn to grow up dishonest by the example of great thieves, but it comes through imitating people who are thought to be honest, and yet can pilfer. Ah, Friends, it is a good thing to get a man right out from the world, even from the best side of it, for the best part of the world is bad enough and complete separation from it, with a deep abyss between it and ourselves, is really necessary for our spiritual health.

Now, the next thing about Abraham was that while he lived away from his country, *he lived in the land of promise*. That was an odd thing, was it

not, that he should be a stranger in the land of promise? God had given it to him and to his seed by a Covenant of Salt, and yet he possessed not a foot of it except what he bought from the sons of Heth for a burying-place. That is all he had. So, today, in this world, perhaps all that some of you will ever have is about six feet of earth for a burying-place, and yet it is all yours, it is all yours. You are living in the land of promise. "The meek shall inherit the earth." They that fear the Lord are the true possessors of the world and the day shall come when even this poor world, itself, brought into subjection to the Christ of God, shall be ours! Indeed, it is ours already and much more than the world is also ours, as the Apostle says, "Things present, or things to come, all are yours." Abraham was in the land of promise and yet he was a stranger in it.

In this point you must be like he. Regard everything about you as yours and yet consider that you have not anything in actual possession except that little plot in the cemetery where sleeps one well-beloved and where you, too, shall sleep, unless the Lord shall come. The point to be remembered is that we are to be strangers in this world! We are not to be mistaken for citizens of this world—we ought to be known to be strangers in it. Abraham never blushed to say, even to the lordly sons of Heth, "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you." He did not want them to think that he was a Canaanite. I do not know what he would have done if they had fallen into that idea. Christian people, if you were what you should be, men would know that you did not belong to this ungodly race! You have been redeemed from among men. You have been endowed with a new life to which they are strangers—and it ought to be apparent in your daily walk and conversation that you seek another country. This world is not your country and never can be!

Why was Abraham made to be a stranger in that country? I think it was that he might be tried and that in the trial Graces might be developed which could never have come out otherwise. And you are to be a stranger in the midst of your own friends, that your patience may be tried, that your faith may be exercised, and that your holy longings for the better country may often break out.

Was he not put there, also, that, being absent from Home, he might learn to look for it by faith? You are not to be in Heaven just yet. It is not the time for you to be there. You are to be absent from Heaven that you may long for it, that you may go there with a better appetite! I think a boy who goes to school loves home the better when he comes back for his holidays. Oh, what a Heaven will Heaven be to some of God's people who spend the most of their time on a hard bed, made harder by their lying long upon it, and who have none of the comforts of this life and, perhaps, not too much of the comforts of the life to come! One hour with our God will make up for everything we suffer here! But our suffering will go a long way towards making Heaven more truly Heaven when once we get there.

Abraham was placed in Canaan as a stranger, in this sense, that he had nothing to do with many of the cares that vexed the sons of Heth. Nor have you as a Christian anything to do with the cares that vex the worldling. You ought to have no care to get rich. You are a stranger here—why

do you want to heap up the furniture when you are soon going away? You ought not to know the worldings' fret and worry. They are at home and they may well fret. That house is decaying, this furniture is going out of repair—but what is that to you? It is none of yours! You are only a traveler stopping at the inn and if the place should fall down tomorrow, you will be away. You are on your journey Home—you are not a fixture, as these men are—you take but little concern in the things that they are most worried about. If I go to Mentone, I do not trouble about French politics. I know who is the President of the Republic, but I do not know the name of the great men who sit on his right and on his left hand, and I do not want to know! If I hear anything about politics, I like to know what is being done in my own dear homeland.

So, you Christians, your citizenship is in Heaven. As to these things which are down below, you take an interest in them so far as they concern the Kingdom of God and the good of your fellow men, but you are no partisan. Why should you be? You are a stranger and a foreigner—and so you keep aloof from party strifes and from those cares and other things of which the men of the world think so much.

I think, also, that Abraham was sent to Canaan as a stranger to be a witness for God. These people were soon to be destroyed, but their iniquity was not yet full, so they had another chance in the living of a man of God, a Prophet of God, among them. You, my Christian friend, are a stranger here, and you are living here for the good of those around you. It may be that you may snatch some brand from the burning. Be content to stay if such is the case.

Abraham lived there to show the people what God could do for those who trusted in Him. He was a mere gypsy in the land, moving about with his tent, and yet he came to be the richest man among them! Abraham was very greatly blessed in flocks and in herds, for God took care of him—and I think He did it to say to these Canaanites, "You see, with all your fret, and all your worry, God's servant, Abraham, gets on better than you do." So, when the king of Sodom offers Abraham wealth, he grandly says, "I will not take from a thread even to a shoelace, and I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, I have made Abraham rich." Yet the man was prospered and by his prosperity he taught men this lesson—that he who trusts in God is no fool. He who trusts in God shall find, even in this life, as far as he is able to bear it, and God thinks fit, that the Lord "is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

Still, Abraham was, to all intents and purposes, a foreigner in the land that belonged to him, even as you are strangers in a world that belongs to you. And as your Lord came unto His own, and His own received Him not. And as God, Himself, is a stranger in the world He made, even as David said to the Lord, "I am a stranger with You, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were."

To make this point still more clear as to Abraham's mode of living, I want you to notice that Abraham lived in tents. He never erected a house, he built no booths—he simply had his tent—he pitched it, or shifted it as he moved from place to place. Why was this? What did it mean? Not that

you should go in a tent, but that you should feel that everything you have, all round about you, all your possessions, are but frail things and are apt to change. I know that you begin to look upon that little property as a very sure thing—be not deceived, the only sure thing is your God! You are beginning to look upon your worldly income as pretty certain and you rest upon it. The only thing you may rest upon is the faithful promises of your God! So you think your wife will live? Ah, me, I do not wish to grieve you, but if I could prophesy, I would not tell you how soon she may be taken. You look upon your children as young immortals—but they are not. You will have to bury them, or they will have to bury you. All things here pass away.

I cannot tell you the strange joy I felt after the earthquake at Mentone. I had been to see many of the houses that had been shaken down and the two churches that were greatly injured, and I was full of the earthquake. I had quite realized its terrors and its power, and when I went up the stairs of my hotel, I thought, “Well, at any moment this may all come down with a run. When I go to bed, it may all slip away.” And I felt a great delight in thinking that I actually realized, not in a dream, but as a matter of *fact*, the shakiness of this poor earthquaky world and how everything in it is without foundation, but is just a mere tent which might come down at any moment—a gust of wind might blow it over! When we are most comfortable in it, we may hear a voice saying, “Up and away! Pack up your tent and journey somewhere else.”

Sit loose by this world, I pray you! Let not your roots strike into this accursed soil. Live here as those who are soon to live *there*—and tarry here as men who only tarry till the trumpet sounds, “Boot and saddle! Up and away, for this is not your rest.” When we live so, we shall live as Abraham did, and as God would have us live.

II. Now, very briefly, in the next place, we must imitate Abraham IN THE COMPANY HE KEPT—“Dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.”

What a fortunate, no, what a *gracious* circumstance it was that Abraham could find the best company in his own neighborhood! There are some men I know that are fine company out of doors, wonderful company, I have heard say, in the bar-parlor, or at a banquet, but they are no company to anybody at home. Short, gruff, sharp barks like a wolf—this is all their family can get out of them. When they are once inside the house, they are not at home. When they are outside, and far away, then they are quite at home.

But here is Abraham, who lives in a tent, and has the happiness of *finding his best company in his own family*. I suppose that he lived with Isaac about 75 years. If you calculate, you will find that that is about the time. Did he live with Jacob? Yes, he must have lived at the same time as Jacob for about 15 years. He saw his dear son Isaac married, and twin children born, and he marked their life long enough to see that Jacob was of that kind that would make a plain man dwelling in tents—and Abraham found the sweetest company with his own dear family. May the Lord in mercy convert all our children, and their wives, and their children—and

may we have a church in a house, as Abraham had a church in a tent! Happy are men who can find their best company at home!

But that is not the point I want to mention. *Abraham dwelt in tents with those like-minded with himself.* We know a man by his company—and a man is blessed or cursed by his company. Abraham dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob—men of the same spirit as himself, quite different men, but men saved by the same Grace, men who worshipped the same God, men who lived for the same end, men who were actuated by the same principles, men who were co-heirs with him of the promised land! This is the company I keep. These are the dearest friends I know. If you need a merry evening, child of God, get together half-a-dozen who are like yourself—God’s children! If you need an evening that you can look back upon with delight, gather such a company together! Never mind how poor the Believers are—perhaps the poorer they are the better it will be, for they will talk more freely with God, often, than some of what we call the better class—the worse class, I have often had to call them. Children of God, who really have to look to Him for daily bread, are often more full of faith than any other class of society. People of God who know the rough and tumble of the world, those who have stood its hard usage, those who mix from day to day with ungodly men who scoff at them—these are the men who come to God in real earnest! They do not *play* at religion—they live it! Never mind their station or rank in life. If they are in good favor with God, let them be in good favor with you and make your choicest companions among the people of God.

I have seen some, who call themselves children of God, turn up their noses at God’s best people because they did not put their H’s in the right places, or they spoiled the Queen’s English. Bless the dear souls! If their hearts are right with God, what matters it about the faultiness of their speech? Ah, how often have our souls been carried up to Heaven by prayers that violated all the proprieties! And how often have I been made to feel as dull as death by a prayer that was wonderfully beautiful in its wording—cold moonlight, no sunshine—a pretty picture, but no life in it! Give us the life of God and let us get into our tent with Isaac and with Jacob, and there let us find Isaac’s God, and Jacob’s God, and we shall do well!

Dear young Friends, who have lately come to Christ, mind that you keep company with God’s people. I do not want you to have a lot of acquaintances to talk to, but have one or two. Perhaps two may be better than one, but one is good enough—one godly Christian to whom you can go and tell your troubles—one older than yourself who has been a little farther on the road than you have been. Talk with such saints, as Jacob probably talked with father Isaac, and Isaac with father Abraham, while they lived together in the same encampment and dwelt in tents.

III. Now, lastly, I wish to say something that may lead your hearts away from this poor, dead, dull world. Let us imitate Abraham IN THE HOME HE LOOKED FOR—“for he looked for a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.”

Note, first, that *all saints live with an eye beyond time*. You know, the horse and the cow are quite satisfied as long as there is something in the rack or the manger—they make no provision for future months. Young men, when they begin life, often spend in waste all they get and make no provision for old age. We do not commend you for your wisdom if you have done so, but we beg you not only to think of all that may be needed while you are here, but to think also of the hereafter. Can we live through this transient span of time and never remember that we have to *live forever*? Can we spend all our time upon time and have no view to eternity? FOOLS, FOOLS, FOOLS, written in capital letters, are they who can use this life and never regard it as the hinge upon which must swing the great door of their eternal state! Children of God have an eye to the world to come. They do not live “like dumb, driven cattle,” but they think of the changeless state into which death, or Christ’s coming, may speedily plunge them—and they live with an eye to that state.

Saints have good reason to live thus. They have not much here, as a rule. “If in this life, only, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”—

**“Alas, for us, if you were all,
And nothing beyond, O earth!”**

Alas, for the believer in God, if all he had could be had here! Surely, we are to be greatly pitied as having missed the grandest end if this world contains our all! But it does not contain our all—Christians have a hope beyond the grave! What an awful thing it must be to everyone here who must die, but who has no idea, yet, of what will become of him, or, if down deep in his conscience there is an idea of what it will be—it is, “a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation!” How can you go home happy? How many die in the streets! How many die in their sleep! I pray you, be not so unconcerned as to be upon the brink of eternal ruin and yet never to think of it! God give you to look beyond the grave and make sure work for eternity!

We are told, here, that *Abraham expected a city*. That is an Inspired description of Heaven. On earth Abraham had no city. Lot went away to Sodom to seek a city and that city was burned with fire and brimstone, and Lot barely escaped with his life. Abraham kept to his tents—he knew nothing about city life, but, “he looked for a city.”

Why is Heaven called a city? Because it is a place of fellowship where men meet one another! You know, away in the country, there is sometimes a lonely cottage where they only see a man pass once in six weeks. They never even see the postman—they must go to get their letters. Heaven is not like such lonely places. We look upon Heaven, not as a spot where there will be half-a-dozen people of our own views and sentiments, but as a great city where there will be a wide fellowship among a multitude that no man can number!

It will be a city for security, within walls that never can be attacked, and with streets where there shall never be known an adversary. Heaven is a city because it is a place of splendor! Countries glorify themselves by the greatness of their cities. There is no city like the New Jerusalem!

It is a place of store. Cities have great wealth and great accumulations of useful things which are not found in villages and hamlets. In Heaven there is everything that a heart can desire—fruits new and old laid up by the great Lord for His well-beloved. Heaven is a place of freedom and, therefore, it is called a city. Men get “the freedom of the city,” here, and they are as proud of it as they well can be. But, oh, to be liverymen of Glory, freemen of the company of the perfect, citizens of the New Jerusalem! This is what we look for. We are looking for a city. We think all this so-called city of London to be but a dissolving view. We count this great country of England to be but like a pack of cards which will soon be knocked over. We reckon the whole world to be but a dream! There is a city, and we are looking for it!

The text said that Abraham “looked for a city which has foundations.” *Saints look for something abiding.* Abraham used to pull up the tent pins and his men would take down the big tent pole and roll up the canvas, and they were soon away, always moving about that country with their flocks and herds. The tents had no foundations, but Abraham was looking for a city that had foundations. There is nothing on earth that really has a foundation. Even those buildings that seem most firm will be dissolved and burned up in the last general fire. They are all “such stuff as dreams are made of,” and will be gone before long. But we look for a city that has foundations. Eternal love, eternal faithfulness, infinite power, endless bliss, immortal glory make the foundations of the city to which we are now wending our way, where all is peace and joy and nothing can ever disturb it! When I think of some of our dear friends who are already there, who have gone from this city to the city that has foundations, could I wish them back again? Could you wish them back to all the sorrow and grief of this poor trying life, back to the tent which has been dissolved, now that they have gained “the building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”? No, Beloved, stay where you are! We are hoping soon to join you. We can hear the sound of the coming chariot and we shall soon be with you where Jesus is!

This was Abraham’s way of living, counting everything around him to be no more fixed and settled than an Arab’s tent, and looking for a city which has foundations.

That city was to have a Builder and a Maker, as all cities have. Hundreds and thousands of names would have to be mentioned to describe this city of London and to say who the builders and makers of it were. You need not be anxious to know them, for they are not good for much, most of them. The builders and makers of the streets that we go through had better be forgotten and, I think, their houses, too. But there is a city that is all built by one Builder, it is the City of God. There will be nothing there that is trumpery or temporary—everything there is the best of the best, most suitable for the inhabitants and most glorious to behold! The very streets are paved with gold, exceedingly rich and rare. The best builders of earth cannot be compared to the great Builder above, the eternal Architect, the everlasting Chief Mason who has built those many mansions where His saints shall dwell forever!

I cannot tell you anything about Heaven. If I could come back for a while after going there, I would like to come and tell you, but that must not be. You must read this Book and study it. Above all, you must get Heaven into your own heart, for you will never have your heart in Heaven till you have Heaven in your heart. You must have Heaven in you before you will be in Heaven—and you can learn about Heaven by the experimental knowledge of the Word of God, by living near to the Lord, and by an experience of His deep love and His eternal faithfulness. Thus, there is a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.

Are you going there? Why, there are some of you who have everything that you own here. You are like the man, when the ship was sinking, who had all his property round his waist in pieces of gold—which sank him to the bottom of the sea! Everything that you have is here and it is sinking you down to Hell! As for us who have believed in Christ, we have only a trifle of spending money just to pay the toll-gates on the road—our treasury is up there, on the other side of the river, in the land of the hereafter, on the hilltops of Glory with the Ever-Blessed—where we hope to soon be!

Saints look for their Home at the end of their pilgrimage. When a man goes on a long journey, he likes to have thoughts of his home. How often have I told you how quickly my horses go home! They seem to know when their heads are turned homewards—and away they go. They pull up even the highest of Norwood's hills with all their might because they are going home! They do not go so fast when they are coming here and I do not blame them. They know where there is a good feed for them and a place to lie down—and even a horse goes best with his head towards home. Come, Beloved, our heads are towards Home, as many of us as believe in Jesus! We do not need to be lashed as we go up the everlasting hills! We will pull against the collar with all our might to get Home as soon as we can!

Oh, but I wish you were all going with us! I wish you were all going the way that leads to the city that has foundations. Trust Christ! Trust Christ! He is the Way! Come out from the world. Lead the separated life. Live upon an unseen God and as surely as there is a God in Heaven, you shall be in Heaven in His good time, for He will never leave one Believer outside in the cold! God bless you, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON.
HEBREWS 11:1-21.**

This is the triumphal arch of faith. Here we find the names of many of the heroes of faith and a brief record of some of the battles in which they fought and conquered. May you and I possess "like precious faith" as that of which we have here the story! We cannot enter Heaven without it! We cannot fight our way through the world without it.

Verse 1. *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for.* It gets a grip of what it hopes for and holds it in its hand.

1. *The evidence of things not seen.* We see by faith. We see by faith what cannot be seen by our eyes. We grasp by faith what cannot be grasped with our hands. A strange mystery is the simple act of faith.

2. *For by it the elders obtained a good report.* All the godly of the olden time had a good report of God and of holy men as the result of their faith.

3. *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.* They were not evolved out of something else that existed before—evolution is a rank lie against Revelation! The worlds were not made, not one of them was made, out of something pre-existent, but they were framed by the Word of God, and the things which are seen were not made of things which are seen.

4. *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.* He was a better man than Cain and his offering was a better offering than Cain's was. But at bottom here was the difference between the two brothers—Abel had faith and Cain had none. It was “by faith” that Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain presented.

4. *By which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaks.* What wondrous faith this is! Here is a dead man speaking! Here is a man who is slain by his brother, yet the one who is killed receives the approbation of God!

5. *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death.* Faith has conquered death, itself, or else avoided it. There is scarcely anything which faith cannot do, for faith ranks itself on the side of the Omnipotent God, and becomes all but Omnipotent. “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death.”

5, 6. *And was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is.* He cannot come to a God who, to his own mind, is non-existent! He must believe that He is.

6. *And that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.* You must believe that God hears prayer. You must believe that He will punish the guilty and that He will reward the righteous. Without this sure faith you cannot come to Him.

7. *By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.* You see, faith and fear can live in the same heart—and they can work together to build the same ark. Faith and fear are very sweet companions when the fear is filial fear, a holy dread of disobeying God. When we are moved with that fear, our faith becomes practical.

7, 8. *By the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed.* He did not hesitate to leave his family, to leave his property, to leave his country—he obeyed—“when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance.”

8. *And he went out, not knowing where he went.* Faith puts her hand into God's hand and follows where He leads, with sweet contentment, knowing that if she cannot see, God can, and He will not lead us wrong.

Do you not remember that hymn that our Brother Chamberlain sings so sweetly?—

***“So on I go—not knowing, I would not if I might.
I’d rather walk in the dark with God, than go alone in the light.
I’d rather walk by faith with Him, than go alone by sight.
Where He may lead, I’ll follow, My trust in Him repose.
And every hour in perfect peace I’ll sing, ‘He knows! He knows!’”***

9, 10. *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.* There have been many here in this House of Prayer who have looked for this city and they have gone to it. Others of us sit waiting here till our Lord’s dear hand shall beckon us and His voice shall say, “Come up higher.” We are looking for the city! Keep looking, Beloved, there is nothing here worth looking for, but look for “a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.”

11. *Through faith, also, Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.* And this holy woman is enrolled among these saintly ones. Her faith was not all it ought to have been, but God saw that it was true faith, and He loved it, and He wrote the record of it.

12. *Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.* This is true, literally, of Abraham’s seed according to the flesh. It is also true in a *spiritual* sense, for he is “the father of all them that believe,” and they are a multitude whom no man can number.

13. *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.* What long arms faith has! The promises are afar off and yet faith embraces them tonight! Embrace the promises, dear Friends, and stretch out your hands by faith to hands that have gone before—

***“Even now by faith we join our hands
With those that went before!
And greet the blood-sprinkled bands
On the eternal shore.”***

13. *And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.* They not only were strangers and pilgrims, but they confessed it! Confessed faith is requisite. Oh, you who, like Nicodemus, come to Christ by night, be ashamed that you are ashamed—and come out and boldly confess what you are!

14. *For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.* They were strangers and pilgrims here, and they sought a country elsewhere. Every man needs a country and if we have not one beneath the stars, we seek it somewhere else.

15. *And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.* Ah, but God’s people are not mindful of that country from whence they came out! They have opportunity to return, but they have no wish to return. May God’s Grace always keep any of you from turning back, for it is to turn back unto Hell! Your faces are heavenward today—keep them so. Remember

the doom of any that apostatize. It is impossible, "if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." "If the salt has lost its savor, with what shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." Lord, keep Your servants! Hold us up and we shall be safe!

16. *But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He has prepared for them a city.* They are not ashamed to be called God's people, and He is not ashamed to be called their God. They are looking for a city and He has prepared a city for them. Evidently He and they are well agreed. They need a Heaven and He is preparing Heaven for them, and preparing them for Heaven!

17-19. *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall your seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.* This was one of the grandest achievements of faith! It was also a figure or type of God's offering up His well-beloved Son almost on the same spot!

20, 21. *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.* The staff which had helped him so often in his early pilgrimage, the staff on which he leaned when he came back from the place of his wrestling, halting on his thigh. He leaned on it as he sat upright on his death couch and pronounced the parting blessing. So, you see, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, all lived by faith and did their works by faith, and distributed blessings to their children by faith. Friend, have you this faith, or have you not? If you have it, you are blessed among men, blessed among women! If you have it not, what hope is there for you either in this life or in eternity?

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AN INSCRIPTION FOR THE MAUSOLEUM OF THE SAINTS NO. 1825

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MARCH 1, 1885,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON MAY 8, 1884.**

***“These all died in faith, not having received the promises,
but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them,
embraced them and confessed that they were strangers
and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such
things declare plainly that they seek a country.”
Hebrews 11:13, 14.***

“THESE all died in faith.” Believers constitute a class by themselves—*“These.”* They are the people that dwell alone and shall not be numbered among the nations. We see a great many distinctions in the world which God takes no notice of—there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free in His sight. But there is a distinction which men think little of, which is greatly observed of God, and that is the distinction between them that believe and those that believe not. Faith puts you across the border most effectually, for it brings you out of darkness into marvelous light, from death to life and from the dominion of Satan into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son. It is the most important thing under Heaven that we should know that we believe in God. The Holy Spirit puts Believers by themselves and speaks of them as, *“These.”*

Believers are a class by themselves, even when they die. It is idle to think that we can mark out a spot in the cemetery where none but saints shall sleep, but yet there is a truth at the bottom of that folly. There is a separation even in death between the righteous and the wicked. The Lord seems to erect a mausoleum in which lie asleep the bodies of His people and He writes this epitaph across the front, “THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH.” As for those who died *without* faith, they indeed, died. But as for His people, a glorious resurrection awaits them—

***“They sleep in Jesus and are blest,
How kind their slumbers are.”***

The characteristics of God’s people are peculiar to themselves. They are all alike in that they all lived and all died in faith. They were not all equally believers, for some were strong in faith, and others were weak—but they all had faith and it continued in them even to the end so that, without exception—“these all died in faith.” We will speak, first, of *dying in faith*. Secondly, of *the faith according to which they died*. Thirdly, of *living by faith*, for that is mentioned in the text, “They confessed that they were

strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” And then, fourthly, *of the faith by which they lived*—“For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.”

I. First, then, here is DYING IN FAITH. What does it mean? Does it not mean that *when they came to die they had not faith to seek*, but having had faith in life, they had faith in death? I will pronounce no opinion upon deathbed repentance. I have heard judgments far too sanguine. I have heard verdicts far too severe. Where we know little, we had better say little, but this much I may say—I would not like to lie upon a sickbed, much less upon my deathbed and have a Savior to seek there! The pains and dying strife are usually enough to occupy a man’s thoughts. It frequently happens that the brain is disordered by disease and he that was clear of judgment, before, is then scarcely able to think. You must, yourself, have often seen men departing out of this life to whom it was useless to speak. If conscious at all, they were barely conscious. Have I not pressed the hand and received no token of recognition from a familiar friend? Have I not spoken into the ear and yet there has been neither hearing nor answering?

Sometimes friends have said, “He seems to know you, Sir, though he knows nobody else.” And certainly there has been a lifting of the eyelids and a movement of the hand which made me feel that my voice had penetrated into those dark recesses into which the mind had retired. But what could I say of deep mysteries, or even of simple faith, when the person has been in such a case? It has been a great joy to feel that we could sing, in many instances—

“Tis done, the great transaction’s done,”

for there was little hope that it could have been done at that hour. Dear Friends, if any of you are delaying, permit me to warn you not to do so! How can it be said of you that you *die* in faith if it cannot be said of you that you are *living* in faith? Not long ago, a friend of mine, who was apparently in robust health, fell dead in the busy streets of the city. Another came up to our religious meetings and on his return died in the waiting room of the railway station. Suppose that this had happened to any of you. It might have done so! Where would you now have been? I bless the name of the Lord that you are spared, or else you would have been where no voice of warning or of invitation could have reached you, but where darkness, death and despair would have enveloped you forever!

The saints mentioned in the text had not faith to *seek*. They *had it* when they came to die!

They did die, however, although they had faith, for faith is not given to us that we should escape death, but that we may die in faith! I have met with one or two friends who have believed that they would never die, but they have died, for all that. One Brother has often favored me with a kind letter of protest when I have spoken about Believers dying, for he affirms that he shall never die and that if a Believer does die, it is his own fault, for he must have fallen into sin. It is rather awkward for his theory that all these saints “died in faith.” We believe that hundreds, thousands and

millions of true and strong Believers have died—and we expect to follow through the same dark stream of death unless the Lord shall come.

This proves that God will not, in every case, hear our prayers for restoration to health. It is not true that if we gather together and pray for a sick man he will always be restored. No Believer would die if that were the case, for every Christian man would find some friends in Christ to pray for his recovery! If, therefore, God had thus divested Himself of His Omnipotence and put it upon *us*, we would keep our dear friends here as long as Methuselah and *no one* would die! It would be a kind of semi-murder to allow our Brother or Sister in Christ to depart! It would be destroying life, by omission to pray, and that would be murder in a degree! I thank God that He has not endowed us with any such power, for it would be a very dangerous privilege for any of us to carry about us. Would you have it said that you were the means of the death of your child, or wife, or friend, because you did not pray sufficiently for them? Is a kind of constructive murder to be laid at every man's door when he loses a friend? Is every woman whose child is taken away from her to be charged with lack of faith because her child died? This would make her guilty of her child's death. It is atrocious—it is a piece of fanaticism that will not bear thinking of, for, pushed to its legitimate issue, it would be cruel in the extreme, for it would condemn men and women who are perfectly innocent and who feel that they would have spared the lives of the departed by losing their own, had such a thing been possible.

“These all died in faith.” Saints die as well as sinners. David dies as well as Saul. He that leaned on the bosom of Jesus lived long, but died, at last—died as surely as Judas did, though in a better style. “It is appointed unto men once to die.” Two have entered into Glory by another way, but only two! There shall come a day when we that are alive and remain shall not see death, but that day is not yet.

“These all died in faith.” I suppose that it means, again, that *these all persevered to this end*. I have often been told that you may be a child of God one day and a child of the devil the next. I do not know upon what Scripture that statement is based. I do not believe a word of it! “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” But suppose he apostatizes? You have no business to suppose what God has promised shall not be, for He has promised, “I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from Me.” If a man truly believes, He shall be saved! “The righteous shall hold on his way and he that has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.” It has been said that we assert that if a man is once a Believer, he may live as he likes, and yet he will never be lost. We never asserted any such thing! It is a caricature of the doctrine that we preach. We believe that God has given to His people eternal life—and that must be true, for He has said—“I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.”

This means that they shall be kept from sin and especially shall be preserved from the sin which is unto death. Though they sin through infirmity, they shall not sin *fatally*, nor sin *finally*, but they shall persevere in holiness and in the love of God. If they wander, they shall be restored.

They shall be kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. The seed which God puts into the believing soul is a “living and incorruptible seed, which lives and abides *forever*.” “The water that I shall give him,” said Christ to the woman of Samaria, “shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.” He gives no transient salvation, but He gives one which will hold the Believer’s soul from the first even to the last. “These all died in faith”—in every one of these instances Grace lived to the last and triumphed at the close!

Does it not mean, also, that *they never go beyond faith*? These good people—Abel, Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Sarah—did they ever get beyond faith? We have heard of some who think they have done so. Having begun in the Spirit, they are afterwards made perfect by the flesh. First, it is the sinner’s simple trust—but they get beyond that and reach “the second blessing.” I wish that they would get beyond that, also, and reach the *third* blessing—and then they would feel more deeply than ever the *deep depravity of the old nature* and cling still more closely to Christ. To go on from a second to a third, and a fourth, and a fifth, and a sixth, and a seventh, and an eighth, and a ninth, and a tenth blessing is the thing for a child of God to do—but to get into a state of pride and cry that he has got a second blessing, is a poor way of growing!

There are 10,000 times 10,000 blessings after which Believers are constantly ready to reach, but, reach what they may, “the just shall live by *faith*.” He shall never get beyond trusting in the faithful promise of a gracious God, living out of himself upon Christ who must be our All in All. “These all died in faith,” the very best of them. They never got beyond that. How could they? Those who get above faith are like the man who went up so high on the ladder that he came down on the other side! They get to be so good that they trust in *themselves* instead of resting in Him who is the Lord our Righteousness! The Lord save us from self-conceit!

But then, while they did not get beyond faith, *the mercy is that they never got below it*. They still had faith. They were sometimes troubled with suspicions of themselves and doubts as to whether the Lord had really worked a work in their souls, but they never quite gave up faith. They had many pains in death, but they did not die in despair. Some of you cry, “What shall I do when I come to die?” I will tell you a more important question, and that is, What will you do *now*? Take life and death just as they come, bit by bit. You know how the Spartans endeavored to keep back the Persians. They took possession of the pass of Thermopylae and there the brave 200 stood and held the way against myriads! The enemy could only advance one by one. Now, do not think of all the armies of your troubles that are coming in the future, but meet them one by one! “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Pray—“Give us this day our daily bread.”

When you come to die, you shall have dying Grace in aging moments. And if you have lived in faith, do not doubt that you will die in faith! Joyfully, with all the strength I have, my quivering lips shall *sing*, instead of doubting or groaning! Faith shall grow stronger when it is about to be changed to full fruition. Go on, dear child of God, though the road is dark

before you, you can see the next step and that is all you need to see, for you cannot take two steps at a time! When you reach the next step, you will see the next—and so on to the end. He that has helped you up till now will help you even to the end! And when you are laid in the grave, it shall be said of you, as of all Believers that went before you, “these all died in faith.” Thus much upon dying in faith.

II. Now, what was THE FAITH THAT THEY DIED WITH?

Turn to the text and you get it. “Not having received the promises.” They had received a great deal, but *they had not received the fullness of the promises*. Abraham had not beheld his seed so many as the sands upon the seashore. Neither Isaac nor Jacob had ever seen the Shiloh, in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed. No, they had not received the promises. And you and I have not received all the promises. We have received a great deal, but there are certain promises which we have not received yet. The coming, the glorious coming, which is the brightest hope of the Church, when the Lord “shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God”—we have not received that as yet. And Heaven, itself, with all its splendor, its white robes and palms of victory we have not yet received. We are looking for these. We do not die in the fruition of these. We die in *faith*, expecting that we shall enter upon the fulfillment of these promises.

But, while they did not receive the promises, notice what they did. *They saw them*—saw them afar off. Faith touched their eyes with eye salve so that Abraham could see his seed in Egypt—his seed coming out of the land of Zoan. He could see the people traveling through the wilderness. He could see them entering upon Canaan and taking possession of the land. Yes, our Lord said, “Abraham saw My day.” He saw the Baby in Bethlehem. He saw the Son of God, who was the Son of Man, the son of Abraham, too! And you and I, if we have faith of the kind we ought to have, already see the coming of the Kingdom, the gathering together of the saints, the glory of the better land, “the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn, whose names are written in Heaven.” By faith we see it! Our faith has such a realizing power that it is as if we beheld it all! It is better to see it thus than with the bodily eyes, for if we looked upon it carnally, we would begin to doubt our eyes. But faith is the opposite of doubt, the evidence of things not seen!

They did more than that. We read that they “*were persuaded of them*.” “What is your persuasion?” asked one of a Christian man. He answered, “Well, this is my persuasion—I am persuaded that neither things present nor things to come shall ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” He was persuaded of the truth of that promise—and so is every Believer when he is in a right state. He is of that blessed persuasion—he is quite sure about the promises of God. “Airy nothings,” mutters one. “Mere fictions,” cries another. “Absolute certainties,” says the saint! He has been persuaded by an inward persuasion which others know nothing of. The Spirit of the living God has given him a faith which amounts to full assurance and he will not permit a question, or tolerate a suspicion.

It is more than that—*the saints “embraced” the promises.* The Greek word signifies, “salutes,” as when we see a friend at a distance. In the clear atmosphere of Mentone, I have sometimes stood on quite a lofty mountain and seen a friend down in the valley and I have spoken his name. And, at first, it was greatly to my astonishment when he replied, “Where are you?” I held a conversation with him readily. I could not have actually reached him for a long time, but I saluted him from afar! At times, dear Friends, we can see God’s promises afar off and we salute them. We are within hail of the Glory land, and we send up rockets in the dark, or, if it is daylight, we signal to the shore. Do you ever do that? Do you ever salute the mercies that are to come? Do you ever talk to the Glory that is to be revealed, yes, and commune with the glorified? This is the faith to live with and to die with—the faith that sees and is persuaded—and salutes the promised blessings of a faithful God! The Lord grant us more of that faith from this time forth!

III. Now, with extreme brevity, I want to speak upon THE FAITH TO LIVE WITH—the life of faith. How do we live if we live by faith? The answer is, they “confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” So are we.

We are *strangers by nature.* Born from above, our life differs from those about us. “The world knows us not.” We do not belong to this world at all. We are in it, but not of it.

We are strangers as to *citizenship.* Here we are aliens and foreigners, whose privileges are connected with another city and not with earth.

We are *strangers as to pursuits.* We are wayfaring men hurrying through this Vanity Fair. The men of the fair cry, “Buy! Buy!” but they have no wares that we care to purchase. We buy the Truth of God and they do not trade in that commodity. We have nothing to do with the business of the fair but to get through it as quickly as we can. There are certain things every traveler has to do when he stops in a town—he must seek an inn and He must take due refreshment—but if he is traveling home from a far country, he moves along as fast as he can.

We are *pilgrims in objective.* We have not come here for a pleasure excursion—we are journeying to the Temple to behold the face of our Lord. Our faces are set towards Jerusalem and we are asking the way there. Our cry is, “Onward! Hinder me not. I must be away to the Glory land, where my home is, where my God is!”

We are *pilgrims as to continuance.* We do not expect to be here long. Do any of you? Ah, then you are under a great mistake! We shall soon be gone. Each time we bid each other, “good night,” we may do it with the suspicion that we shall not all meet again. There never was the same congregation here twice and there never will be. Almost every week two members of this Church depart for the upland country and leave us in these lowlands. Of late our death rate has largely increased and the conscription for the armies of Heaven has fallen heavily upon us. How quickly are we gone! Say to yourself, then, next time you are fretting about worldly trouble, “I will not fret about it. It will not last long.” Next time you are tempted to rejoice in earthly treasure, say to yourself, “No, I shall not re-

joice in this. It is only a shadow. I will rejoice in something more enduring.”

Do not wonder if you are found to be *strangers as to usage*, for the world uses foreigners roughly and they that are really of Christ must expect to be misunderstood and misrepresented. They burned many pilgrims in former days. They cannot do it, now, but there are still trials of cruel mockings and the seed of the serpent still hates the seed of the woman.

This, then, is the way of Believers—they live in this world as strangers and foreigners who are hastening as fast as they can towards their own country where they shall hear their own language spoken, and shall abide with their own Father forever. This is the life of faith.

IV. And what is THE FAITH BY WHICH WE ARE ABLE TO ENDURE SUCH A LIFE AS THIS? Why, it is this faith—“They that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.”

Our faith is one which we dare to declare. We declare plainly that we seek a country! We are not ashamed to say that this is not our rest, that we do not expect to find pleasure *here*. We are speeding over this stormy sea to the Fair Havens, where we shall cast anchor forever. We are not ashamed to say this, however others may ridicule our hope!

And we say it because we believe it! In that day in which Christ washed away our sins, He gave us the token that we should be with Him where He is, for this is the mark of the blessed—“They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” That day in which we gave ourselves up to Christ, to be His forever, He gave us a certificate that we should be with Him in Glory, for this is His prayer, “Father, I will that they also whom you have given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory.” I trust, Beloved, no doubt ever crosses your mind as to the fact that every Believer in Christ will certainly be in Glory with Christ forever and ever. But if you so believe, I pray you to believe it strongly, so that you *realize* it—and if you do, you will sometimes sit yourself down and laugh—and if a neighbor asks you, “Why do you laugh?” you will say, “I laugh with very delirium of delight to think that this poor aching brow shall one day wear a crown—that I shall exchange these dusty garments for the snow-white robes of perfection—that I, whose voice on earth is so poor and cracked, shall one day sing with seraphim and cherubim.”

Oh, what joy to the invalid to know that he shall leave his bed on which he has suffered so much and go where the inhabitant shall no more say, “I am sick.” There the poor man shall no longer fight with poverty and earn his daily bread with toil, for the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne of God shall feed them and none shall know a need. How glad I am that this shall be in so short a time! Some here present may be in Heaven before this year is out—ah, perhaps he who speaks to you, now, may have gone very soon away to his own country! Shall it cost us any regret? It does for others, for we would gladly remain to do them good, but for ourselves, the contemplation is one of unmingled delight! The change has no loss about it—it is unspeakable gain! We lose nothing by departing to be with Christ, for it is not only better, but, as Paul puts it, it is, “far better.”

So now let us refresh ourselves with the thoughts of what we have and forget what we have lost. Let us just think of what is laid up for us and forget the penury of our estate below. Come, let us revel in the prospect of our ultimate perfection and thus gather strength with which to struggle with our present corruption. Come, let us now rejoice and ring the joy-bells at the prospect of beholding the Well-Beloved's face without a mist or a veil between! And so let us be content, awhile, to pass through the darkness, even though we see no light. We will meet! We will meet! We will meet in Glory!

A dear Sister, the other day, wanted to have a long talk with me and I did not want she should, for I had 20 more waiting, and she said, "Well, dear Pastor, I will have a long talk with you when we both get to Heaven." And I said, "Ah, that I will, and I will find you if I can, or you will find me—and we will converse without hurry." When we begin to speak up *there*, she will say to me, "How sweet is your voice." And I shall look at her, and answer, "How beautiful you have become!" We shall be amazed at one another in the perfect country." It does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is."

My dear aged friend will forget all her rheumatism and so shall I! You may be bent half double while you are here below, but you will be straight enough up there! Those dim eyes need glasses, but you will need no spectacles before the Throne of God! Limping, lame and halt you may be at this hour, but up there you will be able to join with all the happy ones in that music and dancing which shall celebrate the triumph of Christ! Arise, then, and be glad! Lift up your eyes from the dust and the darkness and gaze upon the eternal Light of God!

The gate of Heaven is open! If we may not enter yet, we shall enter before it shuts—let us rest assured of that! The day dawns and until its full light has come, let us rejoice in the anticipation of it. Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, let us cry, "Turn, O our Beloved, and abide with us!" He will not deny us our fond request! The Lord bless you, for Christ's sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Hebrews 11*.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—620, 533, 813.**

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THE PILGRIM'S LONGINGS

NO. 1030

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

***“And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from where they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He has prepared for them a city.”
Hebrews 11:15, 16.***

ABRAHAM left his country at God's command and he never went back again. The proof of faith lies in perseverance. There is a sort of faith which does run well but it is soon hindered, and it does not obey the Truth of God. That is not the faith to which the promise is given. The faith of God's elect continues and abides. Being connected with the living and incorruptible Seed, it lives and abides forever. Abraham returned not. Isaac returned not. Jacob returned not. The promise was to them as “strangers and sojourners,” and so they continued.

The Apostle tells us, however, that they were not *forced* to continue—they did not remain because they could not return. Had they been mindful of the place from where they came out, they might have found opportunities to go back. Frequent opportunities came in their way—there was communication kept up between them and the old family house at Padanaram—they had news, sometimes, from the old quarters. More than that, there were messages exchanged, servants were sometimes sent, and you know there was a new relation entered into—did not Rebekah come from there? And Jacob, one of the Patriarchs, was driven to go down into the land but he could not stay there. He was always restless till, at last, he stole a march upon Laban and came back into the proper life—the life which he had chosen, the life which God had commanded him, the life of a pilgrim and a stranger in the land of promise.

You see, then, they had many opportunities to have returned, to have settled comfortably, and tilled the ground as their fathers did before them. But they continued to follow the uncomfortable shifting life of wanderers of the weary foot who dwelt in tents, who own no foot of land—they were aliens in the country which God had given them by promise. Now, our position is very similar to theirs. As many of us as have believed in Christ have been called out. The very meaning of a Church is, “called out by Christ.” We have been separated. I trust we know what it is to have gone outside the camp, bearing Christ's reproach.

From now on, in this world, we have no home, no true home for our spirits. Our home is beyond the flood—we are looking for it among the unseen things—we are strangers and sojourners as all our fathers were.

We are dwellers in this wilderness, passing through it to reach the Canaan which is to be the land of our perpetual inheritance.

I. I propose, then, first of all this evening, to speak to you upon the opportunities which we have had, and still have, to return to the old house if we were mindful of it. Indeed, it seems to me as if the word, "opportunity," as it occurs in the text, were hardly strong enough to express the influence and incentive—the provocations and solicitations—by which, in our case, we have been urged. It is a wonder of wonders that we have not gone back to the world with its sinful pleasures and its idolatrous customs!

When I think of the strength of Divine Grace, I do not marvel that saints should persevere. But, when I remember the weakness of their nature it seems a miracle of miracles that there should be one Christian in the world who could maintain his steadfastness for a single hour! It is nothing short of Godhead's utmost stretch of might that keeps the feet of the saints and preserves them from going back to their old unregenerate condition. We have had opportunities to have returned—my Brothers and Sisters we have such opportunities in our daily calling. Some of you are engaged in the midst of ungodly men and those engagements supply you with constant opportunities to sin as they do, to fall into their excesses, to lapse into their forgetfulness of God, or even to take part in their blasphemies.

Oh, have you not often strong inducements, and if it were not for the Grace of God you would become as they are? Or, if your occupation keeps you alone, yet, my Brethren, there is one who is pretty sure to intrude upon our privacy, to corrupt our thoughts, to kindle strange desires in our breasts, to tantalize us with morbid fancies, and to seek our mischief. The Tempter he is, the Destroyer he would be if we were not delivered from his snares. Ah, how frequently will solitude have temptations as severe as publicity could possibly bring! There are perils in company, but there are perils, likewise, in our loneliness. We have many opportunities to return. In the parlor, pleasantly conversing, or in the kitchen, perhaps, occupied with the day's work—toiling in the field, or trading on the mart, busy on the land or tossed about on the sea—there are critical seasons on which destiny itself might appear to hang contingent.

Where can we fly to escape from these opportunities that haunt us everywhere and peril us in everything? If we should mount upon the wings of the wind, could we find "a lodge in some vast wilderness?" And do you think, then, we might be quite clear from all the opportunities to go back to the old sins in which we once indulged? No! Each man's calling may seem to him to be more full of temptation than his fellow's but it is not so. Our temptations are pretty equally distributed, I dare say, after all, and all of us might say that we find in our avocations, from hour to hour, many opportunities to return.

But, dear Brethren, it is not merely in our business and in our calling—the mischief lies in our bones and in our flesh. Opportunities to return! Ah, who that knows himself does not find strong incentives to return? Ah,

how often will our imagination paint sin in very glowing colors and, though we loathe sin and loathe ourselves for thinking of it, yet how many a man might say, "had it not been for Divine Grace, where would I have been?—for my feet had almost gone, my steps had well-near slipped." How strong is the evil in the most upright man! How stern is the conflict to keep under the body lest corruption should prevail! You may be diligent in secret prayer, and, perhaps, the devil may have seemed asleep till you began to pray—and when you were most fervent, then will he also become most rampant! When you get nearer to God, Satan will sometimes seem to get nearer to you!

Opportunities to return, as long as you are in this body, will be with you. To the very edge of Jordan you will meet with temptations. When you sit expectant on the banks of the last river, waiting for the summons to cross, it may be that your fiercest temptation will come even then. Oh, this flesh, the body of this death—wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from it? And while it continues with me I shall find opportunities to return. So too, dear Brothers and Sisters, these opportunities to return are adapted to our circumstances and adjusted to any condition of life, and any change through which we may pass.

For instance how often have professors, when they have prospered, found opportunities to return! I sigh to think of many that appeared to be very earnest Christians when they were struggling for bread, but who have become very dull and cold now that they have grown rich and increased in goods. How often does it happen in this land of ours that a poor earnest Christian has associated with the people of God at all meetings and felt proud to be there—but he has risen in the world and stood an inch or two above others in common esteem and he could not go with God's people any longer? He must seek out the *world's* church and join in to get a share of the respectability and prestige that will always congregate in the domain of fashion. And therefore the man has turned aside from the faith, if not altogether in his heart, at least in his life.

Beware of the high places! They are very slippery. There is not all the enjoyment you may think to be gathered in retirement and in ease. On the contrary, luxury often pulls up and abundance makes the heart to swell with vanity. If any of you are prospering in this world, oh watch, for you are in imminent danger of returning to the place from where you came. Alas, I have had to mourn over Christian men—at least I thought they were such—who have waxed very poor, and when they have grown poor, they hardly felt they could associate with those they knew in better circumstances. I think they were mistaken in the notion that they would be despised. I should be ashamed of the Christian who would despise his fellow because God was dealing with him somewhat severely in Providence.

Yet there is a feeling in the human heart, and, though there may be no unkind treatment, yet, oftentimes the sensitive spirit is apt to imagine it, and I have observed some absent themselves by degrees from the assembly of God with a sense of shame. It is smoothing the way to return

to your old place and, indeed, I have not wondered when I have seen some professors grow cold when I have thought where they were compelled to live, and how they have been constrained to pass their time. Perhaps they were living at home before, but now they have to take a room where they can have no quiet, and where sounds of blasphemy greet them, or, in some cases, where they have to go to the workhouse and be far away from all Christian communion or anything that could comfort them.

It is only God's Grace that can keep your graces alive under such circumstances. You see, whether you grow rich or whether you grow poor, you will have these opportunities to return. If you need to go back to sin, to carnality, to a love of the world, to your old condition, you never need to be prevented from doing so by lack of opportunities—it will be something else that will prevent you—for these opportunities are plentiful and countless. Opportunities to return! Let me say just one thing more about them. They are often furnished by the example of others—

***“When any turn from Zion's way,
Alas, what numbers do!
I think I hear my Savior say,
Will you forsake Me, too?”***

The departures from the faith of those whom we highly esteem are, at least while we are young, very severe trials to us. We keenly suspect whether that religion can be true which was feigned so cunningly and betrayed so wantonly by one who seemed to be a model, but proved to be a hypocrite. It staggers us! We cannot make it out. Opportunities to return you now have, but ah, may Grace be given you so that, if others play the Judas, instead of leading you to do the same, it may only bind you more fast to your Lord and make you walk more carefully lest you also prove a son of perdition.

And ah, my Brothers and Sisters, if some of us were to return, we should have this opportunity—a cordial welcome from our former comrades. None of our old friends would refuse to receive us! There is many a Christian who, if he were to go back to the gaiety of the world, would find the world awaits him with open arms. He was the favorite of the ball-room once. He was the wit “that set the table in a roar.” He was the man who, above all, was courted when he moved in the circles of the vain and frivolous—glad enough would they be to see him come back. What a shout of triumph would they raise and how they would fraternize with him!

Oh, may the day never come to you, you young people, especially, who have lately put on the Lord Jesus Christ and professed His name, when you shall be welcomed by the world! But may you forever forget your kindred and your father's house! So shall the King greatly desire your beauty, for He is the Lord and worship you Him. Separation from the world will endear you to the Savior and bring you into conscious enjoyment of His Presence. But, of opportunities to return there is no lack. Perhaps you will say, “Why does the Lord make them so plentiful? Could He not have kept us from temptation?” There is no doubt He could,

but it was never the Master's intention that we should all be hothouse plants. He taught us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," but, at the same time, He does lead us there and intends to do it—and this for the proving of our faith—to see whether it is true faith or not.

Depend upon it, faith that is never tried is not true faith! It must be sooner or later exercised. God does not create useless things—He intends that the faith He gives should have its test, should glorify His name. These opportunities to return are meant to try your faith and they are sent to you to prove that you are a volunteer soldier. Why, if Grace were a sort of chain that manacled you so that you could not leave your Lord—if it were a physical impossibility to forsake the Savior—there would be no credit in it! He that does not run away because his legs are too weak, does not prove himself a hero! But he that *could* run, but *will not* run—he that could desert his Lord but will not desert Him—has within him a principle of Grace stronger than any fetter could be! He has the highest, firmest, noblest bond that unites a man to the Savior. By this shall you know whether you are Christ's or not. When you have opportunity to return, if you do not return, that shall prove you are His.

Two men are going along a road and there is a dog behind them. I do not know to which of them that dog belongs, but I shall be able to tell you directly. They are coming to a crossroad—one goes to the right, the other goes to the left. Now which man does the dog follow? That is his master. So when Christ and the world go together, you cannot tell which you are following. But, when there is a separation and Christ goes one way, and your interest and your pleasure seem to go the other way—if you can part with the world and keep with Christ—then you are one of His! After this manner these opportunities to return may serve us a good purpose—they prove our faith, while they try our character—thus helping us to see whether we are, indeed, the Lord's or not.

But, we must pass on (for we have a very wealthy text) to notice the second point.

II. We cannot take any opportunity to go back because we desire something better than we could get by returning to that country from where we came. An insatiable desire has been implanted in us by Divine Grace which urges us to—

***"Forget the steps already trod,
And onward press our way."***

Notice how the text puts it—"But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly country." Brothers and Sisters, you desire something better than this world, do you not? Has the world ever satisfied you? Perhaps it did when you were dead in sin. A dead world may satisfy a dead heart. But ever since you have known something of better things and brighter realities, have you been ever contented with earthly things and empty vanities? Perhaps you have tried to fill your soul with the most dainty provisions the world can offer—to wit, God has prospered you, and you have said, "Oh, this is well." Your children have been about you. You

have had many household joys, and you have said, "I could stay here forever." Did you not find very soon that there was a thorn in the flesh?

Did you ever gather a rose in this world that was altogether without a thorn? Have you not been obliged to say, after you have had all that the world could give you, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity?" I am sure it has been so with me, with you, with all my kinsfolk in Christ, and with all my yoke-fellows in His service. All God's saints would confess, that, were the Lord to say to them, "You shall have all the world, and that shall be your portion," they would be broken-hearted men. "No, my Lord," they would reply, "do not put me off with these biding presents. Feed me not upon these husks. Though You should give me Joseph's lot, the ancient mountains, and the precious things of the lasting hills, You are more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.

"Yes, though You should confer on me the precious things of the earth and the fullness thereof, I would prefer before them all, the goodwill of Him that dwelt in the bush. Give me Yourself, and take these all away, if it so pleases You, but do not, my Lord, do not think I can be content with Egypt since I have set forth for Canaan, or that I can settle down in the wilderness now that I am journeying to the land of promise."

We desire something better. There is this about a Christian, that, even when he does not enjoy something better, he desires it—of that, verily, I am quite sure. How much of character is revealed in our desires! I felt greatly encouraged when I read this, "Now they desire a better"—the word, "country," has been inserted by our translators. It weakens the sense! Vague but vast is the craving expressed in the sentence, "They desire a better"—I know I long for something far better, something infinitely preferable to that which my eyes can see or that my tongue can express. I do not always enjoy that something better. Sometimes my path is dark. I cannot see my Lord. I cannot enjoy His Presence. Sometimes I am like one that is banished from Him—but I *desire* His blessing, I desire His Presence—and, though to desire may be but a little thing, let me say a good desire is more than nature ever grew because Divine Grace has given it! It is a great thing to be desirous. "They desire a better country." And, because we desire this better thing, we cannot go back and be content with things which gratified us once.

More than that, if ever the child of God gets entangled for awhile, he is uneasy by reason of it. Abraham's slips, for he had one or two, were made when he had left the land and had gone down among the Philistines. But he was not easy there—he must come back again. And Jacob—he had found a wife—no, two—in Laban's land, but he was not content there. No, no child of God can be, whatever he may find in this world. We shall never find a Heaven here! We may hunt the world through, and say, "This looks like a little paradise," but there is not any paradise this side of the skies, for a child of God, at any rate. There is enough out there in the farm yard for the hogs, but there is not that which is suitable for the children. There is enough in the world for sinners, but not for saints. They have stronger,

sharper, and more vehement desires for they have a nobler life within them, and they desire a better country.

And even if they get entangled, for awhile, in this country, and in a certain measure identified with citizens of it, they are ill at ease—their citizenship is in Heaven and they cannot rest anywhere but there. After all, we confess tonight, and rejoice in the confession, that our best hopes are for things that are out of sight! Our expectations are our largest possessions. The things that we have a title to and that we value are ours today by *faith*—we do not enjoy them yet. But when our heirship shall be fully manifested and we shall come to the full ripe age—oh, then shall we come into our inheritance, to our wealth, to the mansions, and to the Glory—and to the Presence of Jesus Christ our Lord! Thus you see the reason why the Christian cannot go back.

Though he has many opportunities he does not embrace any. He shrinks with repugnance from them all, for, through Divine Grace he has had produced in his heart desires for something better. Even when he does not realize, as yet, or actually enjoy that infinite good which is something better than creature comfort or worldly ambition, the desires, themselves, become mighty bonds that keep him from returning to his former state. Dear Brothers and Sisters, let us cultivate these desires more and more! If they have such a separating, salutary, sanctifying influence upon our heart, and effect upon our character in keeping us from the world, let us cultivate them much.

Do you think that we meditate enough upon Heaven? Look at the miser. When does he forget his gold? He *dreams* of it! He has it locked up tonight and he goes to bed, but he is afraid he heard a footstep downstairs and he goes to see. He looks to the iron safe—he would be quite sure that it is well secured. He cannot forget his dear gold. Let us think of Heaven, of Christ, and of the blessings of the Covenant, and let us thus keep our desires wide awake and stimulate them to active exercise. The more they draw us to Heaven, the more they withdraw us from the world!

III. It would be unreasonable if we did not vehemently resist every opportunity and every solicitation to go back. The men of faith to whom the Apostle referred in our text were not only strangers and pilgrims, but it is specially observed that they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on *the earth*. They were a grand company. From a unit they had multiplied into a countless host. Sprang there not even of one, and him as good as dead, as many as the stars of the sky in multitude and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable?

Now, Brethren, you see we have here a very strong reason for not returning. It is because you are the descendants, the *spiritual* descendants, of the Patriarchs. Let me try to show you how urgent a motive for steadfastness this is. Practically, it comprises two or three considerations of the highest moment. One thing it implies very obviously is that you thoroughly admire their example and fervently emulate their spirit. As you have glanced over the scroll of history, or narrowly scanned the records of men's lives, the pomp of Pharaoh has not dazzled you, but

the *purity* of Joseph has charmed you. The choice of Moses was to your taste, though it involved leaving a court where he was flattered for fellowship with enslaved kinsmen by whom he was suspected.

And you would rather have been with Daniel in the lions' den than with Darius on the throne of the empire. You have transferred their strong will to your own deliberate choice. And when the jeer has been raised against canting Methodists, you have said, "I am one of them." You have confessed as occasion served before the world. You have professed as duty called before the Church. You have accepted the consequences as honesty demanded before angels and men. Therefore, in your heart of hearts you feel that you cannot go back. The vows of God are upon you. It is well they are. Review them often—refresh your memory with them frequently. Refer to them and renew them in every time of trial and temptation. However never repent of them, or woe be unto you! There is a secret virtue in the confession if it is steadfastly adhered to and zealously maintained. It is a talisman, believe me, against the contagion of an evil atmosphere that might otherwise instill poison into your constitution.

Again, there is something else. You have joined yourself to an ancient fraternity that has something more than rules to guide or legends to captivate, for it has a combination of both, seeing it is rich in poetic lore. Why, it is on this that patriotism feeds as its daintiest morsel. "Your statutes," said David, "have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." Brothers and Sisters! There has no sorrow befallen you but what your noble ancestors have celebrated in cheery tones and set to music in cheerful strains! Oh, Beloved! If you could forget the statutes, can you ever fail to remember the songs? There has never been a revival in the Church that has not witnessed to the value of our psalmody. God be praised for our Psalms and spiritual songs! Oh, how often they have made melody in our hearts to the Lord! While our voices blend do not our very souls become more and more richly cemented? They are, in truth, the pilgrim's solace.

Another thing strikes me. I should not like you to overlook it. There is, in this chapter, a special commendation for faith in a pleasing variety of operations. But the *specialty* of the strangers and pilgrims is that they all died in faith. So, then, you cannot go back because you cannot accomplish the end for which you went forward till you die! You have joined the company that makes the goal of life the object for which you live. Your aim is to make a noble exit. "Prepare to meet your God" was the motto you started with. To go back can hardly cross your thoughts when to look back seems to you charged with peril. Our lease of mortal life is fast running out. The time of our sojourn on earth is getting more and more brief. Therefore, because our salvation is nearer than when we first believed, it is but meet that our desire to reach the better country and to enter the heavenly city should become more and more vehement, as "we nightly pitch our roving tent a day's march nearer home."

It comes to this, Brothers and Sisters. You feel that you have little to show for your faith. It never built an ark like Noah. It never offered a

sacrifice like Abraham. It never subdued kingdoms like Joshua. It never quenched the violence of fire as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. Well, be it so! But he that endures to the end shall be saved! And all those that die in faith are gathered with the great cloud of witnesses! Is not this enough to cheer the rank and file of the Church?

IV. But, I must close with the sweetest part of the text, where it is shown that we have a great and blessed assurance vouchsafed to us as an acknowledgment, on the part of God, of those opportunities and those yearnings persisted in. "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city." Because they are strangers, and because they will not go back to their old abode, "therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God."

He might well be ashamed of them! What poor people God's people are—poor, many of them, in circumstances, but how many of them I might very well call poor as to *spiritual* things. I do not think if any of us had such a family as God has we should ever have patience with them. We cannot, when we judge ourselves rightly, have patience with ourselves! How is it that God bears with the ill manners of such an obstinate, weak, foolish, forgetful generation as His people are? He might well be ashamed to be called their God if He looked upon them as they are, and estimated them upon *their* merits! Call them His own? How can He? Does He not, Himself, sometimes say of them, "How can I put them among the children?"

Yet He devises means, and brings about the purposes of His Grace. Viewed as they are, they may be compared to a rabble in so many respects that it is marvelous He is not ashamed of them. Still, He never does discountenance them and He proves that He is not ashamed of them, for He calls Himself their God. "I will be your God," says He, and He oftentimes seems to speak of it as a very joyful thing to His own heart! "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." While He calls Himself their God, He never forbids them to call Him their God. In the presence of the great ones of the earth they may call Him their God—anywhere—and He is not ashamed to be so called. Matchless condescension is this!

Have you not sometimes heard of a man who has become rich, and has risen in the world, who has had some poor brother or some distant relative? When he has seen him in the street, he has been obliged to speak to him and acknowledge him. But oh, how reluctantly it was done! I dare say he wished him a long way off, especially if he had some haughty acquaintance with him at the time who would, perhaps, turn round, and say, "Why, who is that wretched, seedy-looking fellow you spoke to?" He does not like to say, "That's my brother," or, "That's a relative of mine." Not so our Lord Jesus Christ! However low His people may sink, He is not ashamed to call them Brethren. They may look up to Him in all the depths of their degradation and they may call Him a Brother. He is in very fact a Brother, born for their adversity, able and ready to redress their grievances—He is not ashamed to call them Brethren!

One reason for this seems to me to be because He does not judge them according to their present circumstances, but much rather according to their pleasant *prospects*. He takes account of what He has prepared for them. Notice the text, "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He has prepared for them a city." They are poor now, but God, to whom things to come are things *present*, sees them in their fair white linen which is the righteousness of the saints! All *you* can see in that poor child of God is a hard-working laboring man, mocked and despised of his fellows. But what does God see in him? He sees in him a dignity and a Glory assimilated to His own! He has put all things under the feet of such a man as that—and crowned him with Glory and honor in the Person of Christ—and the angels themselves are ministering servants to such!

You see his outward attire, not his inner self—you see the earthly tabernacle, but the spirit newborn, immortal and Divine—you see not that. But God does. Or, if you have spiritual discernment to perceive the spiritual creature, you only see it as it is veiled by reason of the flesh and beclouded by the atmosphere of this world. But He sees it as it will appear—when it shall be radiant like unto Christ—without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. God sees the poorest, the least proficient disciple as a man in Christ! He sees a perfect man come unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ—such, indeed, as he will be in that day when he shall see Christ, for then he shall be like He is!

It seems, too, in the text, that God looks to what He had prepared for these poor people. He has prepared for them a *city*. I think that by what He has prepared for them, we may judge how He esteems and loves them—estimating them by what He means them to be, rather than by what they *appear* to be at present. Look at this preparation just a minute. "He has prepared for them"—"*them*." Though I delight to preach a free Gospel, and to preach it to every creature under Heaven, we must never forget to remind you of the specialty. "He has prepared for them a city"—that is, for such as are strangers and foreigners—for such as have faith, and, therefore, have left the world and gone out to follow Christ. "He has prepared for *them*"—not, "for all of you"—only for such of you as answer the description on which we have been meditating has he prepared "a city."

Note what is it He has made ready for them? It is a city. This indicates a *permanent* abode. They dwelt in tents—Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob—but He has prepared for them a *city*. Here we are tent dwellers, and the tent is soon to be taken down. "We know that this earthly house of our" tent "shall be dissolved, but we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "He has prepared a city." A city is a place of genial associations. In a lonely hamlet one has little company. In a city, especially where all the inhabitants shall be united in one glorious brotherhood, the true communism of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity may be realized in the purest sense and highest possible degree!

In a city such as this there are plentiful occasions for communion, where mutual interests shall enhance mutual joy. "He has prepared a

city.” It is a city, too, possessing immunities and conferring dignity upon its residents. To be a burgess of the City of London is thought to be a great honor, and upon princes is it sometimes conferred. But we shall have the highest honor that can be given when we shall be citizens of the city which God has prepared!

I must not dwell on this theme, delightful as it is. I need a few words with you, my Friends, direct and personal, before I close. Do not wonder, those of you who are the children of God, do not wonder if you have discomforts here. If you are what you profess to be you are strangers—you do not expect men of this world to treat you as members of their community. If they do, be afraid! Dogs don't bark as a man goes by that they know—they bark at *strangers*. When people persecute you and slander you, do not marvel! If you are a stranger, they naturally bark at you. Do not expect to find the comforts in this world that you crave after—that your flesh would long for. This is our inn, not our home. We tarry for a night—we are away in the morning.

We may bear the annoyances of the eventide and the night for the morning will break soon. Remember that your greatest joy, while you are a pilgrim, is your God. So the text says, “Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.” Do you need a richer source of consolation than you have? Here is one that can never be diminished, much less exhausted! When the created streams are dry, go to this eternal Fountain and find it ever springing up. Your joy is your God—make your God your joy!

Now, what shall be said to those who are not strangers and foreigners? Ah, you dwell in a land where you find some sort of repose, but I have heavy tidings for you. This land in which you dwell, and all the works thereof must be burned up! The city of which you, who have never been converted to Christ, are citizens, is a City of Destruction—and, as is its name—such will be its end. The King will send His armies against that guilty city and destroy it, and if you are citizens of it, you will lose all you have—you will lose your souls—lose yourselves. “Where can I go?” says one—“Where can I find comfort, then, and security?”

You must do as Lot did when the angels pressed him and said, “Hasten to the mountains lest you be consumed.” “To what mountain shall I go?” you ask? The mountain of safety is Calvary! Where Jesus died, there you shall live! There is death everywhere else but there! There is life arising from His death. Oh, fly to Him! “But how?” asks one. Trust Him! God gave His Son, equal with Himself, to bear the burden of human sin—and He died a Substitute for sinners—a real Substitute, an efficient Substitute for all who trust in Him. If you will trust your soul with Jesus, you are saved!

Your sin was laid on Him—it is forgiven you! It was blotted out when He nailed the handwriting of ordinances that were against you to His Cross. Trust Him, now, and you are saved! You shall become, from now on, a stranger and a pilgrim. In the better land you shall find the rest which you never can find here, and need not wish to find, for the land is polluted. Let us get away from it! The curse has fallen—let us get away to the country

that was never cursed—to the city that is forever blessed. Let us get where Jesus dwells—there may we find a home and abide forever!

God add His blessing to this discourse and give a blessing to your souls, for Jesus Christ' sake. Amen.

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GO BACK? NEVER!

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A SERMON
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*“And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly country.”
Hebrews 11:15, 16.*

Abraham left his country at God's command and he never went back. The proof of faith lies in perseverance. There is a sort of faith which runs well for a while, but it is soon ended and it does not obey the Truth of God. The Apostle tells us, however, that the people of God were not forced to continue because they could not return. Had they been mindful of the place from whence they came out, they might have found opportunities to return. Frequent opportunities came in their way. There was communication kept up between them and the old family house at Padan-Aram. They had news concerning the family house. More than that, there were messages exchanged—servants were sometimes sent. There was also a natural relationship kept up. Did not Rebekah come from there? And Jacob, one of the Patriarchs, was driven to go down into the land, but he could not stay there. He was always uneasy, until at last he stole away from Laban and came back to the proper life, the life that he had chosen—the life that God had commanded him to live—of a pilgrim and stranger in the land of promise. You see, then, they had many opportunities to have returned, to have settled down comfortably and tilled the ground which their fathers did before them—but they continued to follow the uncomfortable life of wanderers with weary feet, dwelling in tents, who own no plot of land. They were aliens in the country which God had given them by promise!

Now our position is a very similar one. As many of us as have believed in Christ Jesus have been called out. The very meaning of a Church is called out—by Christ we have been separated. I trust we know what it is to have gone outside the camp bearing Christ's reproach. Henceforth in this world we have no home, no true abiding home for our spirits. Our home is beyond the flood. We are looking for it among the unseen things. We are strangers and sojourners, as all our fathers were—dwellers in this wilderness, passing through it to reach the Canaan which is to be the land of our perpetual inheritance. I shall this evening first speak to you upon—

I. THE OPPORTUNITIES WHICH WE HAVE HAD, AND STILL HAVE, TO RETURN to the old house if we were mindful of it. Indeed, in the text

it seems to me as if the word, “opportunities,” were not, in our case, nearly strong enough. It is a wonder of wonders that we have not gone back to the world and to our own sin. When I think of the strength of Divine Grace, I do not marvel that saints would persevere, but when I remember the weakness of their nature, it seems a miracle of miracles that there should be one Christian in the world at a single hour. It is nothing short of Godhead’s utmost stretch of might that preserves a Christian from going back to his old unregenerate condition! We have had opportunities to have returned. My Brothers and Sisters, we have *such opportunities in our daily calling*. Some of you are engaged in the midst of ungodly men. You have opportunities to sin as they do, to fall into their excess, into their forgetfulness of God, or even into their blasphemies! Oh, have you not often strong inducements, if it were not for the Grace of God, to become as they are or if your occupation keeps you alone, yet, my Brothers and Sisters, there is one who is pretty sure to keep us company and to seek our mischief—the Destroyer, the Tempter! And how frequently will even solitude have temptations as severe as publicity could possibly bring? There are snares in company, but there are snares in our loneliness. We have many opportunities to return. In the parlor—in conversation, perhaps—in the kitchen about the day’s work or in the field, or at the market, on land and on sea. Where can we go to escape from these opportunities to return? If we should mount upon the wings of the wind, could we find “a lodge in some vast wilderness” where we could be quite clear from all the opportunities to go back to the old sins in which we once indulged? No! Each man’s calling may seem to him to be more full of temptations than his fellows, but it is not so. Our temptations are pretty equally distributed, I dare say, after all. And all of us might say that we find in our avocations from hour to hour many opportunities to return.

But, dear Brothers and Sisters, it is not merely in our business and in our calling—the mischief lies in our bones and in our flesh! *Opportunities to return in our own nature*. Ah, who that knows himself does not find strong incentives to return? Ah, how often will our imagination paint sin in very glowing colors—and though we loathe the sin and ourselves for thinking of it, yet how many a man might say—“Had it not been for Divine Grace, my feet had almost gone, my steps had well-near slipped.” How strong is the evil in the best man, how stern is the conflict to keep under the body, lest corruption should prevail! You may be diligent in secret prayer and, perhaps, the devil may have been asleep till you began to pray, but when you are most fervent, then will he also become most rampant! When you get nearest to God, Satan will sometimes seem to get nearer to you. Opportunities to return as long as you are in this body will be with you to the very edge of Jordan! You will meet with temptations when you sit gasping on the banks of the last river, waiting for the summons to cross—it may be that your fiercest temptation may come even then! Oh, this flesh, this body of this death—wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from it? While it continues with me I shall find opportunities to return.

And, dear Brothers and Sisters, these opportunities to return are prepared for us *in any condition of life and any change* through which we may pass. For instance, how often have professors, when they have prospered, found opportunities to return? I sigh to think that many that appeared very earnest Christians when they were struggling for bread have become very dull and cold now that they have become rich. How often does it happen that the poor earnest Christian has associated with the people of God at all meetings and felt proud to be there, but when he has risen in the world and stood an inch or two above others in common esteem, he could not go with God's people any longer? He must seek out the world's fashionable church and join in it to get a share of the respectability and prestige that will always gather there—and he has turned aside from the faith—if not altogether in his heart, at least in the defense of it in his life. Beware of the high places—they are very slippery! There is not all the enjoyment that you may think to be gathered in retirement and in ease, but, on the contrary, luxury often puffs up, and abundance makes the heart to swell with vanity! If any of you are prospered in this world, oh, watch, lest you be mindful to return to the place from where you came out.

But it is just the same with adversity. Alas, I have had to mourn over some Christians—at least I thought they were—who have grown very poor. And when they have grown poor, they hardly felt they could associate with those whom they knew in better circumstances. I think they were mistaken in the notion that they would be despised. I would be ashamed of the Christian who would despise his fellow because God was dealing with him somewhat severely in Providence. Yet there is that feeling in the human heart—and though there may be no unkind treatment—yet often the spirit is apt to imagine it and I have known some absent themselves by degrees from the assembly of God. It is smoothing the way to return to your old places. And, indeed, I have not wondered when I have seen some professors grow cold when I have thought how they were compelled to live! Perhaps they lived in a comfortable home, before, but now they have to take a room where there is no comfort and where sounds of blasphemy meet them. Or in some cases, perhaps, they have to go to the workhouse and are far away from all Christian communion or anything that could comfort them. It is only Grace that can keep Grace alive under such circumstances.

You see, then, whether you grow rich, or whether you become poor, you will have these opportunities to return. If you want to go back to sin, to carnality, to a love of the world, to your old condition, you never need to be prevented from doing so by lack of opportunities! It will be something else that will prevent you, for these opportunities are plentiful, indeed! Opportunities to return—let me say just this much more about them—*are often furnished by the example of others—*

***“When any turn from Zion's way,
Alas, what numbers do!
I think I hear my Savior say,
Will you forsake Me too?”***

Departures from the faith of those whom we highly esteem are, at least while we are young, very severe trials to us. We cannot think that religion can be true if such a man is a hypocrite. It staggers us—we cannot understand it. Opportunities to return you have now, but ah, may Grace be given you so that if others play the Judas, instead of leading you to do the same, it may only bind you more fast to your Lord and make you walk more carefully, lest you also prove a son of perdition!

And oh, my Brothers and Sisters, if some of us wished to return, we would have this opportunity to return in a certain sense. We would find that *none of our old friends would refuse to receive us*. There is many a Christian who, if he were to go back to the gaiety of the world, would find the world receive him with open arms. He was the favorite of the ballroom once. He was the wit that set the table on a roar! He was the man who, above all, was courted when he moved in the circle of the vain and frivolous—glad enough would they be to see him come back! What shouts of triumph would they raise and how they would welcome him! Oh, may the day never come to you, you young people, especially, who have lately put on the Lord Jesus Christ and professed His name, when you shall be welcomed by the world—but may you forever forget your own kindred and your father's house, so shall the King greatly desire your beauty, for He is your Lord, and you worship Him! Separation from the world shall endear you to the Savior and bring you conscious enjoyment of His Presence—but opportunities to return I have now shown you, are plentiful enough.

Perhaps you will say, "Why does the Lord make them so plentiful? Could He not have kept us from temptations?" There is no doubt He could, but it never was the Master's intention that we should all be hot-house plants! He taught us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," but at the same time He leads us there and intends to do it—and this is for the proving of our faith to see whether it is true faith or not. Only He also bids us pray, "Deliver us from evil." Depend upon it, faith that is never tried is not faith! It must, sooner or later, be tested. God does not create useless things. He intends that the faith which He gives should have its test and should glorify His name. These opportunities to return are meant to try your faith and they are sent to you to prove that you are a volunteer soldier. Why, if Grace was a sort of chain that manacled you so that you could not leave your Lord—if it had become a physical impossibility for you to forsake your Savior—there would be no credit in your abiding faithful to Him! He that does not run away because his legs are weak, does not prove himself a hero, but he that *could* run, but *won't* run—who could desert his Lord, but won't desert Him—has within him a principle of Grace stronger than any fetter could be—the highest, strongest, noblest bond that unites a man to the Savior! By this you shall know whether you are Christ's or not—when you have opportunity to return—if you don't return, that shall prove you are His. Two men are going along a road and they have a dog behind them. I do not know to whom that dog belongs, but I'll tell you directly. They are coming to a cross road. One goes to the right, the other goes to the left. Now which man does the dog

follow? That is his master! Now when Christ and the world go together, you cannot tell which a man is following—but when there is a separation, and Christ goes one way, and your interest, your pleasure seems to go the other way—if you can part with the world and stay with Christ, then you are one of His. So that these opportunities to return may serve us a good purpose by trying our faith and helping us to see whether we are, indeed, the Lord's or not. But we must pass on (for we have a very wealthy text tonight) to notice the second point.

II. WE CANNOT TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO BACK BECAUSE WE DESIRE SOMETHING BETTER than we could get by going back. An insatiable desire has been implanted in us by Divine Grace, which urges us to—

***“Forget the steps already trod,
And onward press our way.”***

Notice how the text puts it, “But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly.” Brothers and Sisters, *we desire something better than this world!* Do you not? Has the world ever satisfied you? Perhaps it did when you were dead in sin. A dead world may satisfy a dead heart, but ever since you have known something of better things, have you ever been content with the world? Perhaps you have tried to fill your soul with worldly things. God has prospered you, and you have said, “Oh, this is well!” Your children have been about you. You have had many household joys and you have said, “I could stay here forever.” Did you not find, very soon, there was a thorn in the flesh? Did you ever get a rose in this world that was altogether without a thorn? Have you not been obliged to say, after you have had all that the world could give you, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity”? I am sure it has been so with you. All God's saints will confess that if the Lord were to say to them, “You shall have all the world, and that shall be your portion,” they would be brokenhearted! “No, my Lord,” they would say, “don't put me off so. Don't give me these husks, though You give mountains of them. You are more glorious than all the mountains of praise. Give me Yourself, and take these all away if so it pleases You, but don't, my Lord, don't think I can fill myself with these things.” We desire something better!

Notice, next, that there is this about a Christian, that *even when he does not enjoy something better, he desires it*. How much of character is revealed in our desires. I felt greatly encouraged when I read this, “Now they desire a better”—the word, “country,” has been inserted by our translators—they desire something better. I know I do. I do not always enjoy something better. Dark is my path. I cannot see my Lord, I cannot enjoy His Presence, and though it may be a little thing to desire, let me say a good desire is more than nature ever grew! Grace has given it. It is a great thing to be desirous. They desire a better country. And because we desire this better thing, we cannot go back and be content with things which once gratified us!

More than that, if ever the child of God gets entangled for a while, he is uneasy in it. Abraham's slips—for he made one or two—were made when he had left the land and gone down among the Philistines. But he

was not easy there—he must come back. And Jacob, he had found a wife, no, two, in Laban's land, but he was not content. No, no child of God can be. Whatever we may find in this world, we shall never find a Heaven here. We may hunt the world through and say, "This looks like a little paradise," but there is no paradise this side of the skies—for a child of God at any rate! There is enough out there in the farmyard for the hogs, but there is not for the children! There is enough in the world for sinners, but there is not for saints! They have stronger, sharper and more vehement desires, for they have a nobler life within them and they desire a better country. And even if they get entangled, for a while, in this country, and in a certain measure become citizens of it, they are still uneasy—their citizenship is in Heaven—and they cannot rest anywhere but there. After all, we confess tonight, and rejoice in the confession, that our best hopes are for things that are out of sight. Our expectations are our largest possessions. The things that we have, that we value, are ours today by faith! We don't enjoy them, yet, but when our heirship shall be fully manifested and we shall come to the full ripe age, oh, then we shall come into our wealth—to the mansions and to the Glory and to the Presence of Jesus Christ our Lord!

So, then, you see the reason why the Christian cannot go back, though he has many opportunities, lies in this, that through Divine Grace he has had produced in his heart desires for something better. And even when he does not as yet enjoy that something better, the desires, themselves, become mighty bonds that keep him from returning to what he was. Dear Brothers and Sisters, cultivate these desires more and more. If they have such a separating effect upon our character in keeping us from the world, let us cultivate them much. Do you think that we meditate enough upon Heaven? Look at the miser. When does he forget his gold? He dreams of it! He has locked it up tonight and he goes to bed, but he is afraid he heard a footstep downstairs, and he goes to see. He looks to that iron safe to be quite sure that it is well secured—he cannot forget his dear gold! Let us think of Heaven, of Christ, of all the blessings of the Covenant, and let us thus keep our desires wide awake. The more they draw us to Heaven, the more we shall be separated from earth. But I must close with the sweetest part of the text.

III. WE HAVE FOR THIS REASON GREAT BLESSEDNESS.

"Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city." Because they are strangers and because they will not go back to their old abode, therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God! He might be. What poor people God's people are—many of them poor in circumstances, but how many of them I might very well call poor as to spiritual things? I do not think if any of us had such a family as God has, we would ever have patience with them. We cannot even have, when we judge ourselves rightly, patience with ourselves! But how is it that God bears with the ill manners of such a forward, weak, foolish, forgetful people as His people are? He might well be ashamed to be called their God if you look upon them as they are! Acknowledge them—how can He acknowledge them? Does He not, Himself, sometimes say of

them, "How can I put you among the Children?" And yet He does. Viewed as they are, they are such a rabble in many respects that it is marvelous He is not *ashamed* of them—and yet He never is—and to prove that He is not ashamed of them we have this fact—that He calls Himself their God! "I will be your God," and He oftentimes seems to speak of it as a very joyful thing to His own heart. "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," and while He calls Himself their God, he never forbids *them* to call Him their God! And in the presence of the great ones of the earth they may call him their God anywhere. He is not ashamed that it should be so.

We have sometimes heard of a man who has become great and rich in the world, and he has had some poor brother or some distant relative, and when he has seen him in the street, he has been obliged to speak to him and acknowledge him, but I dare say he wished him a long way off, especially if some rich acquaintance happened to be with him who should say, "Why, Smith, who was that wretched seedy-looking fellow that you spoke to?" He does not like to say, "That is my relative," or, "That is my brother." But we find that Jesus Christ, however low His people may sink, and however poor they may be, is not ashamed to call them brethren, nor to let them look up to Him in all the depths of their degradation and call Him, "Brother born for adversity." He is not ashamed to call them brethren! And one reason seems to me to be because *He does not judge them by what they are, but by what He has prepared for them.* Notice the text, "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them—He has prepared for *them* a city." They are poor, now, but God, to whom things to come are things present, sees them in their fair white linen which is the righteousness of the saints! All you can see in the poor child of God is a hard-working, laboring man, who is mocked at and despised, but what does God see in him? He sees in him a dignity and a glory second only to Himself! He has put all things under the foot of such a man as that, and crowned him with glory and honor in the Person of Christ—and the angels, themselves, are ministering servants to such a one as that! You see his clothes—you see not him! You see but his earthly tabernacle, but the Spirit, twice born Immortal and Divine, you see not that! God does. Or if you spiritually perceive that part, you see it as it is, but God sees it as *it will be when it shall be like unto Christ*, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. God sees the poorest child of God as he will be in that day when he shall be like Christ, for he shall see Him as He is. It seems in the text that *God looks to what He has prepared for these poor people*—"He has prepared for them a city." And I think that by what He has prepared for them, He esteems them and loves them—esteeming them by what He means them to be rather than by what they appear to be!

Now let us look at this preparation just a minute. "He has prepared for them"—*them*. I delight to preach a free Gospel, and to preach it to every creature under Heaven, but we must never forget the specialty—"He has prepared for *them* a city." That is, for such as are strangers and foreign-

ers, for such as have faith and, therefore, have left the world and gone out to follow Christ! He has prepared for them, not for all of you, but only for such as He has prepared for the city, has He prepared the city. But note what it is. It is a *city*, which indicates, first, *an abiding happiness*. They dwelt in tents—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—but He has prepared for them *a city*. Here we are tent-dwellers, but the tent is soon to be taken down. “We know that this earthly house of our tent shall be dissolved, but we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” “He has prepared for them a *city*.” A city is *a place of social joy*. In a lonely hamlet one has little company, but in a city much. There all the inhabitants shall be united in one glorious brotherhood—the true Communism, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity in the highest possible degree! There shall be delightful communion. “He has prepared for them a city.” It is a city, too, *for dignity*. To be a citizen of the City of London is thought to be a great honor, and is it sometimes conferred upon princes—but we shall have the highest honor that can be given when we shall be citizens of the city which God has prepared!

But I must not dwell on this, delightful theme as it is, for I must close by noticing you, who are the children of God. Don’t wonder, don’t wonder if you have discomforts here. If you are what you profess to be, you are strangers. Don’t expect the men of this world to treat you as one of themselves—if they do, be afraid! Dogs don’t bark when a man goes by who they know—they bark at *strangers*. When people stop slandering and persecuting you, be afraid! If you are a stranger, they naturally bark at you. Don’t expect to find comforts in this world that your flesh would long for. This is our inn, not our home! We tarry here a night—we are away in the morning. We may bear the discomforts of the eventide and the night, for the morning will break soon. Remember that your greatest joy, while you are a pilgrim, is your God. So the text says, “Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.” Do you need a greater source of consolation than you have got? Here is one that can never be diminished, much less exhausted. When the creature streams are dry, go to this eternal fountain, and you will find it always springing up! Your God is your true joy—make your joy to be in your God.

Now what shall be said to those who are not strangers and foreigner? Oh, you dwell in a land where you find some sort of repose, but I have heavy tidings for you! This land in which you dwell and all the works thereof, must be burned up. The city of which you, who have never been converted to Christ, are citizens, is the City of Destruction! And as is its name, such shall be its ends The King will send His armies against that wicked city and destroy it—and if you are citizens of it, you will lose all you have—you will lose your souls, you will lose yourselves! “Wither away?” asks one. “Where can I find comfort, then, and security?” You must do as Lot did when the angels pressed him and said, “Hasten to the mountain, lest you are consumed.” The mountain of safety is Calvary. Where Jesus died, there you shall live! There is death everywhere else, but there is life in His death. Oh, fly to Him! “But how?” asks one. Trust Him! God gave His Son, equal with Himself, to bear the burdens of hu-

man sin—and He died a Substitute for sinners, a real Substitute, an efficient Substitute for all who trust in Him. If you will trust your soul with Jesus, you are saved! Your sin was laid on Him—it is forgiven you! It was blotted out when He nailed the handwriting of ordinances to His Cross. Trust Him, now, and you are saved! That is, you shall henceforth become a stranger and a pilgrim, and in the better land you shall find the rest which you never shall find here, and need not wish to find, for the land is polluted! Let us stay away from it. The curse has fallen. Let us get away to the uncursed and ever blessed, where Jesus Christ dwells forever! God add His blessing on these words for Christ's sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
HEBREWS 11:1-26.**

VERSES 1, 2. *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report.* The names of those who lived in old time are handed down with commendation because of their faith. If they had had no faith, we would have had no report of them.

3. *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.* The world was not made out of the world. There was nothing to make it out of. It was created simply by the Word of God, and our faith knows that. I question whether we should ever get in the matter of the Creation beyond what is revealed to our faith. Reason is all very well, but faith mounts upon the shoulders of reason and sees much farther than reason, with her best telescope, will ever be able to see. It is enough for us who have faith that God has told us how He made the world, and we believe it.

4. *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it, he being dead, yet speaks.* He spoke by faith when he lived. Faith makes him speak now that he is dead. What wonders faith can work! The first saint who entered Heaven entered there, it is certain, by faith! It was faith that enabled him to present an acceptable sacrifice, and it was faith that presented him to Heaven. If the first who entered Heaven entered there by faith, rest assured that will be true to the last—and none will enter there but those who believe.

5. *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.* Beloved, if we cannot get a translation as Enoch did, let us not be content without getting God's good pleasure as he did! Oh that it may be said of us that we pleased God! Then we shall, one way or another, conquer death, for if we do, we shall triumph over the grave, and if Christ shall come before we die, we shall triumph in the coming of Christ. Anyhow, faith shall be more than a match for the last enemy.

6. *But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.* Do we not sometimes fail in this matter? We try to come to God without believing that He is. We seem to pray to nothing, or to nobody, to a specter, to a phantom. But that prayer which is accepted is prayer to a real God, of whom we are assured that He is. Do we not also fail in our belief as to the success of prayer? We do not fully recognize that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. He that prays, believing that God will be found by him, shall not pray in vain. Tonight we may well say, “Lord, increase our faith.”

7. *By faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear—*For there is a fear which comes of faith—a fear which is the strength of faith’s arms, by which it moves us into action. It is not slavish fear. It is a fit and proper, and reasonable fear, such as any man must have that believes God’s threats. “Moved with fear.”

7. *Prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.* Every act of faith condemns the world. Men who did not believe in God were, some of them, made to feel condemned, and others *were* condemned, even if they did not feel it, when they saw this holy man building a great ship upon dry land—a ship which he never would launch, but to which God would bring the sea, so that he would float over the deep waters, absolutely secure, while others perished. If you want to judge the wickedness of men, you need not set yourself to do it in the first place. Live a holy life, and you will judge the ungodly. I have heard it said that if there is a crooked stick and you want to show how crooked it is, you need not waste words in description—place a straight one by the side of it, and the thing is done immediately! Noah condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

8. *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing where he went.* Very easy to read about that, but not so easy to do it—to tear yourself from home and friends—to go into a totally unknown country, swarming with enemies, solely on the promise that one day that country would belong to his seed! It might be hundreds of years afterwards, but God had called him and Abraham raised no question, but away he went!

9. *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country.* Not building a house there—not becoming a citizen of it, but always dwelling there in gypsy fashion.

9. *Dwelling in tabernacles.* That is, in tents.

9, 10. *With Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.* For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. He did not build a city. He did not try to do so, “for he looked for a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.”

11. *Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.* And that was good judgment, was it not?

There is no mistake about that. Whatever difficulties may lie in the way, we may always know that He is faithful who has promised. You are not past age, my Brother. God will bless you in seeking to do good. You are not past age, my Sister. Have but faith in God, and then in your old age you may bring many to the Savior's feet. He is faithful who has promised.

12. *Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead.* For he was ordered to be sacrificed. There sprung from one, and him as good as dead.

12. *So many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable.* Or if this text means Abraham, then his body was dead and yet there sprang of him a seed "so many as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable."

13. *These all died in faith, not having received the promises.* By which is meant, not that they did not receive the promises, but they did not receive the *things* promised.

13, 14. *But having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.* They have not come to it yet, nor will they as long as they are here below. They are still seeking a country.

15. *And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from where they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.* Abraham, if he wanted to settle down, might have crossed once more the river and gone back to Ur of Chaldee. But he did not look for a city upon earth. He was evidently looking for one somewhere else. The country that he sought was not beyond the Euphrates, but beyond the narrow stream of death!

16. *But now they desire a better country.* Do you feel those desires within your heart? If not, surely you have no faith, for they that have faith in the better country desire it.

16. *That is, an heavenly: therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He has prepared for them a city.* He might be ashamed to be called their God if He had unsettled them, and made them long for another city, and yet had never prepared one for them. The longings of the saints are but prophecies of the benediction of God! That which He makes us hunger for, is prepared. The Bread of Life shall be given us, and that country which He makes us seek, exists, and will be found by us! Therefore keep your face that way, and let every longing and pining for the home country reassure you that this is not any dreamland, but that there is such a place!

17-19. *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall your seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead: from where also he received him in a figure.* Faith does not always account. She is satisfied with God's Word. But when she does account, then she is great at accounts, for here is a man who had not heard of the resurrection from the dead, yet be-

lieved in it! Christ had not risen from the dead. There had been no such Chapter for Abraham to read as that wonderful one, the 15th Chapter of the first Epistle to Corinthians—and yet his faith seemed to have a Revelation within itself! God must keep His promise. Therefore, if I, in obedience to Him, put the promised seed to death, God can raise him up, for He must keep His promise. He cannot lie.

20. *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.* Blind as he was, he could see more than many that have good eyes, for he had the eyes of faith. There is no end to the blessing that faith can bestow upon others. A believing man can bless his children. I believe in the blessings of good men. Why should I not? If they are Believers, they have power with God. Their wishes are prayers. Their prayers are heard. Their blessings, then, are realities.

21. *By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.* That wonderful staff on which he leaned when he came out of Jabbok—that wonderful staff with which he crossed this Jordan in his poverty, but after which he became two bands.

22. *By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.* Faith touches all sense of things—even a funeral and bones, too—for faith is good at everything. She can sweep the house and seek diligently. She can enter Heaven. She can go to the gates of death. Oh, for more of it!

23. *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.* Their faith made them hide him, for that faith laid hold of God, and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

24-26. *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.*

—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 TWO PIVOTS

NO. 2633

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

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

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

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

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

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

I. I shall ask you to keep your Bibles open at the 11th of Hebrews, that you may see, first, “THEREFORE.” Therefore God is not ashamed to be

called the God of His people. Look at the 13th verse—“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” and so on. “Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.”

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

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

Oh, that is the faith we want! “These all died in faith,” “therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.” He is not the God of apostates, for He has said, “If any man draws back, My soul shall have no pleasure

in him.” If he has put his hand to the plow and looks back, he is not worthy of the Kingdom of God. It is the man who steadily and perseveringly, resting in his God and believing Him against all that may be said by God’s foes, holds on until he sees the King in His beauty in the land which is very far off. Of such a man it may be truly said that God is not ashamed to be called his God!

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

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

**“Kings and Prophets waited for,
And sought, but never found.”**

But they were perfectly willing to wait and God was not ashamed to be called the God of such a waiting people!

You remember Mr. Bunyan’s description of the two children, Passion and Patience? Passion would have his best things now, and he had them. But he soon spoiled them, misused them and abused them. But Patience would have his best things last and, as Bunyan very prettily says, “There is nothing to come after the last.” Therefore, when Patience got his best things, they lasted on forever and forever. God, loves not the passion, but He loves the patience. “The husbandman waits for the precious fruit of

the earth and has long patience for it.” And I would gladly imitate him. “My Soul, wait only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.” The worldly man lives in the present, but that is a poor way of living, worthy only of the beasts that perish.

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

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

Now read on in the 13th verse, and see whether this description fits yourself, dear Friend. “But having seen them afar off.” So *they were a far-seeing people*. God, you know, sees everything. And He loves people who can see afar off. The gods of the heathen have eyes, but they see not. And the Psalmist says, “They that make them are like unto them.” So they that worship a blind god are a blind people! But they that worship a seeing God are, themselves, made to see, for they are numbered with the pure in heart who shall see God! It is a grand thing when a man can see infinitely further than these poor eyes can carry, far beyond the range of the strongest telescope, when he can see beyond death—and see beyond the Judgment Seat and see right into Heaven and there behold the Lamb leading His glorified flock to the living fountains of waters, and the saints, with tearless eyes, forever bowing before the Throne of God and

the Lamb! God is not ashamed to be called the God of the people who can do this! God is ashamed to be called the God of you blind people, whose eyes have never been opened. But when He opens your eyes, then He becomes your God and He is not ashamed to be so called, for He it is that gives us this blessed power to see! Until spiritual sight is thus bestowed upon us, we are blind. But when God has given us sight, then He is not ashamed to acknowledge us as His children, nor is He ashamed to acknowledge that He, Himself, is our God!

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

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

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

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

Remember how David said to the Lord, “I am a stranger with You, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.” That is a very amazing expression—“a stranger with You”—blessed be God, not “a stranger to You,” but, “a stranger *with* You.” That is to say, God is a stranger here—it is His own world and He made it, but when Christ, who is the Son of God, and the Creator of the world, came into it, “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” And they soon made Him feel that the only treatment which He would receive at their hands was this—“This is the Heir. Come, let us kill Him, that the inheritance may be ours.” There was no man

who ever lived who was a truer Man than was Christ the Lord. But there was never a Man who was more unlike the rest of men. He was a homely Man, a home-loving Man to the last degree, yet He was never at home. This world was not His rest. He had nowhere to lay His head and what was true, naturally, was also true spiritually. This world offered Christ no rest whatever.

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

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

Now read on a little further. "For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." The word translated, "country," might, I think be better rendered, "fatherland." "They who say that they are strangers here declare plainly that they seek a fatherland." The word is sometimes translated, "their own country." "A Prophet is not without honor, save in his own country." It is the same word here in the Greek. *It signifies that they sought their own country—their fatherland.* Therefore God, who is the Father of all His people, and whose Heaven is their fatherland, is not ashamed to be called their God. Now, dear Friends, are

you seeking a fatherland? I put the question to every hearer here—Are *you* looking for a fatherland? Sir Walter Scott wrote—

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

So said the patriot poet and we have said it, too, for we are patriots! But yet I venture to say that this is not my home, this is not my fatherland—

***“I’m but a stranger here!
Heaven is my home.”***

My fatherland lies out of sight, beyond the everlasting hills, where God dwells and where Christ sits at the right hand of the Father. Now, the men who, by Grace, have been brought to say this, “We are out of our own country, we are seeking a fatherland,” these are the people of whom it is written, “Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.”

Paul goes on to say, “And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from where they came, they might have had opportunity to have returned.” Brothers and Sisters, this is another characteristic of Believers—*we have left the world as our home, and joy, and comfort, to seek a better country, but we may go back if we like.* There is no compulsion to keep a man a Christian but the compulsion of love. He who is enlisted in the army of Christ may desert if he pleases, but the blessed Grace of God will hold us so that we shall do no such thing! We have plenty of opportunities to return. Oh, how many invite us to turn back! I know how they beckon some of you who have lately come out on the Lord’s side. Sometimes it is a female voice that would charm you and there is a great fascination about it, and you have to mind what you are doing lest you become unequally yoked together. Sometimes it is the voice of the world promising you wealth—offering you a better situation, perhaps, if you will go back. But, like Moses, you esteem “the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” You have plenty of opportunities to return. There are back entrances to Satan’s Kingdom—he does not require you to come in at the front door—he lets you sneak in, again, by the back gate. If you want to go into slavery, again, there are many opportunities of returning! But if you are made by Christ to be, in this respect, like God, immutable, so that you say, “I cannot turn. I cannot change. I must be what Christ has made me. I must stand fast for truth and for holiness, and stand fast as long as I live, so help me, my God”—if you are able to talk like that, then God is not ashamed to be called your God! Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, you can get back to the old country whenever you like. But they never will go back—the deep dividing river rolls between them and that land, even as, today, there rolls between some of us and the world the stream in which we have been buried with Christ and, by God’s Grace, we shall never cross it again! And, because of that holy determination, God is not ashamed to be called our God.

I finish up my remarks upon the word, “therefore,” which is very full of matter, by noticing how the Apostle says, “But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly.” That is to say, *instead of going back, we are pressing forward towards heavenly things*. “God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” “The Father seeks such to worship Him.” That is, those who are *spiritual*, who are seeking after heavenly things with all their heart. These are they whom God loves, for God is spiritual. God is heavenly and when He has made us spiritual and made us pant after heavenly things, then He is not ashamed to be called our God.

I have put these points before you as briefly as I could, wishing every moment to be examining myself, and asking you to examine yourselves. Have you a life within you which makes you pant and pine after heavenly things? Whatever you have in this world, do you hold it with a loose hand? Do you feel that it is not your real riches—it is not your true treasure? You know that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all rich men. God blessed them and gave them a great increase to all that they had, but, still, they did not live simply to gather riches! They did not make that their chief delight. If you had asked them, they would have told you that they were inheritors of a mysterious Covenant by which God had bound Himself to be their God, and the God of their seed. And in that Covenant was included the promise that Christ Himself should come out of their loins—and for Him they waited—He was the hope of their spirit. Now, dear Friends, if that is the case with you, also, you can understand the meaning of my text, “Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.”

II. I must give but a few minutes to the second part of the text, yet it needs a good deal of thought, for it says, “for He has prepared a city for them.” The second pivot word is, “for.”

Now go back again to the text in Exodus, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Yet Paul says, “These all died,” and we know that our Lord said to the Sadducees, “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” Is He not ashamed to be called the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, seeing that they all died? No, because they are not dead, though they died, “for He has prepared for them a city.” These men, though they *lived and died, and passed out of the world without having received the heritage, are not dead!* There is the glory of the matter. When they lay a-dying, the devil might have come and said to them, “Now, what have you got by your Covenant with God? You left father, mother and everything that you had, and went and lived the separated life—and now you are dying out here—what have you got? Nothing but some little holes in the Cave of Machpelah into which they will push your bodies! That is all that you have!”

Oh, but the devil does not know! Or if he does, he is a liar, for they gained *everything* by that life of faith, for they still live and God has prepared a city for them. And now they have entered that city! Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob are at the very head of the celestial company, for our Lord said, "Many shall come from the east, and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven." And, by-and-by, Machpelah shall yield up her dead and Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob shall live, again, in the fullest sense, for their bodies as well as their souls shall live again! And Joseph's bones, which he would not allow to lie in Egypt—for he would not let the Egyptians have a scrap of him—shall live, and thus, in their flesh, shall they see God and shall rejoice before Him. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called the God of these people who all died in faith because they are still living—and they shall continue to live forever and ever!

Somebody may, perhaps, say that these people did not receive the promises. Well, they did not *literally* receive the fulfillment of them. They did not see Christ. They did not witness the descent of the Holy Spirit. They did not hear the Gospel preached. They did not see those wonders that they looked for—so is not God ashamed to be called the God of people who, after all, did not receive the promises? No, because "He has prepared for them a city." *They have received the promises now* and they shall receive them yet more and more! God will yet cause the Believer's life to be all blessing. Do not be afraid of the consequences of trusting in Christ—you may have the rough side of the road, here, but what we sang, just now, is quite true—

***"Afflictions may press me, they cannot destroy,
One glimpse of His love turns them all into joy!
And the bitterest tears, if He smiles but on them,
Like dew in the sunshine, grow diamond and gem!
Let doubt, then, and danger my progress oppose—
They only make Heaven more sweet at the close.
Come joy or come sorrow, whate'er may befall,
An hour with my God will make up for them all!"***

If God gave to His children gall and wormwood to drink here—yes, if they never had anything but aches and pains from the moment of their conversion till they died—yet they would have the best of the bargain, after all, for there is an eternity of bliss in the Heaven which is prepared for them!

But, further, these people were a sort of gypsies, always moving about and living in tents, different from everybody else. Yes, *they were strangers among the people where they dwelt*. And men often say of us, now, that we cannot be content to go on as other people do. Those Patriarchs were strangers, odd folk, peculiar people. Is not God ashamed to be called their God? No, because they have now gone where they are all right, for their manners and customs are exactly suitable to the place. A very dear old woman, whom I visited when she was dying, said to me, "One thing comforts me, Sir, I do not think that God will ever send me among the wicked, for I never could get on in their company. The best times I have ever had were when I could sit with a few of the Lord's people and hear them talk about Him. And though I could not always be

sure that I was, myself, a Christian, yet I was very much like them and I was very happy when I was with them. I think I shall go to my own company, Sir." Yes, dear Soul, and so she did! And if we are strangers here, we are going to that company where we shall not be strangers! They will understand our language when once we get across the river into the King's own country. "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God" because they speak the language which He speaks, the language of His own courts—and He is not ashamed to say, "These are My people, and I acknowledge them before you all."

Notice, yet again, that *these people were seekers and desirers all their lives*. "They seek a country." "They desire a better country." Is this a right state of heart for a Christian—to always be seeking and always desiring? Well, Brothers and Sisters, that is the state in which I often am and I wish, still, to stay in that condition—always seeking, always desiring. Whenever God gives me any spiritual blessing, I always seek more. And if He gives me more, I seek for still more! And if He gives me my heart's desire, I pray Him to enlarge my heart that I may desire some greater gift. For, in spiritual things, we may be as covetous as we like! We may say, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And God is not ashamed to be called the God of those who are thus seeking and desiring because He has laid up for them all that they seek! And He has prepared for them all that they desire! I would be ashamed to set a poor person desiring if I could not gratify the desire. I would be ashamed to set a man seeking if I knew that he could not get what he sought after. But because God has prepared a city for these seekers and desirers, He is not ashamed to be called their God!

As I stood, this evening, by the bedside of the dear Brother whom I mentioned to you a little while ago, I could not help saying, "Here is a poor soul covered with boils and blisters, but God is not ashamed to be called his God." And there may be a child of God who is very poor, indeed, with hardly sufficient garments to cover him, but God is not ashamed to be called his God, either. Perhaps his own brother is ashamed to be called his brother. I have even known cases where men have been so wicked as to be ashamed of their own parents because they were not so well off as themselves. But God is never ashamed of His poor people. Yes, and if God's people are persecuted, and ill-used. If they are covered with mud from head to foot, or if they are cast into prison, God is not ashamed to be called their God. In those days when God permitted His people to be fastened up to the cross, or when others were taken to the stake and burnt, and everybody hissed at them, and cast out their

name as evil, and said that they were the offscouring of all things—God was not ashamed to be called their God!

I am almost ashamed to say what I am going to say. I really feel my very heart blush that I should have to say it. I have known some professors who have been ashamed to call God their God! Is it not strange that the glorious God of Heaven and earth should call a worm His own, and take mean wretches such as we are, and say, “I am not ashamed to be called their God,” and yet that some of these creatures should be so miserably cowardly that they are ashamed to be called the people of God? Oh, write His name on your foreheads! Never be ashamed of it! Ashamed of God? Ashamed of Jesus? Ashamed of the Truth? Ashamed of righteousness? I do not wonder that there is such a text as this—“The fearful”—that is the cowardly—“and unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

If you really do love the Lord, come out and show yourself on His side! And if He is not ashamed of you and if your prayer is, “Lord, remember me when you come into Your Kingdom,” acknowledge Him as your Lord and Savior now! You who are not members of any Christian Church—you who have believed in Christ, or think you have—and yet have never confessed Him. You who are hiding like rats behind the wall—come out and confess Christ! What are you doing? How can you be soldiers of the Cross and followers of the Lamb if you fear to acknowledge His cause and blush to speak His name? Come out of your hiding places! May God the Holy Spirit draw or drive you out at once! If anything could do it, surely, it should be such a blessed fact as this—that you are numbered among those of whom it is said that “God is not ashamed to be called their God.”

God bless you, dear Friends, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—854, 847, 848.

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JACOB WORSHIPPING ON HIS STAFF

NO. 1401

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

***“By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph,
and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.”
Hebrews 11:21.***

“When he was dying.” Death is a thorough test of faith. Beneath the touch of the skeleton finger shams dissolve into thin air and only truth remains unless, indeed, a strong delusion has been given—and then the spectacle of a presumptuous sinner passing away in his iniquities is one which might make angels weep. It is hard, very hard, to maintain a lie in the presence of the last solemnities. The end of life is usually the close of self-deception. There is a mimic faith, a false assurance, which lasts under all ordinary heats of trial, but this evaporates when the fires of death surround it.

Certain men are at peace and quiet in their conscience. They stifle convictions, refuse to allow such a thing as self-examination—they count an honest self-suspicion to be a temptation of the devil and boast of their unbroken tranquility of mind. They go on from day to day with perfect confidence, but we would not be of their order. Their eyes are closed, their ears are dull of hearing and their heart has grossly waxen. A siren song forever enchants them with delight, but also entices them to destruction! Terrible will be their awakening when they lie dying—as a dream, their false peace will vanish and real terrors will come upon them.

That expression, “When he was dying,” reminds me of many deathbeds, but I shall not speak of them now, for I desire each one of you to rehearse the scene of your own departure, for soon a tale will be told of everyone commencing with, “When he was dying.” I want each one to project his mind a little forward to the time when he must gather up his feet in the bed, pronounce his last farewell and yield up the ghost. Before your actual departure, probably, there may be allotted to you, unless you are carried away with a sudden stroke, a little time in which it shall be said, “He was dying.” Perhaps it is a desirable thing to occupy some weeks in departure, till the mind seems to have passed through the gate and to be already in Glory, while yet the body lingers here. But as we have had no experience, we are scarcely able to form a judgment.

The text tells us that the Patriarch’s faith was firm while he was dying, so that he poured forth no complaints, but plentiful benedictions as he

blessed both the sons of Joseph. May your faith and mine, also, be such that whenever we shall be dying it will perform some illustrious exploit that the Grace of God may be admired in us. Paul does not say anything about Jacob's *life*, but selects the death scene. There were many instances of faith in Jacob's life story, but you remember that in the Epistle to the Hebrews Paul is walking through the histories and plucking a flower here and a flower there. He even complains that time fails him in doing that, so fertile is the garden of faith!

I do not doubt, however, that he gathered the best out of each biography and, perhaps, the finest thing in Jacob's life was the close of it. He was more royal between the curtains of his bed than at the door of his tent—greater in the hour of his weakness than in the day of his power. The old man of 147 might have been willing to depart through infirmities of age, but yet he had much to keep him below and make him wish to live as long as possible. After a very troublous life he had enjoyed 17 years of remarkable comfort, so much so, that had it been ourselves, we should probably have begun to strike our roots into the soil of Goshen and dread the bare thought of removal.

Yet there sits the venerable Patriarch with his hands on his staff, ready to go, seeking no delay, but rather waiting for the salvation of God. After all his tossing to and fro, when he had been so long a pilgrim, it must have been a pleasant thing for him to have settled down in a fat land with his sons and grandsons—and great-grandsons—all around him! They were all comfortably provided for with Joseph at the head of the whole country—prime minister of Egypt—reflecting honor upon his old father and taking care that none of the family needed anything. The last course of Jacob's feast of life was by far the sweetest and the old man might have been loathe to retire from so dainty a table!

The children of Israel were a sort of foreign aristocracy in the land and against them a dog would not dare to move its tongue lest the renowned Joseph should put forth his hand. That 17 years must have been bright and full of rest for the old man. But sense has not killed his faith! Luxury has not destroyed his spirituality! His heart is still in the tents where he had dwelt as a sojourner with God. You can see that not even one single rootlet of his soul has taken hold upon Egypt—his first anxiety is to take care that not even his *bones* shall lie in Goshen—but that his body shall be taken out of the country as a reminder to his family that they are not Egyptians and cannot be made into subjects of Pharaoh—and that Canaan is their possession to which they must go.

By his dying charge to bury him in Machpelah, he practically teaches his descendants that they must set loose of all the good land which they possessed in Goshen, for their inheritance did not lie on the banks of the

Nile, but on the other side of the desert in Canaan—and they must be on tiptoe to journey there. The blessing which he gave to the sons of Joseph was but an utterance of his firm faith in the Covenant which gave the land to him and to his seed. It was confirmed by that faith of his which let go the present and grasped the future, renounced the temporal and seized the eternal, refusing the treasures of Egypt and clinging to the Covenant of God.

First, then, his blessing. He blessed the two sons of Joseph. Will you have patience with me while I try to show that his blessing the sons of Joseph was an act of faith? First, only by faith could the old man really give a blessing to anyone. Look at him. He is too feeble to leave his bed. When he sits up, supported by pillows, at what is called the bed-head, he calls for his trusty staff that he may lean upon it while he raises himself up a little to be in a position to stretch out his hands and to use his voice. He has no strength and his eyes are dim so that he cannot see which is Ephraim and which is Manasseh.

He is failing in most of his faculties—in every way you can see that he is a worn-out old man who can do nothing for the children whom he loves. If he is able to bestow a blessing, it cannot be by the power of nature—and yet he can and does bless them—and therefore we feel sure that there must be an inner man within that feeble old Jacob! There must be a spiritual Israel hidden away in him, an Israel who, by prevailing with God as a prince, has obtained a blessing and is able to dispense it to others. And so there is—and at half a glance we see it! He rises to the dignity of a king, a Prophet and a priest when he begins to pronounce a blessing upon his two grandchildren!

He believed that God spoke by him and he believed that God would justify every word that he was uttering. He believed in the God that hears prayer. His benediction *was* a prayer and as he pronounced blessings upon his grandsons he felt that every word he was speaking was a petition which the Lord was answering. They were blessed and they should be blessed—and he discerned it by faith. Thus we see he was manifesting his faith in offering believing prayer and in uttering a confident benediction. Whether we live, or whether we die, let us have faith in God! Whenever we preach or teach the Gospel, let us have faith, for without faith we shall labor in vain. Whenever you distribute religious books or visit the sick, do so in faith, for faith is the lifeblood of all our service!

If only by faith can a dying Jacob bless his descendants, so only by faith can we bless the sons of men. Have faith in God and the instruction which you give shall really edify—the prayers you offer shall bring down showers of mercy—and your endeavors for your sons and daughters shall be prospered. God will bless what is done in faith! But if we believe not,

our work will not be established. Faith is the backbone and marrow of the Christian's power to do good. We are weak as water till we enter into union with God by faith—and then we are omnipotent! We can do nothing for our fellow men by way of promoting their spiritual and eternal interests if we walk according to the sight of our eyes. But when we get into the power of God and grasp His promise by a daring confidence, then it is that we obtain the power to bless!

You will notice, also, that not only the power to bless came to him by faith, but the blessings which he allotted to his grandsons were his upon the same tenure. His legacies were all blessings which he possessed only by faith. He gave to Ephraim and Manasseh a portion each—but where and what? Did he fetch out a bag from an iron safe and say, “Here, young men, I give you the same portion of ready money as I give my sons”? No, there does not seem to have been a solitary shekel in the case. Did he call for the map of the family estates and say, “I give over to you, my boys, my freehold lands in such-and-such parish and my farms in such-and-such a manor”? No, no, he gave them no portion in Goshen, but each had a lot in Canaan.

Did that belong to him? Yes, in one sense, but not in another. God had promised it to him, but he had not yet a foot of land in it. The Canaanites were swarming in the land. They were dwelling in cities walled up to Heaven and held the country by the right of *possession* which is nine points of the law. But the good old man talks about Canaan as if it were all his own and he foresees the tribes growing into nations as much as if they were already in actual possession of the country! He had, as a matter of fact, neither house nor ground in Palestine and yet he counts it *all* his own since a faithful God had promised it to his fathers! God had said to Abraham, “Lift up, now, your eyes and behold to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south. All this will I give you.”

And Jacob realizes that gift of God as being a charter and title-deed of possession! And he acts upon it while he says, “This is for Ephraim. This is for Manasseh.” The sneering infidel standing by would have said, “Hear how the old man dotes and maunders, giving away what he has not!” Faith is the substance of things hoped for and she deals seriously and in a business manner with that which she makes real to herself! Blind Reason may ridicule, but Faith is justified of all her children. Beloved, in this manner Believers bless the sons of men, namely, by faith. We pray for them and we tell them of good things yet to come, not to be seen of the eyes, or to be perceived by the senses, but inconceivably good things laid up by God for them that love Him—which shall be the portion of our children and our friends if they believe in the living God.

By faith we believe in things not as yet seen. We confess that, like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we are strangers here and we are journeying towards a place of which God has spoken of to us—"A city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God." We have learned to talk about the crown which the Lord has laid up for us and not for us, only, but for all them that love His appearing! And we delight to tell others how to win this crown. We point them to the narrow gate and to the narrow way—neither of which they can see—and to the *end* of that narrow road, even to the hilltops crowned with the Celestial City where the pilgrims of the Lord shall dwell forever and enjoy an eternal reward!

Faith is needed to enable us to point men to the invisible and eternal! And if we cannot do this, how can we bless them? We must believe for those we love and have hope for them—and thus shall we have power with God for them—and shall bless them. Oh, you worldly fathers, you may give your sons what heritage you can and divide among your daughters what wealth you please, but as for us, our longing is to see our children and our children's children blessed with the riches which come from above! If they win a share in the land on the other side of Jordan, as yet unseen, and have a portion now in Christ Jesus, we shall be glad—infinitely more glad than if they were the richest among mankind! Our legacies to our sons are the blessings of Divine Grace and our dowries to our daughters are the promises of the Lord.

It is well worthy of our notice that the venerable Patriarch Jacob, in his benediction, particularly mentioned the Covenant. His faith, like the faith of most of God's people, made the Covenant its pavilion of delightful abode, its tower of defense and its armory for war! No sweeter word was on his tongue than the Covenant and no richer consolation sustained his heart. He said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me. He said to me, Behold I will make you fruitful and multiply you." His confidence rested in the promise of the Lord and in the Divine fidelity—that was the fountain Truth of God from which he drew the inspiration which led him to bless his grandchildren.

And, also, notice how he dwells upon the name of his father Abraham and of his father Isaac with whom the Covenant had been established—the memories of covenant love are precious and every confirmatory token is treasured up and dwelt upon. Dying men do not talk nonsense. They get to something solid and the Everlasting Covenant made with their fathers and confirmed in their own persons has been one of the grand things about which dying saints have been known to deliver their souls. Remember how David said, "Although my house is not so with God, yet has He made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure." While we are sitting here we can talk about the matter coolly. But

when death dew lies cold upon our brow, the pulse is failing and the throat is gradually choking up, it will be blessed to fix our eyes upon the faithful Promiser and to feel a calm within our soul which even death pangs cannot disturb! We can then exclaim, "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him until that day."

I want to call your attention to one point which I think extraordinarily illustrates the faith of Jacob. In distributing to these two grandchildren his blessings as to the future, he takes them right away from Joseph and says, "As Simeon and Reuben, shall they be mine." Do you know who those two young gentlemen were? Think awhile and you will see that they were very different in rank, station, parentage and prospects from any of the sons of Jacob! Jacob's sons had been brought up as laboring men without knowledge of polite society or learned arts. They were country men, mere Bedouins—wandering shepherds and nothing else!

But these two young gentlemen were descended from a princess and had, no doubt, been liberally educated. Pharaoh had given to Joseph a daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, and the priests of Egypt were the highest class of all—the nobility of the land! Joseph himself was Prime Minister and these were partakers of his lofty rank. The sons of Reuben and Simeon were *nobodies* in the polite circles of Egypt—very good, decent people—farmers and grazers, but not at all of the high class of the Right Honorable Lord Manasseh and the Honorable Ephraim! Indeed, every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians and, therefore, inadmissible to Egypt's nobility! Manasseh and Ephraim were of a superior caste and gentlemen of position and fortune.

But Jacob showed his faith by ignoring worldly advantages for his grandsons. He says to Joseph, "They are not to be yours. I do not know them as Egyptians—I forget all about their mother's rank and family. The boys have attractive prospects before them. They can be made priests of the idol temple and rise to high dignity among the Egyptians. But all that glitter we reject for them and, in token thereof, I adopt them as my own sons. They are mine—as Simeon and Reuben they shall be mine. For all the gold of Egypt you would not have one of them serve an idol, for I know that you are true to your father's God and your father's faith." And so He takes the boys right away, you see, from all their brilliant opportunities, and bestows upon them that which, to the carnal mind, appears to be an estate in dreamland, a chateau in Spain—something intangible and unmarketable!

This was a deed of faith and blessed are they who can imitate it, choosing rather the reproach of Christ for their sons than all the treasures of Egypt! The joy of it is that these lads accepted the exchange and let the

golden possessions of Egypt go, like Moses after them. May our heirs and successors be of the same mind and may the Lord say of them, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." And again, "When Ephraim was a child then I loved him and called My Son out of Egypt." This is how faith leads Believers to bless their children. We are of the same mind as Jacob in this matter. We would sooner bury our little ones than that they should live to become among the richest and most famous of men—and yet not know or serve their father's God! Better that we laid them quietly in such ground as our Christian Brethren permit us to use as a sepulcher for our unbaptized babes. Better that they were safely housed at God's right hand than that they should grow up to plunge into dissipation or to follow false doctrine and perish out of Christ!

We have not done yet, for we notice that Jacob showed his faith by blessing Joseph's sons in God's order. He placed Ephraim before Manasseh. It was not according to the rule of nature, but he felt the impulse upon him and his faith would not resist the Divine guidance. Blind as he was, he would not yield to the dictation of his son, but crossed his hands to obey the Divine monition. Faith resolves to do the right thing in the right way. Some persons' faith leads them to do the right thing the wrong way, but mature faith follows the order which God prescribes. If God will have Ephraim first, faith does not quarrel with His decree. We may wish to see a favorite child blessed more than another, but Nature must forego her choice, for the Lord must do what seems good to Him. Faith prefers Divine Grace to talent and piety to cleverness. She lays her right hand where God lays it and not where beauty of person or quickness of intellect would suggest. Our best child is that which *God* calls best—Faith corrects Reason and accepts the Divine verdict.

Notice that he manifested his faith by his distinct reference to redemption. He alone who has faith will pray for the redemption of his children, especially when they exhibit no signs of being in bondage but are hopeful and amiable. The good old man prayed, "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." Let your faith bring down upon your children a share in redemption's blessings, for they need to be redeemed even as others. If they are washed in the blood of Jesus. If they are reconciled to God by the blood of His Son. If they have access to God by the blood of Atonement, you may die well satisfied—for what is to harm them when once the Angel that redeemed you has also redeemed them? From sin, from Satan, from death, from Hell, from self—"from all evil"—does our Redeemer set us free! And this is the greatest of all benedictions which we can pronounce upon our dearest children.

Jacob showed his faith by his assurance that God would be present with his seed. How cheering is the old man's dying expression, made not

only to his boys, but concerning all his family! He said, “Now I die, but God will be with you.” It is very different from the complaints of certain good old ministers when they are dying. They seem to say, “When I die, the light of Israel will be quenched! I shall die and the people will desert the Truth of God. When I am gone, the standard-bearer will have fallen and the watchman on the walls will be dead.” Many, in dying, are afraid for the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof and, sometimes, we who are in good health talk very much in the same fashion as though we were wonderfully essential to the progress of God’s cause!

I have known some of our Church members speak in that manner and inquire—“What should we do if Mr. So-and-So were dead? If our pastor were gone, what would the Church do?” I will tell you what you will do without us—I will put the case as though I were myself to die—“Now I die, but God will be with you.” Whoever passes away, the Lord will abide with His people and the Church will be secure. The grand old cause does not depend on one or two of us! God forbid! The Truth of God was mighty in the land before the best man living was born—and the Truth of God will not be buried with him, but in its own immortal youth will still be powerful! Yes, and fresh advocates will arise more full of life and vigor than we are! And greater victories will be won! It is grand to say with Jacob, “Now I die, but God will be with you.” Such language honors God and bespeaks a mind greatly trustful and completely delivered from the self-conceit which dreams itself important, if not *necessary*, to the cause of God.

We are told, next, that the old man “worshiped”—worshiped by faith. Very briefly let me tell you what worship I think he rendered. First, while he was dying he offered the worship of *gratitude*. How pleasing is the incident recorded in the 10th and 11th verses—“Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And Joseph brought his two sons near unto him and he kissed them and embraced them. And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see your face and, lo, God has showed me, also, your seed.” Ah, yes, we shall often have to say, “O Lord, I had not thought that You would do as much as this, but you have gone far beyond what I asked or even thought.”

I hope that this will be among our dying speeches and confessions—that the half was never told us, that our good Lord kept the best wine till the last and that the end of the feast on earth—being but the beginning of the eternal feast in Heaven was the crown of all! Let us declare concerning our Lord that we found Him better and better and better and better, even till we entered into His rest! He has been, at first, better than our fears, then better than our hopes and finally better than our desires! Did Jacob not also offer the worship of testimony when he acknowledged God’s goodness to him all his life? He says, “The God that fed me all my life long,”

thus acknowledging that he had been always dependent but always supplied.

He had been a shepherd and he uses a word, here, which means, “the God that shepherded me—who was a Shepherd to me all my life long.” It was a testimony to the care and tenderness of Jehovah. Yes, and I hope we, also, shall finish life by magnifying the goodness of the Lord. Be this our witness, “He fed me all my life long. I was in straits, sometimes, and I wondered from where the next bit of bread would come—but if He did not send a raven, or if He did not find a widow woman to provide for me—yet somehow or other He did feed me all my life long. He worked in His own wise ways so that I never lacked, for the Lord was my Shepherd all my life long.”

Notice, too, how reverently He worships the Covenant Messenger with the adoration of reverent love. He speaks of “the Angel who redeemed me from all evil.” He thinks of the Angel that wrestled with him and the Angel that appeared to him when he fell asleep at Bethel. This is the Angel, not an ordinary angel, but the true Archangel—Jesus Christ—the Messenger of the Covenant whom we delight in. It is He that has delivered us from all evil by His redeeming blood, for no other being could have accomplished a redemption so complete. Do you remember when He came to you, personally, and wrestled with you and tore away your self-righteousness and made you limp on your thigh? This, it may be, was your first introduction to Him. You saw Him by night and thought Him, at the first, to be your enemy rather than your friend.

Do you remember when He took your strength away from you and then at last saved you, because in utter weakness you were about to fall to the ground? You laid hold of Him and said, “I will not let You go unless You bless me,” and so you won a blessing from Him. You had thought, before that time, that you had strength in yourself. But now you realize that you were weakness, itself, and that only as you became consciously weak would you become actually strong. You learned to look out of self to Him and do you not bless Him for having taught you such a lesson? Will you not, when you come to die, bless Him for what He did for you, then, and all your life? O my Brothers and Sisters, we owe all things to the redeeming Angel of the Covenant! The evils which He has warded off from us were terrible beyond conception! And the blessings He has brought us are rich beyond imagination! Thus you have had a picture of the old man blessing, by faith, and worshipping by faith—faith was the mainspring of the two actions—their essence, their spirit and their crown.

The last matter for us to speak upon is his attitude. He “worshiped leaning upon the top of his staff.” The Romanists have made fine mischief out of this text, for they have read it, “He worshiped the top of his staff.”

Their notion has been, I suppose, that there was a pretty little god carved on the top—an image of a saint or a cross, or some other symbol—and that he held up that symbol and so worshiped the top of his staff! We know that he did no such thing, for there is no trace in Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob of *anything* like the worship of images! Though teraph worship lingered in their families, it was not with their consent. They were not perfect men, but they were perfectly clear from idolatry and never worshiped an image. No, no, no—they worshiped only God! Jacob worshiped on the top of his staff—*leaning* on it—supporting himself upon it.

In Genesis you read that he “bowed himself upon the bed’s head.” It is a very curious thing that the word for bed and the word for staff in the Hebrew are so exceedingly like each other that unless the little points had been used, which I suppose were not used at all in the olden times, it would be difficult to tell whether the word is, “bed,” or “staff.” I do not, however, think either Moses or Paul can be wrong! Jacob strengthened himself and sat upon the bed and he *leaned* upon his staff, too. It is very easy to realize a position in which both descriptions would be equally true. He could sit upon the bed and lean on the top of his staff at the same time. But why did he lean on his staff? I think besides the natural need which he had of it, because of his being old, he did it emblematically. Do you not remember his saying, “With my staff I crossed this Jordan”?

I believe he kept that staff throughout life as a memorial. It was a favorite staff of his which he took with him on his first journey and he leaned upon it as he took his last. “With my staff I crossed this Jordan,” he had said before, and now with that same staff in hand he crosses the *spiritual* Jordan! That staff was his life companion, the witness with himself of the goodness of the Lord, even as some of us may have an old Bible, or a knife, or a chair which are connected with memorable events of our lives. But what did that staff indicate? Let us hear what Jacob said at another time. When he stood before Pharaoh he exclaimed, “Few and evil have been the days of my pilgrimage.” What made him use that word “pilgrimage”? Why, because upon his mind there was always the idea of his being a pilgrim! He had been literally so during the early part of his life, wandering here and there.

And now, though he has been 17 years in Goshen, he keeps the old staff and he leans on it to show that he had always been a pilgrim and a sojourner like his fathers and that he still was! While he leans on that staff, he talks to Joseph and he says, “Do not let my bones lie here. I have come here in the Providence of God, but I do not belong here. This staff indicates that I am only a sojourner and need to be gone. I am in Egypt, but I am not of it. Take my bones away. Do not let them lie here, for if they do, my sons and daughters will mingle with the Egyptians and that

must not be, for we are a distinct nation. God has chosen us for Himself and we must keep separate. To make my children see this, lo, here I die with my pilgrim staff in my hand.”

Now, Christian Brothers and Sisters, I want you to live in the same spirit, feeling that this is not your rest nor your native country. There is nothing here that is worthy of you. Your home is yonder, on the other side the desert, where God has mapped out your portion. Christ has gone to prepare your place and it would ill become you to have no desires for it. The longer you live, the more let this thought grow upon you—“Give me my staff. I must be gone. Poor world, you are no rest for me. I am not of your children. I am an alien and a stranger. My citizenship is in Heaven. I take my share in Egypt’s politics and Egypt’s labor, yes, and in Egypt’s griefs, but I am no Egyptian, I am a stranger bound for another land.” Worship on the top of your staff and sing—

***“A scrip on my back, and a staff in my hand,
I march on in haste through an enemy’s land.
There is nothing on earth which can tempt me to stay,
My staff is the emblem of ‘up and away.’”***

Singular enough is it that each descendant of Jacob came to worship on the top of his staff at last, for on the paschal supper night, when the blood was sprinkled on the lintel and the side posts, they each one ate the lamb with their loins girt and with a staff in his hand! The supper was a festival of worship and they ate it, each one leaning on his staff, as those that were in haste to leave home for a pilgrimage through the wilderness! My dear Hearers, this advice does not apply to *all* of you, for you are not all Jacobs, nor do you belong to the believing seed. I cannot bid you take your staff, for if you were to take your staff and start off, where would you go? You have no portion in the next world, no promised land, no Canaan flowing with milk and honey.

Where will you go? You must be banished from the Presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power! Alas for you! You cannot worship, for you know not God! You cannot bless others, for you have not been blessed yourselves! May the Lord bring you to His dear Son, Jesus Christ, and lead you to put your trust in Him—and then I shall hope that being saved you will by faith imitate Jacob and both bless men, worship God and wait with your staff in your hand, ready to journey to the eternal rest!

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JOSEPH'S BONES

NO. 966

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 18, 1870,
BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing
of the children of Israel.
And gave commandment concerning his bones.”
Hebrews 11:22.***

WE cannot readily tell which action in a gracious life God may set the most store by. The Holy Spirit in this chapter selects out of good men's lives the most brilliant instances of their faith. I should hardly have expected that He would have mentioned the dying scene of Joseph's life as the most illustrious proof of his faith in God. That eventful life, perhaps the most interesting in all sacred Scripture, with the exception of One, abounds with incidents of which the Holy Spirit might have said by His servant Paul, “By faith Joseph did this and that,” but none is mentioned save the closing scene. The triumph especially of his chastity under well-known and exceedingly severe temptation, might have been very properly traced to the power of his faith, but it is passed over, and the fact that he gave commandment concerning his bones is singled out as being the most illustrious proof of his faith.

Does not this tell us, dear Brothers and Sisters, that we are very poor judges of what God will most delight in? Very likely, when we least please ourselves, God is best pleased with us. That prayer over which we groaned, and thought it was not prayer, may have had more true supplication in it than another intercession of which we thought far more highly. That sermon which made us lament in the bitterness of our soul because we thought we had delivered it so feebly, may have been, in God's sight, more precious than many a fluent discourse concerning which we congratulated ourselves.

That trial which we thought we passed through with so much impatience, may have been before God an exhibition of true patience as He looked deep down into our souls. The tests by which we try ourselves are very inaccurate. It may be when we read our own biographies in the light of eternity we shall be surprised to notice that God has highly commended what we wept over—while much that we gloried in will be cast away among the reprobate silver.

The Lord sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the *heart*, and His glance pierces to the core. The Lord weighs the spirits. He estimates not by color, form, and glitter, but by actual weight, and therefore when He weighed up the character of Joseph He gave the preponderance to an incident wherein faith is really present in much force, but not to the superficial observer.

It may seem surprising that the charge of Joseph concerning his body should be mentioned as a notable act of faith, and not the similar charge delivered by Jacob. For did not Jacob also give commandment concerning his bones? "And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife. There they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife. And there I buried Leah."

He bade them carry his body to that dear mausoleum of the family at Machpelah, where his fathers rested. Why was not that a case of faith in Jacob as much as in Joseph? We cannot always speak positively of these things, but we think that there is a very decided difference between the two. You will notice that Jacob's wish to lie in Machpelah was by himself described as resting mainly on the grounds of *natural* affection.

He speaks about his relationship to Abraham, to Isaac, to Leah, and so on, and with that natural feeling which is exceedingly commendable, but which is not a work of Grace. He desires to be buried with his own kith and kin. When his soul should be gathered to his people he would have his body lie side by side with his own relatives. This wish was probably as much an outgoing of nature as an expression of Divine Grace. Of course, natural affection would have led Joseph to desire the same thing, but he does not put it on that score.

Moreover, you notice that Jacob commands his sons to do with his bones what they could readily do—they were to take him to Machpelah and bury him at once. He knew his son Joseph to be in power in Egypt. And therefore anything that was wanted for his funeral would be provided—the Egyptian court, as it proved, were ready enough to give him the most sumptuous interment. They even spent forty days in mourning for him, denoting, thereby, that he was a person held in high honor. Jacob therefore commanded nothing to be done but what *could* be done. There was no very remarkable exhibition of faith in commanding an immediate funeral which the filial love of Joseph would readily secure.

He takes immediate possession of his sepulcher in Canaan, and for very excellent reasons, does not ask to remain unburied till Canaan is possessed by his descendants. Jacob seeks immediate sepulture, but Joseph postpones his interment till the Covenant promise is fulfilled. Joseph not only wished to be buried in Machpelah, which was natural, but he would not be buried there till the land was taken possession of, which was an exhibition of the Grace of faith. He wished his unburied body to share with the people of God in their captivity and their return.

He was so certain that they would come out of the captivity, that he postpones his burial till that glad event, and so makes what would have been but a natural wish, a means of expressing a holy and gracious confidence in the Divine promise. It was faith in Jacob, but it was *remarkable* faith in Joseph. And God who looks not simply at the *act*, but at the *mo-*

tive of the act, has been pleased not to put down Jacob as an instance of dying faith in this particular matter of His Holies, but to award praise to Joseph as exhibiting in death a memorable degree of confidence in the promise.

Probably Jacob's dying faith, when exercised upon other matters, outshone his faith in connection with his burial, while in his favorite son that matter was his leading proof of faith. We shall now come to examine this incident with some little particularity, and we shall find in it valuable lessons. May the Holy Spirit write them on our hearts.

I think I see, first, in this word of Joseph on his deathbed, the *power* of faith. I see, secondly, the *workings* of faith, the forms in which this precious Grace embodies itself. And, thirdly, I see an *example* for our faith when we come to die.

I. I observe in the text an example OF THE POWER OF FAITH. The endurance of true faith under three remarkable modes of test. First, the power of faith over worldly prosperity. "Not many great men after the flesh, not many mighty are chosen"—true enough is that word. But it was never said, "Not *any* great men, not *any* mighty are chosen." God has selected a few in places of wealth, and power, and influence who have faith in their hearts, and that in an eminent degree.

Our Lord told us that it was "easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven," but He added, "the things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Observe, then, the difficulty which surrounded Joseph's case. And then remark how great must have been the faith which triumphed over the difficulty! Joseph's position, after he had passed through his first trials in Egypt, was a very eminent one. He possessed unbounded riches. He was the viceroy of the entire country, and Pharaoh had said to him, "Only in the throne will I be greater than you."

He was, in all respects, except in name, the absolute lord of that great nation. He could do just as he willed. He was surrounded by all the state of royalty. And when he rode in his chariot through the streets the heralds cried before him, "Bow the knee." Yet all this did not prevent Joseph's possessing faith in God, and a faith which persevered even to the end!

My dear Brethren, the trials of faith are usually those of poverty, and right gloriously does faith behave herself when she trusts in the Lord, and does good, and is fed even in the land of famine. But it is possible the ordeal of prosperity is far more severe, and it is therefore a greater triumph of faith when the rich man sets not his heart upon uncertain riches, and does not suffer the thick clay of this world to encumber his pilgrimage to Heaven. It is hard to carry a full cup with a steady hand, some spilling will usually occur. But where Divine Grace makes rich men, and men in high position of power and authority to act becomingly and graciously, then Grace is greatly glorified.

You who are rich should see your danger. But let the case of Joseph be your encouragement. God will help you, if you seek His merciful aid. There is no need that you should be worldly, there is no need that you

should sink the Israelite in the Egyptian. God can keep you, even as He kept Job, so that you shall be perfect and upright, and yet be exceedingly great in possessions. Like Joseph you may be at once richer and better than your brethren. It will be very difficult, and you will need very, very much Divine Grace, but the Lord your God will help you, and you shall learn, like Paul, how to abound. And, like Joseph of Arimathea, you shall be both a rich man and a devout disciple.

Be it remembered, too, that Joseph was not only tried by riches, but that the trial lasted throughout a long life, from almost his early days to the close of his career. I suppose that for sixty or seventy years, at least, he stood in the high position of lord-lieutenant of Egypt with all the wealth of that great people at his feet, and yet all that time he remained true in heart towards the God of his fathers. May God give you who are in elevated places the like fidelity. May you remain unshaken under the most protracted temptation.

Remember, moreover, that the society into which Joseph was cast by his position in Egypt was of the very worst kind as to spiritual religion, for the Egyptians were, to a man, idolaters. They were worshippers of all kinds of living animals and creeping things. A satirist said of them, "Oh, happy people who grow their gods in their own gardens," for they even worshipped leeks and onions—they were a most idolatrous people. And though far ahead of their neighbors in civilization, they were very low in the scale of religion. We think we see in Joseph, here and there, traces that he was damaged by Egyptian habits and customs, but still not so much as one might have expected—and in no degree so much as to make us suspect his fidelity to the one God.

There must have been a deep, sound, depth of holiness in the young man or he would never have been able to live at court, and at an idolatrous court, too, and yet preserve his integrity and his faith towards Jehovah, the God of Israel. Do not forget that during a very great part of that time Joseph had not one single person to associate with who was of his own faith. Think what a trial that must have been to him! I have known persons very warm-hearted in religion while living with zealous Christians, and very diligent while listening to a lively ministry, who, when removed from Christian society, or compelled to sit under a cold ministry, have made a spiritual failure.

Alas, I mourn over some who, when transplanted into sterner soil, have declined so that it were hard to say whether they are trees of the Lord's right hand planting or not. Joseph was removed to a place where there was no prayer in the household, no friends, no godly teacher to speak a word with, no one who knew of Jehovah or of the Covenant made with Israel. He was all alone, alone, alone in the midst of an idolatrous people—with all the temptations of Egypt before him. He was possessed of its riches and its treasures, and tempted to live as the people lived in all manner of heathenism.

And yet, for all that, he endured as seeing Him who is invisible, and at the last he died full of confident, joyous and godly belief in the God of his

fathers. Ah, this is a great triumph of faith, and I would urge any of my dear Brethren here, who really love the Lord, to seek that the work of Grace in them may be so deep, so true, so thorough, that if God should make kings of them they would not grow proud of it. If God should send them right away from Christian associations they would not forget Him. And if they were exposed to all the temptations of the world at once they would resist them all. The power of Joseph's faith was, you see, abundantly evidenced in its triumph over his worldly circumstances.

Secondly, you see here the power of his faith exhibited in its triumph over death. He says, if you turn to the last chapter of Genesis, "I die, and God will surely visit you." Or, as the text puts it, he "made mention concerning the departing of the children of Israel." Death is a great tester of a man's sincerity and a great shaker down of bowing walls and tottering fences. Men have thought that it was all well with them—but when the swellings of Jordan have been about them, they have found matters quite otherwise.

Here we see Joseph so calm, so quiet, that he remembers the Covenant and falls back upon it, and rejoices in it. He speaks of dying as if it were only a part of living, and comparatively a small matter to him. He gives no evidence of trepidation whatever, no fear distracts him. He bears his last witness to his brothers, who gather about his bed, concerning the faithfulness of God and the Infallibility of His promise. Moreover, if I am to gather from the text that the Holy Spirit has singled out the brightest instance of faith in Joseph's whole life, it is beautiful to remark that the grand old man becomes most illustrious in his last hour.

Death did not dim, but rather brightened, the gold in his character. On his deathbed, beyond all the rest of his life, his faith, like the setting sun, gilds all around with glory. Now that heart and flesh fail him, God becomes more than ever the strength of his life, as He was soon to be his Portion forever! Is it not a grand thing for a Christian to do his very best action last, being strongest in Divine power when his own weakness is supreme? We should desire to serve God in youth, in health, in strength, with all the might we have. But it may happen to us that, like Samson, our last act may be the greatest.

Many a good man groans over his life, that having done all he can it is still unsatisfactory. But perhaps the Master may be intending to give him a crowning mercy, just at the last, and make the place of his departure to be the scene of his most glorious victory! Then, by God's Grace, he may enter into Heaven wearing the laurels of faith—there to cast them at the Savior's feet. Joseph, at any rate, is a noble instance of faith's conquest over death.

Once more, here is a proof of the power of faith in laughing at improbabilities. If you will think of it, it seemed a very unlikely thing that the children of Israel should go up out of Egypt. Perhaps, at the time when Joseph died, there appeared to be no reason why they should do so. They were settled in Goshen, they had been favored with a part of the land. The

wisdom of Joseph had selected the most fertile part of the Delta of the Nile as a pasture for their flocks. Why should they wish to go?

They had all the comforts earth could yield them, why should they wish to leave Egypt for the soil of Canaan, where the Canaanites would dispute every inch of the ground? Canaan was where there were few, if any, advantages over Egypt, and many disadvantages! Suppose Joseph to have seen, by prophetic foresight, as perhaps he did, that another dynasty would succeed that of the Pharaoh who had honored him, and that Israel would be oppressed? He must have felt, if he weighed probabilities, that it was unlikely to the last degree that the children of Israel, when reduced to slavery, would ever have been able to cut their way out of Egypt, to reach the promised land.

Any person qualified to judge, had he been asked as to the probable issue of a conflict between the twelve tribes and the armies of Egypt, would have replied, "Israel would be at once trod down like straw for the dung-hill, and the people would remain in perpetual bondage." But Joseph's eye was fixed upon the mighty promise, "In the fourth generation, they shall come here again." He knew that when the four hundred years were passed, Abram's vision of the smoking furnace and the burning lamp would be fulfilled, and the Word would be established—"And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance."

Though as yet he could not know that Moses would say, "Thus says Jehovah, Let My people go," though he might not have foreseen the wonders at the Red Sea and how Pharaoh and his chariots would be swallowed up there, and, though he did not predict the wilderness and the fiery cloudy pillar, and the heavens dropping manna, yet his faith was firm that by some means the Covenant would be fulfilled. Improbabilities were nothing to him, nor impossibilities either. God has said it, and Joseph believes it.

On his dying bed, when fancy fades and strong delusion relaxes its iron grip, the true, sure faith of the man of God rose to its highest altitude, and like the evening star, shed a sweet glory over the scene. May we, my Brethren, possess the faith which will triumph over all circumstances, over the pains of death, and over every improbability that may apparently be connected with the Word of God.

II. Under our second head we are to endeavor to show YOU THE WORKINGS OF FAITH. In this case Joseph gives commandment concerning his bones. The first fruit of faith in Joseph was this—he would not be an Egyptian. He Had not been asked to be an Egyptian under the yoke—anybody might have refused that. He had not been asked to be an Egyptian of the middle class—that might have been desirable from a worldly point of view. But he had the opportunity of being an Egyptian of the *highest* grade. He was actually exalted to almost royal rank, and he might have become a naturalized Egyptian, and his family, also.

In the Providence of God he was called upon to accept the honors and riches of a most dignified office, but still he would not be an Egyptian—

even on the best of terms. His dying bed afforded him a turning point, an opportunity for testifying that he was an Israelite, and by no means an Egyptian. He did not hesitate, his choice had never wavered. No doubt he would have had a sumptuous tomb enough in Egypt. But no, he will not be buried there, for he is not an Egyptian. In Sakhara, hard by the great pyramid of Pharaoh Apophis, stands at this day the tomb of a prince, whose name and titles are in hieroglyphic writing.

The name is "Eitsuph," and from among his many titles we choose two—"Director of the king's granaries," and the other, an Egyptian title, "Abrech." Now this last word is found in the Scriptures, and is that which is translated, "Bow the knee." (See a little book, "*Stone Witnesses.*" Morgan & Chase). It is more than probable that this monument was prepared for Joseph, but he declined the honor. Though his resting-place would have been side by side with the pyramid of one of Mizraim's greatest monarchs, yet he would not accept the dignity, he would not be an Egyptian. This is one of the sure workings of faith in a man of wealth and rank. When God places him in circumstances where he might be a worldling of the first order, if his faith is genuine, he says, "No. I will not, even at this rate, be numbered with the world."

He dreads above all things that he should be supposed to have his portion in this life. If you could put a Christian on the throne, the first fear he would have would be this—Am I to be put off with an earthly crown, and miss the heavenly diadem? Place him at court and his great question will be—How shall I show that I am not one of the citizens of this world? Surround him with broad acres, a noble mansion, and a large estate, yet he says, "I accept this thankfully from God, but oh, I would not have it if I had it on condition of being numbered with the followers of Mammon!

"Now I have obtained wealth, my daily prayer to God shall be, Lord, help me so to use my station that I may not serve this evil world with it, but may be a father to Your poor Israel. If it comes to the choice between the reproach of Christ and the treasures of Egypt, I will take Christ's reproach, and renounce the treasure. I cannot be an Egyptian." O rich Men and Women, make this a main point of concern—prove that you are not worldlings! You have to frequent the exchange, to visit the bank, to handle large sums of money—but be not money-grubbers, rakers up of gold! Be not covetous or grasping. Prove that though in Egypt you are not Egyptians. May this be your prayer, "May God grant I may never so live as to be mistaken for a man of this world who has his portion in this life. My portion is above. Whatever I enjoy here, Heaven is my heritage."

Notice, next, that his faith constrained him to have fellowship with the people of God. Not only does he refuse to be a worldling, but he avows himself an Israelite. You will tell me, perhaps, that he only had fellowship with them when he was dead. Yet think not too lightly of that. He gave up the funeral which Egypt would accord him that he might wait long years for his funeral to be celebrated by his own people. But I beg to remind you that it was not the first time that Joseph had shown fellowship with his Brethren. It was but the conclusion of a lifetime of communion with them.

It is true he did not go down into their poverty, there was no need that he should, but he made them sharers of his wealth.

God had so ordained in Providence that Joseph should be a man of wealth, and rank, and station, and he showed his fellowship with Israel by bringing his father and brothers down into Goshen, and providing for them there, and being always ready to urge their case, and to do his best to promote their interests. Now one mark of faith in the Christian man is this—if he is poor he takes his lot with the poor people of God cheerfully—but if he is rich, he counts that he is placed in a commanding position that he may the better help his Brethren, and he has fellowship with them by his constant kindness towards them.

If it ever were necessary to prove his true fellowship that he should give up his position altogether, he would cheerfully do it that he might be numbered with the despised people of God. Joseph, it seems to me, never blushed to own his race, and never failed at all proper times to say to the Egyptians, "I am not one of you. There is my family down in Goshen." As he knew that afterwards his family would become despised and persecuted, he said to them, "Keep my bones, so that when they degrade you they may degrade me—I am going to stay with you in all your future sorrows, for I am one of you."

True faith will make the child of God say, "I am one of God's people, my soul is joined to them in all conditions." Where they go, I will go. Where they lodge, I will lodge. Their people shall be my people, and their God my God. Where they die, will I die, and there will I be buried."

In the case of Joseph his faith led to an open avowal of his confidence in God's promise. On his deathbed he said, "I die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land." He also said, "He will bring you to the land which He promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." Faith cannot be dumb. I have known her tongue to be silent through diffidence, but at last it has been obliged to speak. And, my Brethren, why should not *your* faith speak, for her voice is sweet and her countenance is comely? No tongue is more sweet to Christ's ear, nor more potent over the hearts of men, than the tongue of true faith.

If your faith is real, though you may, for awhile, hide your light under a bushel, you will not always be able to do so. Before long you will be compelled to say, "I believe the Gospel of Christ, I believe the promise of God. He will keep His Covenant, and I avow myself to be a Believer in His Truth." Joseph, having thus declared his faith, practically showed that he meant it, that it was not a matter of form, but a matter of *heart*. I do not know in what better way he could have shown his practical belief in the fact that God would bring the people out of Egypt, than by saying, "Keep my bones here, never bury them till you go yourselves to Canaan, having left Egypt forever, and taken possession of your Covenant country."

He who believes in God will find practical ways of proving his faith. He will avow it by an open confession, but he will also manifest it by choosing some form of service in which his faith shall be put to the test. Or if affliction is allotted to him by God, he will take it cheerfully, expecting that God

will give him strength equal to the emergency. And so his faith, by God's Grace, will triumph under the trial. That faith which never proves itself by works is a faith to be dreaded. If your faith never makes you speak up for your God or serve Him, it is a bastard faith, a base-born presumption which will ruin your soul. It never came from God and will not carry you to God. But Joseph is very practical, as practical as the circumstances permitted him to be.

Moreover, notice, that having faith himself, he would encourage the faith of others. No man may be said to have real faith who is not concerned that faith may be found in the hearts of his fellow men. But, you say, "What did Joseph do to encourage the faith of others?" Why, he left his bones to be a standing sermon to the children of Israel. We read that they were embalmed and put into a coffin in Egypt, and thus they were ever in the keeping of the tribes. What did that say? Every time an Israelite thought of the bones of Joseph, he thought, "We are to go out of this country one day." Perhaps he was a man prospering in business, laying up store in Egypt.

But he would say to himself, "I shall have to part with this, Joseph's bones are to be carried up. I am not to be here forever." And then while it acted as a warning, his body would serve also as an encouragement, for when the task-masters began to afflict the people, and their tale of bricks was increased, the despondent Israelite would say, "I shall never come up out of Egypt." Oh, but others would say, "Joseph believed we should—there are his bones still unburied. He has left us the assurance of his confidence that God would, in due time, bring up His people out of this house of bondage."

It seems to me that Joseph had thought of this device as being the best thing on the whole he could do to keep the Israelites perpetually in remembrance that they were strangers and sojourners, and to encourage them in the belief that in due time they would be delivered from the house of bondage and settled in the land that flowed with milk and honey. True faith seeks to propagate herself in the hearts of others. She is earnest, eager, intense, if by any means she may scatter a handful of holy seed that may fall in good soil, and bring forth glory to God. It is a good proof of your own faith when you lay yourself out to promote the faith of others.

Note, too, that Joseph's faith made him have an eye to the spiritualities of the Covenant, Joseph had nothing earthly to gain in having his bones buried in Canaan rather than in Egypt. That can make small difference to a dying man. Naturally we like to think of being buried with our kin, but then we would choose to be buried soon after death. None of us would voluntarily desire to have his bones kept for some hundreds of years out of the ground in order that they might ultimately come into the family sepulcher.

I believe he had no eye to the mere secularities of the Covenant, but was looking to the spiritual blessings which are revealed in Jesus, the great Seed of Abraham. This made him say, "I am no Egyptian, I am one of the seed that the Lord has chosen. I look for the coming Messiah. I have

a part and a lot among the chosen people of God. I will claim that, I will claim it not only for myself, but for my sons and for my household." He had in the Providence of God, without any fault of his own, been married to an Egyptian woman. Manasseh and Ephraim, therefore, were half of Egypt, and if the father had been buried in Egypt the sons might have clung to Egypt and separated from Israel.

He seems to say, "No, my Children, you are not Egyptians. You are like your father, Israelites! Never bury my bones in Egypt. I charge you never bury them at all till you can lay them down in the ancient sepulcher of our race. Be Israelites to the backbone, through and through, for the best possession is not what I can bequeath you in Egypt, which will pass away, but the heritage to which I point you—the spiritual heritage which I would gladly you should have. My bones shall charge you, Manasseh and Ephraim, not to make yourselves Egyptians, not to be conformed to the world nor to seek your rest here. Let your father's bones tempt you towards Canaan—never rest till you feel you have an interest in the spiritual blessings of the Covenant.

Once more, it seems to me that Joseph's faith in connection with his unburied bones showed itself in his willingness to wait God's time for the promised blessing. Says he, "I believe I shall be buried in Machpelah, and I believe that my people will come up out of Egypt. I believe, and I am willing to wait." Every man wants that when he dies he shall be decently buried soon. Who wants to have his bones hawked about? But this man will wait, wait for his funeral—wait on, however weary may be the time of Israel's captivity. It is a great thing to have *waiting* faith. "Stand still and see the salvation of God," is easier said than done.

"He that believes shall not make haste." We are, for the most part, in a childish hurry. We would like to be in Heaven tomorrow. If we were wise, we should be glad to keep out till God lets us in. We would like to have the resurrection tomorrow, and many are pining because the coming of Christ is not by-and-by. Wait the Lord's appointment, O impatient Grumbler. Be quiet of spirit and calm of heart—the vision will not tarry. Be willing to wait. Be willing to let your bones sleep in the dust till the trump of the resurrection sound, and if you could have a choice about it, refer your choice back again to your Lord in Heaven, for He knows what is best and right for you.

I like the idea of a man who could not wait in life, for he must die, but who proves the waitingness of his spirit by letting his bones wait till they could be deposited in Canaan. You will notice that Joseph had his wish, for when Israel went up out of Egypt you will find, in the fifteenth of Exodus, that Moses took care to carry with them the bones of Joseph. And, what is rather singular, those bones were not buried as soon as they came into Canaan. Nor were they buried during the long wars of Joshua with the various tribes.

But in the last verses of the book of Joshua, when nearly all the land had been conquered, and the country had been divided to the different tribes, and they had taken possession, *then* we read that they buried the

bones of Joseph in the field of Shechem, in the place which Abraham had bought for a sepulcher. As if Joseph's remains might not be buried till they had won the country, until it was settled, and the Covenant was fulfilled. Then he must be buried, but not till then. How blessed is waiting faith which can let God take His time, and wait, believe in Him, let Him wait as long as He wills.

III. I must close with the third point. I think we have in our text, beloved Friends, AN EXAMPLE FOR OUR FAITH TO ACT UPON WHEN WE ALSO COME TO THE TIME OF DEATH. We will imagine it to be very near, and the conception will be literally true to some, and true to us all in a degree. What shall I derive any comfort from when I come to die?

Come, let me prepare my last dying speech. Now think it over. First, I would imitate Joseph by deriving my comfort from the Covenant, for that he did. That commandment concerning his bones was only made because he believed God would keep His Covenant to His people and bring them up out of Egypt. May you and I be able to say with David, "Although my house is not so with God, yet He has made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." Ah, my Soul, this is not *dying*, but only passing from earth to Heaven. Jesus, who is Himself the Covenant, soothes most blessedly the dying beds of His saints.

A Negro was asked when he had been sitting up to nurse his master one night, "How is your master?" Said he, "He is dying full of life." It is a grand thing when one has the Covenant to think on. You can then die full of life—you can pass away out of this lower life, being filled with the life eternal before the life temporal has quite gone out, so that you are never emptied out of life, but the life of Grace melts into the life of Glory, as the river into the ocean. Joseph may be an example to us, in that he drew his consolation from the future of his people. "God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land."

Very often the dying thoughts of a Christian man are troubled about the condition of the Church of Christ. He fears that dark days are coming upon her. If a minister, he anxiously asks, "What will my people do, now that I can no longer lead and feed them? Will they not be like a flock without a shepherd?" But here will come in the consolation. There are better days for the Church of God. Though the fathers sleep—

***"All the promises do travail,
With a glorious day of Grace."***

Though one after another we shall pass away, there are not dark days for our descendants, but days of brightness are on the way. "Let Your work appear unto Your servants, and Your glory unto their children."

"He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet." The kings of the isles shall yet acknowledge Him, and the wanderers of the desert shall bow down before Him. Jesus, the Christ of God, must be King over all the earth, for God has sworn it, saying, "Surely all flesh shall see the salvation of God." The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it." With such thoughts as

these upon our minds, we may well close our eyes in death with a song upon our lips!

And then, my Brethren, we have another and brighter hope to die with—if die we must before it is fulfilled, and that is, Christ Jesus the Son of God will visit His people. Brethren, the glad hope of the second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ may light up the chamber of death with hope. As Joseph said, “God will visit you.” The time comes when the Lord shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the trump of the archangel and the voice of God. Let our dying testimony be to the effect that surely He comes quickly and His reward is with Him. We have not to look forward as the Jew did. He expected the first advent, but we watch for the second coming. This shall cheer us even in our departure, for if we die before He comes we shall yet share in the splendor, for the dead in Christ shall rise.

We may add to all this a hope concerning our bones. We may tell our weeping kindred, as they gather round our bed, to give our bones a decent sepulcher. They need not blazon our names, or write our fancied virtues on stone. But we will tell them that we shall rise again, and that we commit ourselves to the bosom of our Father and our God, with the full conviction that our dust shall yet be quickened anew—

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

I do not know when a witness to the resurrection sounds more sweetly than it does from the lips of a saint who is just about to quit this mortal body, to enter into the Presence of his God. It is well to say, as you take leave of these hands, and feet, and eyes, and all the members of this mortal frame, “Farewell, poor body, I shall return to you again. You shall be sown in weakness, but you shall rise in power! You have been the faithful friend and servant of my soul, but you shall be still more fit for my spirit when the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised.” May we take care that our last act shall be a triumph of faith, the crowning deed of our lives. God help us that it may be so!

Beloved, there is one sad reflection, namely, that we cannot hope to die triumphantly unless we live *obediently*. We cannot expect to exhibit faith in dying moments if we have not faith now. God grant you faith, O Unbeliever. Seeker, rest not till you have it, and may the Spirit of God give you the faith of God's elect, that living you may serve God, and dying you may honor Him as Joseph did of old. The Lord bless you, dear Friends, for His sake. Amen.

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THE HIDING OF MOSES BY FAITH NO. 1421

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

***“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment.”
Hebrews 11:23.***

As I observed to you in the exposition, the stress in these passages of sacred biography should be laid upon the words, “by faith.” The mighty deeds of heroes and the obedient acts of pilgrim fathers are only told to us because they spring out of *faith*. It is to commend the root that the fruits are mentioned. The children are named one by one that the mother may have the praise, for faith is the mother of all virtues. According to this Book, God estimates men by their faith and “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Faith is well-pleasing to the Most High, but it is in proportion to its strength, for there are cases in which weakness of faith has evidently been followed by chastisement and other cases in which strength of faith has been abundantly honored.

The more you believe, the more God blesses you. If you believe with faith as small as a grain of mustard seed you shall be saved, for where there is faith there is salvation. But if your faith is weak, you shall miss many comforts and only as your faith grows and becomes strong through Divine Grace shall you be a receiver of the greater, deeper and higher things of the Covenant of Grace. More faith is what we need and the Lord is willing to give it, Grace upon Grace! He delights, especially, to strengthen the faith which we already possess by trying it, by sustaining it under trials and thus rooting and grounding it. He thus causes it to become firm and vigorous.

Oh that we might always live so that the Lord might see in all our actions that they spring from faith. Then shall our actions as well as ourselves be always accepted of Him by Christ Jesus, for the Lord has plainly declared, “the just shall live by faith; but if any man draws back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him”—that is, draws back from faith and runs in the way of sense and feeling. Having begun by faith we are to live by faith. We are not to find life in the Gospel and then nourish it by the Law. We are not to begin in the Spirit and then seek to be made perfect by the flesh, or by confidence in man—we must continue to walk by the simple faith which rests only upon God, for this is the true spirit of a Christian.

Faith is the freewoman’s child and it cannot live with merit, or self-righteousness, for that is the bondwoman’s child and the Scripture says, “Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.” Faith is, in God’s sight, the very soul of all holy actions. That which is done without faith, even though, considered in itself, had there been faith at the back of it, it might

have been accepted, yet it is *not* accepted without faith. As no sacrifice, even though it were an unblemished one, should be offered except with salt and with fire—and that fire a holy and heavenly fire—so nothing will be accepted of God except it is mixed with faith.

Hearing is no hearing to profit if it is not mixed with faith in them that hear it. And even *doing* may stand in our way unless, first of all, we have attended to that work—that God-like work, that work of God—that we believe in Him whom He has sent. There must be faith! Without it, it is impossible to please God and He measures our actions according to the faith from which they proceed. I do again, therefore, very strongly say I take the meaning of these texts to be not a laudation of the *acts*, themselves, as much as an honor put upon *faith*, itself, by the Holy Spirit.

If you read of those who subdued kingdoms, that is not the point—others have subdued kingdoms—but it is, “who *through faith* subdued kingdoms.” If you read of those who escaped the edge of the sword—many have done that, but none are recorded here but those—“who by faith escaped the edge of the sword.” “Turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” Many have done that by valor and strength. But to do it by *faith*—that is the thing! Many have endured scourging and bonds and imprisonments. Many have wandered about destitute, afflicted, tormented. But such sufferings are nothing unless they are borne by faith!

I might almost quote the words of Paul, only altering them a little, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not faith, I have become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and though I give my body to be burned, and have not faith, it profits me nothing” Faith—first, middle, last—must be the walk, life and triumph of the Christian! God gives *to* faith, God accepts *from* faith, God *saves* through faith, God *keeps* through faith, God *sanctifies* through faith, God *perfects* through faith. In all good things the power, life and acceptance are, “not of works, lest any man should boast,” but by faith that all things may be of Grace alone!

I come, now, to take up the instance of faith mentioned in the text, and as I do so I trust many here will be asking themselves the question, “Have I that faith which sees the invisible? Have I a faith which exercises an operative power over my entire life? Am I a believer in God, in His dear Son, in His most sacred Word? Is that faith real, practical, effective? If not, I can be sure that I am without God and without hope in the world! If He, by His Grace, has given me the faith of His elect whereby I discern Him, recognize Him, act towards Him as the God that is and is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, then I am accepted in Christ Jesus.”

Let us read our text again and then we will fall to and gather instruction from it. “By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment”—their faith made them brave and led them to preserve their little one.

I. My first observation about this brief narrative is this—IT IS A GREAT BLESSING WHEN IN A FAMILY BOTH THE PARENTS HAVE FAITH. Paul,

in one text, says, "By faith he was hid three months by his parents." Now you will please to notice that Moses, himself, in the account which he gives in the second chapter of Exodus, ascribes this to his mother—"When she saw that he was a good child she hid him three months." Stephen, in his speech before the Sanhedrin, says, "In which time Moses was born and was exceedingly fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months." Thus mentioning, rather, his father than his mother.

Paul writes in Hebrews, "He was hid three months by his parents," thus mentioning both of them. No doubt the Apostle combined the two other Inspired utterances. Do you wonder that Moses chiefly mentions his mother, Jochebed? I do not. What man is there among us but always delights to mention his godly mother? And though we would have no partialities about our parents, yet without controversy, great is the mystery of a mother's love and there are some points about it in which it makes a deeper impression upon the memory than a father's care. Prize fathers as you may, and will, and should—yet there is a tender touch that comes home to every man's heart when he thinks of his mother!

It seems natural that Moses should, when he wrote the account, mention most of all his mother and, indeed, and of a truth, a mother has more to do with a baby than a father can have. In its tender infancy she is naturally its chief guardian. Perhaps, too, though we cannot be sure, Jochebed may have been the stronger Believer of the two and may have been the main instigator of the child's preservation. There are other instances in Scripture of the same sort, if it were so. Manoaah would have been sadly put about if it had not been for his wife when she said, "If the Lord had meant to destroy us, He would not have showed us such things as these."

The mother of Zebedee's children is often mentioned, while very little is said about Zebedee. And I know there are many instances now extant where, if we had to write the religious history of families, albeit that the father is a good man, yet the mother, I was about to say, is better and would be the prominent actor in any family deed of faith. Well, let us imagine it to have been so. Jochebed, the wife, has the stronger faith. She is not a business person. She stays at home and looks after little Moses as she did after little Aaron and little Miriam in their time. The father must go out brick-making and earn the family bread. But mother at home, though not conspicuous, but rather obscure, walks near to God and believes in Him and so becomes the very center and pivot upon which the household rests and turns.

It is often so and blessed is that man who can say as much of his own wife. He will never be envious of her, but rather rejoice that, if he is Amram, God has given him a Jochebed whom his son, Moses, will mention in years to come even if he forgets his father! The husband will be well content to have it so, for the joy and peace which he receives from a godly woman of decided and vigorous piety will be an abundant compensation for being a little overshadowed in the memory of an honored son. But what a blessing it was, dear Friends, that although Moses does not say

his father hid him, yet he had his share in it, for Stephen says he was nourished three months in his father's house.

The father was cognizant of it, helpful in it and hopeful about it. He was fully agreeing, consenting and assisting in all that the mother did. Would God it were so in all families! When husband and wife fit together in the things of God like brick and mortar, then is the house well built! But when the mistress pulls one way and the master draws the other—when one is for Christ and the other is for Belial—the house is divided against itself and how can it stand? It is no marvel when both parents serve the Lord that their children are brought up in His fear and become their happiness and their honor! And it is equally natural that if an ungodly father undoes all that can be done by a godly mother, the evil example of the stronger should be followed rather than the godly example of the weaker.

If I address any husband here who is as yet an unbeliever, I can but pray the Lord and join my prayers with those of his wife that he may be brought to know the Lord and rest in Him. Both the parents of Moses believed, so my text says, and both acted by faith in disobeying the cruel order of the king. If they had not agreed about it, I do not see how Moses could have been concealed. But they both went together in the hiding of the child and, dear Friends, how well it will be if we all go together in the endeavor to bring our children to Christ! If our prayers are united, if our example is one, if our teaching is never contradictory, if both parents are with like earnestness seeking the salvation of their little ones, we may rest assured the promise will be kept, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it."

II. Our second remark shall be that TRUE AND EVEN REMARKABLE FAITH MAY ACT IN A VERY COMMONPLACE WAY. What do we read? By faith they "subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword," and so on, and so on. Why, these are *great* things and worthy of mention among memorable deeds! Yes, but this, also, is great in its way—"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents." It has no trumpet ring about it like stopping lions' mouths, quenching fires and subduing kingdoms—but in *God's* consideration—from his point of view, the hiding of a little baby three months may be as great an instance of admirable and acceptable faith as any of them!

Even turning to flight the armies of the alien may not be greater than defeating the malice of a king by saving a little child! But you say to me, "It was a very natural thing for a mother to do. When Pharaoh had given orders that all the male children should be destroyed, was it not natural enough that a mother should try to preserve her child's life? Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" Yes, yes, I know all that and admit it! But still, the Lord is not praising the *natural* affection, but the *supernatural faith*. A very strong current is seen when Nature and faith both set the same way. Yet it is not Nature but *faith* which bears the sway!

Sometimes faith has to go against Nature, as in the case of Abraham when he was told to offer up his son. And then faith wins the victory! And

here, though faith and Nature ran together and so made the current stronger, still the text does not say, "By the force of Nature, by the natural love of parents for their child, Moses was hid three months." No, but they did it, "by faith," so the Spirit says, and He knows how they came to do it better than we do! We would say, "Nature led them to conceal the baby," but God says, "Faith led them to do it." And, in their degree, both are true. Nature prompted, but faith compelled, constrained and enabled them to do what else their timidity would not have ventured upon.

But was it not a very simple thing to be doing by faith—the mere hiding of a child? Yes, but not so easy as it looks. Sometimes, I suppose, the mother said, "Hush! Hush! Hush! Dear child, you must not cry, whatever your pain, as Egyptian children may, for if some stranger should hear a child's cry, it will be reported to Pharaoh's murdering officers and you will die." Many, many times the instinctive cry must have been hushed by a mother's sedulous care. And when neighbors came to the door, little can we tell the difficulty to put them off the scent, to keep them from knowing that there was such a little living treasure anywhere about the house. How often would callers in the daytime put the family into a fever? And in the middle of the night how readily would both parents start if someone knocked at the door, or loitered under the window!

A rustling outside their poor little house would make them full of alarm. They were so distressed because they were breaking the king's law and though they were not afraid of it, they were afraid of the king's officers who might come and seize their child. Yes, it was a very simple thing to do, just to hide away a baby—keep it quiet and not let anybody know about it—but it was done by faith and that makes the act Divine. It was natural. It was simple. I admit all that, but when the Holy Spirit says, "By faith his parents hid him," it makes the simple and the natural action to glow with an unusual glory, like the bush in Horeb, which was only a bush, but yet the Lord appeared in it!

And here is the point of it, dear Friends, Mothers, Daughters, Sisters and all of you engaged in common life—do you not see how you can use faith to honor God in ordinary things? You think I preach by faith in this pulpit and so I do, blessed be God! But then you can darn stockings by faith, mend and piece and save and make a little go a long way by faith! When you are ill, you can lie and cough by faith without being impatient! You can keep your temper sweet with a provoking husband, or a disobedient child by faith! You can do all sorts of things by faith! It rides the whirlwind, but it threads a needle! It climbs up to the Throne of God and yet it stands by a baby's cradle!

Faith can obtain the promises, but it can sit down and twist bulrushes, boil bitumen and stir a tar pot to pitch a little ark within and without with pitch, if it is necessary. There is *nothing* that faith cannot make noble when it touches it! You need not say, "I need to get away from my daily business, or from my domestic concerns, in order to show my faith." No, no! Stop where you are and show it! If a soldier wants to be brave and asks his captain what he can do, he will tell him, "You keep rank in the day of battle. You fire your gun when the word is given." In order to be a

brave man you need not leave the ranks, nor run up to the cannon's mouth out of mere bravado!

Soldier of Christ, just keep your place! Do the work appointed by the great Lord, trusting in Him and believing in His power to help you. So shall you make your life sublime, however commonplace it may appear to carnal eyes. By faith these parents hid their child three months—a short time, perhaps, you will think. If you had to go through their anxieties you would reckon that it was the longest three months you ever lived! Three months the officers are after your darling child and every time you look it in the face you are afraid it will be snatched away from your arms to be flung into the river. In vain, O Mother, do you give your child its daily food! In vain do you delight in its dimpled cheek and laughing eyes, for it must die! The crocodiles of the Nile must feast upon that beloved flesh! Such would her fears be day and night!

Three months both parents must have been in great distress and they could hardly have held on under such an agony of mind if it had not been by faith! But faith enabled them to watch during the weary days which must have been crowded with tortures. Though the time seems short to you who never lost a child and to all of us who never knew what it was to live under the heart-rending peril of having our infants murdered, yet it filled all the little world of a mother's and a father's heart—and what could be worse? They bore the perpetual anxiety and hid the child by faith, believing and hoping that God would have pity upon them.

III. A third principle which we will lay down is this, that FAITH WILL ACT WITH A VERY SLENDER ENCOURAGEMENT. “By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a proper child.” As I read these words I thought to myself, “I wonder what parents do not see their children to be very proper children?” It seems to be the general rule that we have, all of us—at least all mothers—the most beautiful children that ever have been born! A slender reason, it seems, to be for hiding a child three months! Stephen says in his speech that the child was “exceedingly fair” and, if you look at Stephen's speech, you will see that the translators have put in the margin, “fair to God.” So it may run, “when they saw that the child was fair to God.”

Now, I gather from that expression that the child was exceedingly beautiful—beyond the common run of children. That there was a charm about its features, a remarkable glory about its face and something superhuman, probably, since it was fair to God. A spiritual air floated about the child's face, as if it bore some glimmerings of the Glory of Sinai, of the wondrous shepherd-lawgiver who led the people 40 years through the wilderness. In the baby's face there were prophecies of the man of God. Surely among them that have been born of women there has not been born a greater than Moses! And about him as a child there was a something so striking, so marvelously beautiful, that his parents were fascinated by him.

Now, you can get a great deal of sunshine through a little hole and you can see a very large prospect through a small glass—and it is, as it were, a little space that the faith of Amram and Jochebed looked through—but

they saw great things! Here was born to them a lovely child, an extraordinary child, a child fair to God! Well, what did they say? "This remarkable child, surely, was not brought into the world without some purpose on the part of God with regard to it. We will keep it alive. This is not a child that can die or shall die. We will keep it alive. Pharaoh or no Pharaoh, such a child as this must and shall live."

Perhaps they remembered that it was close upon the time when God had promised to deliver His people, Israel. I should not think that believing Israelites had quite forgotten that God had told Abraham that they should be in bondage 400 years—and they must have known that the time would expire within another 80 years—and it is probable that the mother said, "There is to come a deliverer. There is something about this child's face which makes me hope that he will be the deliverer." Jochebed's faith that God would deliver His people was strong and so she thought, "Perhaps this is to be the champion who shall bring Israel out of Egypt. I will save him. I will save him! He shall be hid. Pharaoh shall not have him. All his edicts shall not drive me to expose him to death." She looked for a deliverer and expected him to come—this was faith!

O dear Friends, if we had but such faith as this woman had, what wonders we should do because we have not to look through a little glass, but have a wide window open before us! She had no Bible! The man who was to write the first Book in the Bible was her own little child! She had only oral traditions handed down from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and her fathers. And she had only the fact that their child was exceedingly comely to cheer her in this special hope. But she believed in God and that enabled her to endure danger for her child's sake. She believed God. Now "God who in old times spoke to His servants by the Prophets has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things."

He has let the full Glory of Heaven blaze forth in the face of Jesus! What manner of Believers ought *we* to be, surrounded by such a light and nursed in the midst of such mercy? May God grant that our faith, having so much encouragement, may act strongly to the Glory of God! But if sometimes you should seem to have very little to catch hold upon, dear Brother, dear Sister, do not throw away that little! If you should only see some little token for good—some one little cloud the size of a man's hand—still expect a shower of mercies! Even if all things should seem to be against you, and only one thing should appear to be for you, still draw sweet inferences from slender promises, or from what may appear to be slender promises, for truly the Lord is good and His mercy endures forever—and you may stay yourselves upon Him!

IV. A fourth principle is clear in the text, namely, that FAITH HAS GREAT POWER IN OVERCOMING FEAR. The text says they were not afraid of the king's commandment. The king's commandment made all Egypt tremble! It does now! The Egyptians are still the meanest of all peoples. The description given of them in the Prophet holds good to this day! Everywhere, all over Egypt, you will hear the stick going. No other race of men would ever bear the beatings as the Egyptians do—the whole mass of them working, practically, for one man—that he may spend a superabun-

dance upon himself. As they are now, so they have been from the beginning—a generation of yielding slaves, trodden down perpetually by greedy oppressors!

The Israelites in Egypt had no doubt caught very much the spirit of the Egyptians and the spirit of the Egyptians was the exact opposite of the spirit of a true-born Englishman! You and I rejoice that we are free. We are in the habit of discussing laws and criticizing statutes and if there were an unjust edict passed, we should not scruple for a single moment to break it! We should even feel a pleasure in putting our foot through an unrighteous act of Parliament, for we have been trained for centuries in the habits and ways of liberty and think and speak for ourselves! But it has never been so in Egypt and specially was it not so in those days. Then they might well swear by the life of Pharaoh for they all *lived* by the permission of Pharaoh!

They *belonged* to him—their lands and everything. Therefore it must have taken a good deal for these two, son and daughter of Levi, to feel that they could go against the king's commandment! They had a right to do so. What right had Pharaoh to order them to destroy their children? It was their *duty* to break the king's commandment and they did it because they had faith! I am bound to admit, though I have commended the spirit of Englishmen, that there are a great many people, even in this country, who are very much ruled by what is called Law. The Church established by Law will always enjoy a vast prestige because it has royalty for its head and the State at its back. To me its connection with the State is worthy to be called, "the king's evil," but to others it seems a beauty spot!

To the unthinking crowd, that which is established by Law must be right! Do the ritualistic priests come to us with legal authority? Well, then, who among us may dare to question their doings? Have certain rubrics been ordained by the Lords and Commons in assembled Parliament? Has Her Majesty given consent to them? Well, then, they must be proper and correct! A great many people have never got out of that style of thinking and perhaps never will! Whereas, to me, it seems to be a first principle of the Christian Church that Christ's Kingdom is not of this world and that to all these great ones of the earth, the only thing is to say, "Keep your hands off the Ark lest you meet with the doom of Uzziah! Come humbly, like disciples, to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him—but do not set up to be legislators for His dominion, nor dare to intermeddle or make rules or regulations for the spiritual Kingdom! We care nothing for your ordinances and regulations! You have no power here! Let Caesar have his own, but he must not touch the things which belong to Christ."

Now this woman, by faith, had got beyond the fear of Caesar, the Caesar of the age, the Pharaoh of the period. Whatever he might establish by law was just nothing at all to her. She broke away from it. There was, no doubt, appended to Pharaoh's statute, a punishment for anybody who should not obey the law. Perhaps four lives were in danger for the sake of that one little life—her husband, herself, Aaron and Miriam, her daughter. If the officers enter the house and they find that little Moses has been saved, it may be they will destroy the family, root and branch. That fear

must have been upon her, but yet, through *faith*, she will run all risks—and so will all her family risk themselves that this promising child whom they believe God has sent to them for a noble purpose may live!

Now, dear Friends, I want you, if you have faith in Christ, to manifest it by overcoming all fear of the consequences of doing right. It is right to obey God rather than man! God has the first claim upon us. Indeed, God has the *only* claim upon us! We are to obey men for God's sake! But when man's authority oversteps itself and interferes with the authority of God, then it becomes treason to the great King to obey even the greatest of kings! Parents and all in authority over us are to be obeyed in all things up to that point. It stops there! I pray that you may have Grace to do the right thing, everyone among you, even if it costs you everything. If to be honest would make you lose your employment. If to speak the Truth of God would bring you into trouble about your daily bread, do it and dare it!

"We must live," says somebody. I do not know that. It might be better to die than to live under some circumstances—certainly better to die a martyr than to live a traitor—better to die for the right than to live in sin! You say, "We must live." I will tell you another, "must." We must die! And it becomes us to live with that always before us, for we shall be called to "give an account for the things done in the body, whether they are good or whether they are evil." Beloved, may we have the faith that masters fear so that we can go through the world fearless of popular opinion, fearless of ungodly censure, fearless of the little circle around us to whom some are altogether slaves! May we fear God and therefore be no more afraid of man's commandments. Be just and fear no consequences! If the heavens, themselves, should shake, we would do no wrong, nor tell a single lie to prop up the skies! Let the sun, moon and stars come down sooner than we should, ourselves, fall from our integrity! May faith give us such a fearless walk as this!

V. But now, fifthly, and very briefly, I want you to notice that FAITH IS OFTEN A PRECURSOR TO GREAT IDEAS. The mother of Moses had to hide her child. I have no doubt if she were here and if her husband were here, they would have a long story to tell of the things that happened—how often their hearts were in their mouths, how frequently poor Amram was in a cold sweat because one of his companions with whom he worked talked of going home with him! How that prying neighbor of theirs, who always wanted to put her finger into everybody's business, tried to find out what there was that made Mrs. Jochebed stay at home so much.

They might relate how they were afraid, even, of their own little children, lest they might, in their play, talk of their little brother! What fear was upon the whole family, lest discovery should lead to destruction, we may guess from their hiding the baby. The mother was forced to come up with ingenuous ways to hide her child and she used all her wits and common sense. She did not put her child in the front room, or carry it into the street or sit at the open door and nurse it! No, she was prudent and acted as if all depended upon her concealing the baby.

Some people suppose that if you have faith you may act like a fool! But faith makes a person *wise*. It is one of the notable points about faith that

it is sanctified common sense! That is not at all a bad definition of faith. It is not fanaticism, it is not absurdity—it is making God the grandest asset in our account—and then reckoning according to the soundest logic. It is not putting my hands into boiling water with the impression that it will not scald me! It is not doing foolish and absurd things! Faith is believing in God and acting towards God as we ought to do. It is treating Him, not as a cipher, but as a grand over-topping numeral in all our additions and subtractions!

It is realizing God—that is what it is! And in that sense, faith is the truest reason, spiritualized and lifted up out of the ordinary sphere in which godless men choose to indulge in it. It is *sanctified* reason, enlightened from on high! The mother wants the Lord to preserve her child, but she knows that God would have *her* to be the instrument of it, so she hides him. And when she can no longer hide him, then comes that little business of making an ark. Faith is inventive, but at the same time faith always likes a precedent! I imagine that the mother of Moses thought of making that ark and pitching it within and without because she had heard about Noah's ark!

Her faith made her love the memorial of the Lord's working salvation in days of old. She had not a book to read, but she had been told that story about Noah's ark. "Well," said she, "I will have a little ark for my little Noah and as I cannot otherwise save him, I will act as Noah did when, being moved with fear, he prepared an ark for the saving of his house." Brothers and Sisters, it is always safe for faith to think out her plans, but if she can discover one of *God's* plans and adopt it, then faith is more confident! There are always precedents if you look for them. You can find a Noah's ark somewhere and make a little one after that model. Of course your ark cannot be as big as Noah's, but then, if it were, it would be too big for little Moses—he would be lost in it! A little ark will do for a little Moses.

Go upon your own scale and work after the model which some servant of God was taught to set you. And as you have the same God to deal with and He has the same love to you as He had for the saints of old, you will find the old plans work exceedingly well! Some of you young folks always want something new of your own. Well, after a good deal of trying all sorts of new things, I always find out that if my new plans succeed, they turn out to have been old ones! There is nothing new under the sun that is worth trying! As sure as ever you strike out a new path you will find, if it is the right path at all, that somebody went that way years before. One has wittily complained of the ancients, that they have taken all our original thoughts and all our original plans—and carried them out before we had an opportunity to claim them!

But still, the faith of Moses' mother was inventive. She invents the ark, yet does she borrow from the precedent of former days! She considers the days of old and her spirit makes diligent search—and she acts after the way in which men of God had acted before. A critical commentator complains that the faith of these parents was somewhat weak. It made them go part of the way towards putting their child out of existence by putting

him out in the ark and leaving him among the bulrushes. Well, I do not know anything about that! I am always satisfied with not knowing what I do not know—that is to say, if I see that God says nothing about their weak faith, I think we had better not say anything about it, either!

By faith they did what they did and they did the best thing possible! And if there was weakness, as probably there was, still, as a painter, when he was sketching a favorite prince, took care to put his finger upon an uncomely spot in his face, so does the Holy Spirit, when He speaks of these godly parents, omit all mention of defects in their faith! He praises their faith and it would be presumption on our part to modify His verdict. May we have as much faith as they had when we are tried and we shall have no need to fear.

VI. Lastly, FAITH'S SIMPLE ACTS OFTEN LEAD ON TO THE GRAND-EST RESULTS. "Take care of that child, Miriam. Do not let him cry, for fear anyone should hear." Now, that everyday act of Miriam in nursing the baby. The mother giving the child the breast to stop its cries. The father watching the door and all those little things, were small matters, yet how wonderfully they conduced to the great future by which Pharaoh's power was broken! The whole history of Israel rested upon hiding that little child! The whole history of *Israel*, did I say? Think of the names that hung upon the child's life—Aaron, Joshua, Samson, Barak, David, Solomon and even the Divine Baby of Bethlehem and the whole history of Israel were connected with Moses!

Wrapped up in that child was the history of the world, for in the Jewish people all nations were blessed and blessing comes only to us Gentiles through the Jew! Greater blessings are yet to come by the same channel! Oh yes, she takes care of Moses and hides him and her reward is that Moses lives—and in due time, there he is, ready for his work—waving his rod over the fields of Zoan, working plagues and wonders! And there he is by the dark sea, drowning all Pharaoh's host and then leading the people to the mount of God, even to Horeb, and bringing them to the margin of the promised land! There he is! And he could not have been there if by *faith* his mother had not hid him three months!

You do not know all you are doing when you do little things in faith! Brothers and Sisters, do not despise domestic duties, but bring up all your children, your little children, in God's fear! Correct their little habits, bear with their little ways, teach them their little hymns—all lead up to great results! Do not, I beseech you, despise and sin against the child! You know not what is in him, or her, or what in God's great book of history those tiny hands are yet to write! If you have no children but have some other sort of work to do for God, do not think little of it! Grand events hinge on little incidents! Great wheels turn on little axles! There is a tiny part to each machine of unutterable importance. You never know the infinity of the influence of a word! To the wise man nothing is little—to the fool nothing is truly great. Make all things great by doing them by faith!

So there I finish. Have you faith in God? Are you really believing in Him? Are you trusting in Jesus? Have you accepted His way of salvation?

My dear Friend, if you have not, you are going the wrong way to work in everything! If I were to go into a country where there was a king and I took note of everything except that king and the king's laws, I should soon get into trouble. If he were a king whose power was everywhere present and yet I never recognized him, I should certainly make a failure of my life in his dominions!

You come into this world where God is and He is Omnipotent to bless or curse you—will you disregard Him? You come under certain Laws of His and if you take no note of them or Him, but live only seeing what your eyes can see and only knowing what comes under the cognizance of your senses, you will lead a bankrupt life and fail at the last. Why, Sirs, I dare to say concerning myself that the grandest object of my thought is always my God in Christ! I have most excellent and admirable friends here who love and esteem me, but I dare not lean on one of them! I must lean upon God alone!

He gives me many mercies and favors, but I know what it is to have been without them and to have been just as happy as I am with them! And now I know what it is to live above them and just live upon God! I could bear to let all go if you leave me my God. But if there is no God, then I am, of all men, most miserable! I have learned to live on Him, to trust Him and to run to Him with all my troubles and I find that He always sustains me. I go to Him with all my joys and He keeps me steady under them. He is All in All to me and I can and do only say this much about myself that I may recommend my Lord to you all! I beseech every young man and woman, every middle-aged man and woman and even every old man and woman here to taste and see that the Lord is good!

I cannot understand some of you poor people—how can you live without God when you have so little comfort of a temporal sort? I cannot understand you rich people—how can you live without God when He is so good and kind to you? How can you forget Him who daily loads you with benefits? You seem to me to get the husks and not to look for the kernels! You are living on the outside skins and never suck the juice of joy! The soul of life is to live to God! The peace, the deep, the heavenly rest which the soul gets must always come by a living faith in Jesus Christ!

I say this because there is not one among you who, if you have this faith, may not exercise it whatever your calling may be! You may drive horses, you may measure calico and weigh up sugar—and do all by *faith* to God's Glory! You may be on the Exchange, or you may be a book-folder, or a porter, or a nursery governess, or a plain cook—but everywhere, *faith* has something to do and you can show the power of faith in common life! God grant you may have faith worked in you by the Holy Spirit. God is true, why do you not trust Him? God is true, why do you not believe Him? The Christ of God is gracious, why do you not accept Him? He loves to save sinners! He receives all them that come to Him! Why do you not come to Him? God grant you may, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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MOSES' DECISION

NO. 1063

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 28, 1872,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“By faith Moses, when came of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.”
Hebrews 11:24, 25, 26.

LAST Sunday we spoke upon the faith of Rahab [**RAHAB, #1061**]. We had then to mention her former unsavory character and to show that, notwithstanding, her faith triumphed and both saved her and produced good works. Now it has occurred to me that some persons would say, “This faith is, no doubt, a very suitable thing for Rahab and persons of that class. A people destitute of sweetness and light may follow after the Gospel and it may be a very proper and useful thing for them, but the better sort of people will never take to it.”

I thought it possible that, with a sneer of contempt, some might reject all faith in God as being unworthy of persons of a higher condition of life and another manner of education. We have, therefore, taken the case of Moses, which stands as a direct contrast to that of Rahab, and we trust it may help to remove the sneer, though, indeed, that may be of small consequence—for if a man is given to sneering it is hardly worth while to waste five minutes in reasoning with him. The scorner is usually a person so inconsiderate that his scoffing deserves to be unconsidered. He who is great at sneering is good for nothing else, and he may as well be left to fulfill his vocation.

It occurred to me, also, that nevertheless, some might in all seriousness, say, “I have, through the Providence of God and the circumstances which surround me, been kept from outward sin. Moreover, I am not a member of the lowest ranks and do not belong to the class of persons of whom Rahab would be a suitable representative. In fact, I have, by the Providence of God, been placed in a choice position and can, without egotism, claim a superior character.” It is possible that such persons may feel as if they were placed under a disadvantage by this very superiority! The thought has passed over their mind, “The Gospel is for *sinner*s. It evidently comes to the chief of sinners and blesses them. We are free to admit that we are sinners, but perhaps because we have not sinned so openly we may not be so conscious of the sin, and consequently our mind may not be so well prepared to receive the abounding Grace of God which comes to the vilest of the vile.”

I have known some who have almost wished that they were literally like the prodigal son in his wanderings, that they might be more readily like he is in his return! It is altogether a mistake under which they labor, but

it is by no means an uncommon one. Perhaps, as we introduce to their notice one of the heroes of faith who was a man of noble rank, high education and pure character, they may be led to correct their thoughts. Moses belonged to the noblest order of men, but he was saved by faith, alone, even by the same faith which saved Rahab! This faith moved him to the faithful service of God and to an unparalleled self-denial. My earnest prayer is that you who are moral, amiable and educated may see in the action of Moses an example for yourselves.

No longer despise a life of faith in God! It is the one thing which you lack—the one thing above all others necessary. Are you young men of high position? Such was Moses. Are you men of spotless character? Such, also, was he. Are you now in a position where to follow out conscience will cost you dearly? Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible and though for a while a loser, he is now an eternal gainer by the loss! May the Spirit of God incline you to follow in the path of faith, virtue and honor where you see such a man as Moses leading the way!

We shall first consider the decided action of Moses. Secondly, the source of his decision of character—it was “by faith.” Thirdly, we shall look into those arguments by which his faith directed his action, after which we shall briefly reflect upon those practical lessons which the subject suggests.

I. And first let us observe THE DECIDED ACTION OF MOSES. “When he had come to years he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.” We need not narrate the stories which are told by Josephus and other ancient writers with regard to the early days of Moses, such as, for instance, his taking the crown of Pharaoh and trampling upon it. These things may be true, but it is equally possible that they are pure fiction. The Spirit of God has certainly taken no notice of them in Holy Scripture and what He does not think worth recording we need not think worth considering.

Nor shall I more than hint at answers to the question why it was that Moses remained no less than 40 years in the court of Pharaoh and doubtless, during that time, was called, “the son of Pharaoh’s daughter,” and if he did not enjoy the pleasures of sin, at any rate, had his share in the treasures of Egypt. It is just possible that he was not a converted man up to the age of forty. Probably during his early days he was, to all intents and purposes, an Egyptian, an eager student, a great proficient in Egyptian wisdom and also, as Stephen tells us in Acts, “a man mighty in words and in deeds.”

During those early days he was familiar with philosophers and warriors, and perhaps in his engrossing pursuits he forgot his nationality. We see the hand of God in his being 40 years in the court of Pharaoh. Whatever of evil or indecision in him may have kept him there we see the good result which God brought out of it, for he became, by his experience and observation, the better able to rule a nation and a fitter instrument in the hand of God for fashioning the Israelite state into its appointed form. Perhaps during the 40 years he had been trying to do what a great many are aiming at just now—he was testing whether he could not serve God and remain the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, too.

Perhaps he was of the mind of our Brethren in a certain Church who protest against, but still remain in that Church which gives to ritualism the fullest liberty. Perhaps he thought he could share the treasures of Egypt and yet bear testimony with Israel. He would be known as a companion of the priests of Isis and Osiris and yet at the same time would bear honest witness for Jehovah. If *he* did not attempt this impossibility, others in all ages have done so! It may be he quieted himself by saying that he had such remarkable opportunities for usefulness that he did not like to throw them up by becoming identified with the Israelite dissenters of the period. An open avowal of his private sentiments would shut him out from good society and especially from the court where it was very evident that his influence was great and beneficial.

It is just possible that the very feeling which still keeps so many good people in a wrong place may have operated upon Moses till he was 40 years of age. But then, having reached the prime of his manhood and having come under the influence of faith, he broke away from the ensnaring temptation as I trust many of our worthy Brethren will, before long, be able to do. Surely they will not always maintain a confederacy with the allies of Rome but will be men enough to be free! If when Moses was a child he spoke as a child and thought as a child—when he became a man he put away his childish ideas of compromise. If, when he was a young man he thought he might conceal a part of the Truth of God and so might hold his position—when he came to ripe years enough to know what the Truth of God fully was, he scorned all compromise and came out boldly as the servant of the living God.

The Spirit of God directs our eyes to the time when Moses came to years, that is to say, when his first 40 years of life were over. Then, without any hesitation he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and took his part with the despised people of God. I beg you to consider, first, who he was that did this. He was a man of education, for he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Somebody says he does not suppose the wisdom of the Egyptians was anything very great. No, and the wisdom of the English is not much greater! Future ages will laugh as much at the wisdom of the English as we now laugh at the wisdom of the Egyptians.

The human wisdom of one age is the folly of the next. Philosophy, so called, what is it but the concealment of ignorance under hard names and the arrangement of mere guesses into elaborate theories? In comparison with the eternal light of God's Word all the knowledge of men is "not light but darkness visible." Men of education, as a rule, are not ready to acknowledge the living God. Philosophy in its self-conceit despises the Infallible Revelation of the Infinite and will not come to the light lest it be re-proved. In all ages, when a man has considered himself to be wise, he has almost invariably despised the Infinite Wisdom. Had he been truly wise he would have humbly bowed before the Lord of All, but being only nominally so, he has said, "Who is the Lord?"

Not many great men after the flesh, not many mighty are chosen. Did not our Lord Himself say it, and His Word is for all time—"I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that You have hid these things from the

wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes"? But yet, sometimes a man of education like Moses is led, by the blessing of Heaven, to take the side of Truth and of the right—and when it is so let the Lord be magnified! Beside being a man of education, he was a person of high rank. He had been adopted by Thermuthis, the daughter of Pharaoh, and it is possible, though we cannot be sure of it, that he was the next heir, by adoption, to the Egyptian crown. It is said that the King of Egypt had no other child and that his daughter had no son, and that Moses would, therefore, have become the King of Egypt.

Yet, great as he was and mighty at court, he joined with the oppressed people of God! May God grant that we may see many eminent men bravely standing up for God and for His Truth and repudiating the religion of men! But if they do it will be a miracle of mercy, indeed, for few of the great ones have ever done so! Here and there in Heaven may be found a king, and here and there in the Church may be found one who wears a coronet and prays. But how rarely shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of Heaven! When they do so God is thanked for it. In addition to this remember that Moses was a man of great ability. We have evidence of that in the administrative skill with which he managed the affairs of Israel in the wilderness. Though he was inspired of God, yet his own natural ability was not superseded but directed.

He was a poet—"Then sung Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord." That memorable poem at the Red Sea is a very masterly ode and proves the incomparable ability of the writer. The 90th Psalm, also, shows the range of his poetic powers. He was both Prophet, priest and king in the midst of Israel—and a man second to no man save that Man who was more than man! No other man I know of comes so near in the glory of his character to Christ as Moses does, so that we find the two names linked together in the praise of Heaven—"they sung the song of Moses the servant of God, and of the Lamb."

Thus you see he was a truly eminent man yet he cast in his lot with God's people. It is not many that will do this, for the Lord has usually chosen the weak things to confuse the mighty, and the things that are not to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His Presence. Yet here He who will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, took this great man, this wise man and gave him Grace to be decided in the service of his God. Should I address such an one this morning I would anxiously pray that a voice from the excellent Glory may call him forth to the same clear line of action!

Next, consider what sort of society Moses felt compelled to leave. In coming forth from Pharaoh's court he must separate from all the courtiers and men of high degree, some of whom may have been very estimable people. There is always a charm about the society of the great, but every bond was severed by the resolute spirit of Moses. I do not doubt that being learned in all the wisdom of Egypt, such a man as Moses would be always welcome in the various circles of science. But he relinquished all his honors among the elite of learning to bear the reproach of Christ. Neither great men nor learned men could hold him when his conscience had once pointed out the path.

Be sure, also, that he had to tear himself away from many a friend! In the course of 40 years one would suppose he had formed associations that were very dear and tender. But to the regret of many, he associated himself with the unpopular party whom the king sought to crush and therefore no courtier could acknowledge him. For 40 years he lived in the solitude of the desert and he only returned to strike the land of Egypt with plagues—so that his separation from all his former friendships must have been complete.

But, O true-hearted Christian, should it break every fond connection—should it tear your soul away from all you love—if your God requires it, let the sacrifice be made at once! If your faith has shown you that to occupy your present position involves complicity with error or sin, then break away, by God's help, without further parley. Let not the nets of the fowler hold you, but as God gives you freedom, mount unfettered and praise your God for liberty! Jesus left the angels of Heaven for your sake—can you not leave the best of company for His sake?

But I marvel most at Moses when I consider not only who he was and the company he had to forego, but the persons with whom he must associate—for in truth the followers of the true God were not, in their own persons, a loveable people at that time. Moses was willing to take upon himself the reproach of Christ and to bear the affliction of God's people when, I venture to observe again, there was nothing very attractive in the people themselves. They were wretchedly poor. They were scattered throughout all the land as mere drudges, engaged in brick making—and this brick making, which was imposed upon them for the very purpose of breaking down their spirit—had done its work all too well.

They were utterly spiritless. They possessed no leaders and were not prepared to have followed them if they had arisen. When Moses, having espoused their cause, informed them that God had sent him they received him at first, but when the Prophet's first action prompted Pharaoh to double their toil by an enactment that they should not be supplied with straw, they upbraided Moses at once, even as 40 years before, when he interfered in their quarrels, one of them said, "Will you slay *me* as you did the Egyptian yesterday?" They were literally a herd of broken down slaves, crushed and depressed. It is one of the worst things about slavery that it unmans men and unfits them, even for generations, for the full enjoyment of liberty.

Even when slaves receive liberty we cannot expect them to act as those would do who were free born, for in slavery the iron enters into the very soul and binds the spirit. Thus it is clear that the Israelites were not a very select company for the highly educated Moses to unite with. Though a prince, he must make common cause with the poor. Though a free man, he must mingle with slaves. Though a man of education, he must mix with ignorant people. Though a man of spirit, he must associate with spiritless serfs. Many would have said, "No, I cannot do that! I know what Church I ought to unite with if I follow Scriptures fully and obey in all things my Lord's will—but they are so poor, so illiterate—and their places of worship are so far from being architecturally beautiful! Their preacher is a plain, blunt man and they themselves are not refined. Scarcely a

dozen of the whole sect can keep a carriage! I should be shut out of society if I joined with them.”

Have we not heard this base reasoning till we are sick of it, and yet it operates widely upon this brainless, heartless generation! Are there none left who love Truth even when she wears no trappings? Are there none who love the Gospel better than pomp and show? Where God raises up a Moses, what cares he how poor his Brethren may be? “They are God’s people,” he says, “and if they are very poor I must help them the more liberally. If they are oppressed and depressed, so much the more reason why I should come to their aid. If they love God and His Truth, I am their fellow-soldier and will be at their side in the battle.”

I have no doubt Moses thought all this over but his mind was made up and he took his place promptly. In addition to other matters, one mournful thing must be said of Israel which must have cost Moses much pain. He found that among God’s people there were some who brought no glory to God and were very weak in their principles. He did not judge the whole body by the faults of some, but by their standards and their institutions—and he saw that the Israelites, with all their faults, were the people of God—while the Egyptians, with all their virtues, were not so.

Now, it is for each one of us to try the spirits by the Word of God and then fearlessly to follow out our convictions. Where is *Christ* recognized as the Head of the Church? Where are the *Scriptures* really received as the rule of faith? Where are the *Doctrines of Grace* clearly believed? Where are the ordinances practiced as the Lord delivered them? With that people I will go! Their cause shall be my cause, their God shall be my God! We look not for a perfect Church this side of Heaven, but we do look for a Church free from Popery and Sacramentarianism and false doctrine! And if we cannot find one we will wait until we can—but with falsehood and priestcraft we will never enter into fellowship! If there are faults with the Brethren, it is our duty to bear with them patiently and pray for Grace to overcome the evil. But with Papists and Rationalists we must *not* join in affinity or God will require it at our hands!

Consider now what Moses left by siding with Israel. He left honor—he “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.” He left pleasure—for he refused to “enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” And, according to our Apostle, he left wealth as well, for in taking up the reproach of Christ he renounced “the treasures of Egypt.” Very well, then, if it comes to this—if to follow God and to be obedient to Him I have to lose my position in society and become a pariah. If I must give up a thousand pleasures, and if I am deprived of emoluments and income, yet the demands of duty must be complied with. Martyrs of old gave their *lives*—are there none left who will give up their *living*? If there is true faith in a man’s heart he will not deliberate which of the two to choose—beggary or compromise with error. He will esteem the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than the treasures of Egypt!

Consider yet once more what Moses espoused when he left the court. He espoused abounding trial, “choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God.” And he espoused poverty for he, “esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.” O Moses, if you must

join with Israel, there is no present reward for you! You have nothing to gain and all to lose! You must do it out of pure principle, out of love to God, out of a full persuasion of the Truth—for the tribes have no honors or wealth to bestow! You will receive affliction and that is all! You will be called a fool and people will think they have good reason for calling you so!

It is just the same today. If any man today will go outside the camp to seek the Lord. If he goes forth unto Christ outside the gate, he must do it out of love to God and to His Christ and for no other motive. The people of God have no benefices or bishoprics to offer—they therefore beseech men to count the cost. When a fervent convert said to our Lord, "Lord I will follow You where ever You go," he received for answer, "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have nowhere to lay My head." To this hour Truth offers no dowry but herself to those who will espouse her. Abuse, contempt, hard fare, ridicule, misrepresentation—*these* are the wages of consistency—and if better comes it is not to be reckoned on.

If any man is of a noble enough spirit to love the Truth of God for Truth's sake, and God for God's sake, and Christ for Christ's sake, let him enlist with those of like mind! But if he seeks anything over and above that, if he desire to be made famous, or to gain power, or to be well benefited—he had better keep his place among the cowardly dirt-eaters who swarm around us! The Church of God bribes no man! She has no mercenary rewards to offer and would scorn to use them if she had. If to serve the Lord is not enough reward, let those who look for more go their selfish way! If Heaven is not enough, let those who can despise it seek their Heaven below.

Moses, in taking up with the people of God, decidedly and once and for all acted most disinterestedly, without any promise from the right side, or any friend to aid him in the change. For the Truth of God's sake, for the Lord's sake he renounced everything! He was, by God's Grace, content to be numbered with the down-trodden people of God.

II. Now, secondly, what was THE SOURCE OF MOSES' DECISION? Scripture says it was faith, otherwise some would insist upon it that it was the force of blood. "He was by birth an Israelite, and therefore," they say, "the instincts of nature prevailed." Our text assigns a very different reason. We know right well that the sons of godly parents are not led to adore the true God by reason of their birth. Grace does not run in the blood—*sin* may, but righteousness does not. Who does not remember sons of renowned lovers of the Gospel who are now far gone in Ritualism? It was *faith*, not blood, which impelled Moses in the way of the Truth of God!

Neither was it eccentricity which led him to espouse the side which was oppressed. We have sometimes found a man of pedigree and position who has associated with persons of quite another rank and condition simply because he never could act like anybody else, and must live after his own odd fashion. It was not so with Moses. All his life through you cannot discover a trace of eccentricity in him—he was sober, steady, law-abiding—what if I say he was a *concentric* man, for his center was in the right place

and he moved according to the dictates of prudence. Not thus can his decision be accounted to eccentricity.

Neither was he hurried on by some sudden excitement when there burned within his soul fierce patriotic fires which made him more fervent than prudent. No, there may have been some haste in his slaying the Egyptian on the first occasion, but then he had 40 years to think it over and yet he never repented his choice, but held on to the oppressed people of God and still refused to think of himself as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. It was *faith* then, faith alone, that enabled the Prophet of Sinai to arrive at his decision and to carry it out.

What faith had he? First, he had faith in Jehovah. It is possible that Moses had seen the various gods of Egypt, even as we see them now in the drawings which have been copied from their temples and pyramids. We find there the sacred cat, the sacred ibis, the sacred crocodile and all kinds of creatures which were revered as deities. And in addition there were hosts of strange idols, compounds of man and beast, and bird, which stand in our museums to this day and were once the objects of the idolatrous reverence of the Egyptians. Moses was weary of all this symbolism. He knew in his own heart that there was *one* God, only one God, and he would have nothing to do with Amun, Pthah, or Maut.

Truly, my very soul cries to God that noble spirits may, in *these* days, grow weary of the gods of ivory and ebony and silver which are adored under the name of crosses and crucifixes, and may come to abominate that most degrading and sickening of all idolatries in which man makes a god with flour and water, bows down before it, and then swallows it, thus sending his god into his belly, and, I might say, worse! The satirist said of the Egyptians, "O happy people, whose gods grow in their own gardens." We may say with equal force, O happy people, whose gods are baked in their own ovens!

Is not this the lowest form of superstition that ever debased the intellect of man? O that brave and true hearts may be led to turn away from such idolatry and cast off all association with it, and say, "No, I cannot, and dare not. There is one God that made Heaven and earth. There is a pure Spirit who upholds all things by the power of His might—I will worship Him alone! And I will worship Him after His own Law, without images or other symbols, for has He not forbidden them?" Has He not said, "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: for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God"?

Oh that God would give to men faith to know there is but one God and that the one God is not to be worshipped with man-ordained rites and ceremonies, for He is "a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth!" That one Truth of God, if it were to come with power from Heaven into men's minds, would shiver St. Peter's and St. Paul's from their topmost cross to their lowest crypt—for what do these two churches teach us now but sheer clear idolatry—the one of rule and the other by permission! And now men who boldly worship what they call the "sacred elements" have leave and license to exercise their craft within

the Church of England! Every man who loves his God should shake his skirts clear of these abominations and I pray God that we may find many a Moses who shall do so!

The faith of Moses also rested in Christ. "Christ had not come," says one. No, but He was to come and Moses looked to that coming One. He cast his eyes through the ages that were to intervene and he saw before him the Shiloh of whom dying Jacob sang. He knew the ancient promise which had been given to the fathers, that in the seed of Abraham should all the nations of the earth be blessed—and he was willing, in order to share in the blessing—to take his part in the reproach.

Dear Friends, we shall never have a thorough faith in God unless we have, also, faith in Jesus Christ! Men have tried long and tried hard to worship the Father apart from the Son—but there it stands and it always will be so—"No man comes unto the Father but by Me." You get away from the worship of the Father if you do not come through the Mediation and Atonement of the Son of God! Now, though Moses did not know concerning Christ all that is now revealed to us, yet he had faith in the coming Messiah and that faith gave strength to his mind. Those are the men to suffer who have received Christ Jesus the Lord. If any man should ask me what made the Covenanters such heroes as they were or what made our Puritan forefathers fearless before their foes—what led the Reformers to protest and the martyrs to die—I would reply it was faith in the Invisible God, coupled with faith in that dear Son of God who is God Incarnate! Believing in Him they felt such love within their bosoms that for love of Him they could have died a thousand deaths!

But then, in addition to this, Moses had faith in reference to God's people. Upon that I have already touched. He knew that the Israelites were God's chosen—that Jehovah had made a Covenant with them and in spite of all their faults God would not break His Covenant with His own people. And he knew, therefore, that their cause was God's cause and being God's cause it was the cause of right—the cause of truth! Oh, it is a grand thing when a man has such faith that he says, "It is nothing to me what other people do, or think, or believe. I shall act as God would have me act. It is nothing to me what I am commanded to do by my fellow creatures.

"It is nothing to me what fashion says or what my parents say as far as religion is concerned. The Truth is God's star and I will follow wherever it may lead me. If it should make me a solitary man. If I should espouse opinions which no one else ever believed in. If I should have to go altogether outside the camp and break away from every connection—all this shall be as immaterial to me as the small dust of the balance. But if a matter is true, I will believe it and I will propound it and I will suffer for its promulgation. And if another doctrine is a lie I will not be friends with it, no, not for a solitary moment. I will not enter into fellowship with falsehood, no, not for an hour! If a course is right and true, through floods and flames, if Jesus leads me, I will pursue it."

That seems to me to be the right spirit, but where do you find it now-a-days? The modern spirit mutters, "We are *all* right, every one of us." He who says, "yes," is right, and he who says, "no," is also right! You hear a man talk with mawkish sentimentality which he calls *Christian charity*.

“Well, I am of opinion that if a man is a Muslim, or a Catholic, or a Mormon, or a Dissenter—if he is sincere—he is all right.” They do not quite include devil worshippers, thugs and cannibals yet—but if things go on they will accept them into the happy family of the Broad Church. Such is the talk and cant of this present age, but I bear my witness that there is no truth in it and I call upon every child of God to protest against it and, like Moses, to declare that he can have no complicity with such a confederacy!

There is Truth somewhere—let us find it! The lie is not of the truth—let us abhor it. There is a God—let us follow Him and it cannot be that false gods are gods, too! Surely truth is of some value to the sons of men! Surely there must be something worth holding—something worth contending for—and something worth dying for! But it does not appear now-a-days as if men think so. May we have a respect for God’s true Church in the world which abides by the Apostolic word and doctrine! Let us discover it and join with it, and at its side fight for God and for His Truth!

Once again, Moses had faith in the “recompense of the reward.” He said thus within himself, “I must renounce much and reckon to lose rank, position and treasure. But I expect to be a gainer, nevertheless, for there will be a day when God shall judge the sons of men. I expect a judgment throne with its impartial balances and I expect that those who serve God faithfully shall then turn out to have been the wise men and the right men, while those who truckled and bowed down to gain a present ease shall find that they missed eternity while they were snatching after time and that they bartered Heaven for a paltry mess of pottage.”

With this upon his mind, you could not persuade Moses that he ought to compromise and must not be uncharitable! You could not convince him he ought not to judge other good people, but should be large-minded and remember Pharaoh’s daughter and how kindly she had nurtured him—and consider what opportunities he had of doing good where he was! You could not persuade him how he might just befriend his poor Brethren and what influence he might have over Pharaoh—how he might be the means of leading the princes and the people of Egypt in the right way—and perhaps God had raised him up on purpose to be there.

Who could tell, and so-on, and so-on, and so-on—you know the Babylonian talk, for in these days you have all read or heard the plausible arguments of the deceivableness of unrighteousness which in these last days teaches men to do evil that good may come! Moses cared for none of these things. He knew his duty and did it—whatever might be the consequences. Every Christian man’s duty is to believe the Truth of God and to follow the Truth and leave the results with God. Who dares do that? Again I ask it, who dares do that in these days?

III. Thirdly, we are going to run over in our minds some of THE ARGUMENTS WHICH SUPPORTED MOSES in his decided course of following God. The first argument would be he saw clearly that God was God and therefore must keep His Word, must bring His people up out of Egypt and give them a heritage. Now he said within himself, “I desire to be on the right side. God is almighty, God is all truthful, God is altogether just. I am

on God's side, and being on God's side I will prove my truthfulness by leaving the other side altogether."

Then, secondly, we have it in the text that he perceived the pleasures of sin to be but for a season. He said to himself, "I may have but a short time to live but even if I live to a good old age, life at the longest is still short. And when I come to the close of life, what a miserable reflection it will be that I have had all my pleasure and then I have to appear before God as a traitorous Israelite who threw up his birthright for the sake of enjoying the pleasures of Egypt." Oh that men would measure everything in the scales of eternity! We shall be before the bar of God, all of us, in a few months or years, and then think how we shall feel?

One will say, "I never thought about religion at all," and another, "I thought about it, but I did not think enough to come to any decision upon it. I went the way the current went." Another will say, "I knew the Truth well enough, but I could not bear the shame of it—they would have thought me fanatical if I had gone through with it." Another will say, "I halted between two opinions, I hardly thought I was justified in sacrificing my children's position for the sake of being out and out a follower of the Truth of God." What wretched reflections will come over men who have sold the Savior as Judas did! What wretched deathbeds must they have who have been unfaithful to their consciences and untrue to their God!

But oh, with what composure will the Believer look forward to another world! He will say, "By Grace I am saved, and I bless God I could afford to be ridiculed, I could bear to be laughed at—I could lose that situation, I could be turned out of that farm and could be called a fool—and yet it did not hurt me. I found solace in the society of Christ. I went to Him about it all and I found that to be reproached for Christ was a sweeter thing than to possess all the treasures of Egypt! Blessed be His name! I missed the pleasures of the world, but they were no miss to me! I was glad to miss them, for I found sweeter pleasure in the company of my Lord and now there are pleasures to come which shall never end." O Brothers and Sisters, to be out and out for Christ—to go to the end with Him even though it involve the loss of all things—this will pay in the long run! It may bring upon you much disgrace for the present, but that will soon be over and then comes the eternal reward.

And, then, again, Moses thought within himself that even the pleasures which did but last for a season, while they lasted, were not equal to the pleasure of being reproached for Christ's sake. This ought also to strengthen us, that the worst of Christ is better than the best of the world! That even now we have more joy as Christians, if we are sincere, than we could possibly derive from the sins of the wicked. I have only this to say in closing. First, we ought, all of us, to be ready to part with everything for Christ, and if we are not, we are not His disciples. "Master, you say a hard thing," says one. I say it yet again, for a greater Master has said it—"He that loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." "Unless a man forsakes all that he has he cannot be My disciple." Jesus may not require you actually to leave *anything*, but you must be *ready* to leave everything if required.

The second observation is this—we ought to abhor the very thought of obtaining honor in this world by concealing our sentiments or by making compromises. If there is a chance of your being highly esteemed by withholding your witness for Jesus, do not run the risk of winning such dishonorable honor! If there is a hope of people praising you because you are so ready to yield your convictions, pray God to make you like a flint never to yield again—for what more damning glory could a man have than to be applauded for disowning his principles to please his fellow men? From this may the Lord save us!

The third teaching is that we ought to take our place with those who truly follow God and the Scriptures, even if they are not altogether what we should like them to be. The place for an Israelite is with the Israelites. The place for a Christian man is with Christian men. The place for a thorough-going disciple of the Bible and of Christ is with others who are such—even if they should happen to be the lowest in the land and the poorest of the poor, and the most illiterate and uneducated persons of the period—what is all this if their God loves them and if they love God? Weighed in the scales of the Truth of God the least one among them is worth 10,000 of the greatest ungodly men!

Lastly, we must all of us look to our faith. Faith is the main thing. You cannot make a thorough character without sincere faith. Begin there, dear Hearer! If you do not believe in Christ, if you believe not in the one God, may the Lord convert you and give you now that precious gift! To try and raise a character which shall be good without a foundation of faith is to build upon sand and to pile up wood, hay and stubble—which wood, hay and stubble are very good things as wood, hay, and stubble—but they will not bear the fire! And as every Christian character will have to bear fire, it is well to build on the Rock and to build with such graces and fruits as will endure trial.

You will have to be tried and if you have, by sneaking through life as a coward, avoided all opposition and all ridicule, ask yourself whether you *really* are a disciple of that master of the house whom they called Beelzebub! Ask yourself whether you are *truly* a follower of that crucified Savior who said, “except a man take up his cross daily and follow Me, he cannot be My disciple.” Suspect the smooth places! Be afraid of that perpetual peace which Christ declares He came to break. He says, “I came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword.” He came to bring fire upon the earth and, “how I wish,” He said, “it were already kindled.”—

***“Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?
Surely I must fight if I would reign.
Increase my courage, Lord,
I'd bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Your Word.”***

Amen.

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MOSES—HIS FAITH AND DECISION

NO. 2030

DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, JUNE 24, 1888,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.”

Hebrews 11:24-26

WE generally picture Moses with beams of glory rising from his brow and the two tables of the Law in his hand. A stern man holding forth a sterner Law. But we must correct our idea. Moses is as much an example of faith as he is a representative of Law. What he did was as much due to his faith as were the acts of Paul or John. In describing Moses, the summary must begin, “By faith,” as much as if we were describing Abraham. Continue to regard Moses as a representative of the Law but also view him as a man of wonderful and powerful faith.

I need scarcely remind you that the faith of Moses was peculiarly active and operative. I might apply the words of James to him and say, “Likewise, was not Moses justified by works when he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter and chose to endure affliction with the people of God?” The faith of Moses was what ours must be, a faith which worked by love—even love to God and love to His people. It was no mere *belief* of a fact. But that fact had an overpowering influence upon his life. Moses believed, believed firmly and intensely, believed for himself, so that he took fast hold of that which is invisible. Moses showed the reality of his faith in his life—by what he refused to do—and by what he chose to do.

Both the negative and the positive poles were made right by his faith. Everything about Moses proved the truth and the vigor of his faith in God. He was second to none among those “who believed God and it was accounted unto them for righteousness.” He was king in Jeshurun and he was the greatest of Law-givers. But yet he happily takes his place among Believers who find their all in God. On the Arc de Triomphe which is raised in this eleventh chapter of Hebrews the name of Moses is written among the very greatest of those who lived by faith in God. I pray that while I am speaking this morning faith may be worked in some here present who have it not as yet.

And I pray also that others who have true faith but have not yet avowed it may find themselves drawn to take a decided step and take their place on the side of God and His people. The question, “Who is on the Lord’s side?” is the one I would press upon you this morning in the hope that,

like Moses, many of you may be willing to suffer the reproach of Christ, which has not ceased.

Our first remark shall be Moses had faith. The second shall be Moses exhibited clear decision as the result of his faith. And then, thirdly, we will say Moses should be imitated by us.

I. First, then, MOSES HAD FAITH. I am not going through the whole life of Moses—that is much too large a theme for one discourse. But I shall very much keep to my text.

It is very clear that Moses believed in God. He was learned in all the learning of the Egyptians. He had been brought up in the very best academies of the period. But he had not been seduced from faith in his God. There were many gods in Egypt. But Moses worshipped the one God, the God of his fathers. And though he may have known comparatively little of Him, he knew enough to have no other God but the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I suppose that his mother and father could tell him but little of the family faith. But as they were God-fearing, believing people, they taught him what they knew.

He believed in the living God, Creator of Heaven and earth. He worshipped one God, the Ruler of Providence—one God who is to be obeyed and adored. And to this God he adhered. I would that all of you believed in the living, personal, working, ever present God! In these days many do not believe in a personal God but in some sort of force or mystic energy—they know not what. This is virtually to have no God at all. To Moses the existence and ruling power of God were the greatest facts of life. He believed in the one living and true God, bowed before Him, desired to be found serving Him and to have Him as his friend, even though this should put him in opposition with all the world. Although the pomp and power and glory and wisdom of the ruling nation were all on the side of idols, Moses worshipped the one God. For in His power and Godhead he solemnly believed.

In the next place, Moses believed that the Israelites were the chosen people of God. This, of course, he had learned from his parents and he heartily believed it, though it certainly did not look to be true. If the seed of Jacob were the people of God, why were they left under oppression? Why were they enslaved by Pharaoh? Why were their children doomed to die? Could the elect of God be left in so evil a plight? If God was the God of this people, why were they made to endure affliction? Perhaps they told him that God had revealed unto their fathers that they were to go down into Egypt and to be strangers in a strange land.

But whether or not, it was the solemn conviction of Moses that the living and true God had chosen the seed of Abraham to be His people and had taken them into covenant with Himself. They were the election of Divine Grace. For this cause Moses loved them and desired to be numbered with them. Certainly, they were not in themselves a very lovable people—there was much about them that must have saddened the heart of Moses. They were ignorant, while he was educated—they had been debased by slavery, while he was of that brave disposition which is nourished in free-

dom. When he, himself, attempted to be their champion, they did not receive him. He found two of them striving together and when, with gentle words he would have made peace between them, one of them replied, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us?”

Yet Moses said to himself, “Whatever they may be, they are the people of God and I will be one of them.” Even to this day the Lord has a chosen people, a remnant according to the election of Divine Grace. Looking critically at the Church of God, we soon detect much that is faulty, many shortcomings and many grievous evils. Yet the Church of God is God’s choice and we may not despise it. I can say of God’s people—“These are the company I keep. These are the choicest friends I know.”

If they are good enough for God, they are good enough for me. If you never join a Church till you find a perfect Church, you must wait till you get to Heaven. And if you could go there as you are, they would not receive you into fellowship. Consider who are the people that acknowledge God in their lives, who hold the Truth of God as it is revealed, who believe the Holy Scriptures and worship God in the Spirit, having no confidence in the flesh. Cast in your lot with these people, however poor and commonplace they may be. If they are not all you would like them to be, neither are you yourself all you would like to be. But simply, because you believe them to be the people of God, cast in your lot with them, begging the Lord to have mercy upon you and deal with you as He is likely to do to those who fear His name.

Moses further believed that the reproach which fell upon his people was the reproach of Christ. It is said that he “esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” But Christ was not there. Christ as yet had not been born into the world. How could the reproach of Israel in Egypt be the reproach of Christ? This shows us that the Christ was always one with His people. Even as the Church is the body of Christ now, so were the Lord’s people the body of Christ of old. The Lord Christ so sympathized with Israel in Egypt that what they bore He bore. “In all their affliction He was afflicted and the angel of His Presence saved them.” *Jesus is that “angel of His Presence.”*

Brethren, it is a grand thing to discover and know by faith that the reproach which falls upon the people of God is the reproach of Christ. When Stephen was killed, it was Stephen, was it not, that died? Yes, but Christ stood up from His Throne that day. When Christ spoke to Saul on the road to Damascus He did not say, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute the Church?” but, “why do you persecute Me?” Christ suffers in the least of His people. The poorest and the most obscure of them, when ridiculed and put to scorn for His sake, is not alone in his grief—the Head suffers in the members. The reproach of Believers is really the reproach of Him in whom they believe. The reproach of Israel is the reproach of Christ and Moses believed this. “Ah,” said he, “whatever they say against these people and whatever they do against them, they are really saying and doing against the Lord’s Anointed.”

Furthermore, Moses believed it to be wisest to be upon the side of God. “He had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” Adding all things up and making a deliberate calculation of the whole business he believed that it must be right and wise to stand on that side which was in agreement with the living God. He made up his mind that he would be where the Lord was. Now, dear Friends, that is a wise conclusion to come to, is it not? Should we not be on the side of God? We are His creatures—should we contend with our Creator? He has been infinitely good to us—ought we not to side with our Benefactor? All that He does is right, all that He permits is just, all that He advocates is pure.

Should we not be on that side? The other side is the side of evil and darkness, the side of the devil—should we be found there? I think not. O young Man, it will be your glory to be upon the side of God. O young Woman, it will be your beauty to espouse the cause of Christ. What can become of us if we are opposed to God, the Good and True? Shall the thread contend with the flame, or the wax with the fire? If we are on the side of God we are on the right side. And being on the right side we shall have peace of conscience and rest of heart. The right must ultimately win the day.

But even if it were not so, a brave heart is content with being right. Is it just? Is it true? Then put down my name as a soldier in that army. It must be well to be upon the side of God because God’s worst is better than the world’s best. Did you notice how Moses put it? He brings forth affliction and he esteems it to be better than the “pleasures of sin.” Now, pleasures are certainly better than afflictions, according to any ordinary judgment. But Moses came to this conclusion—that although affliction might be God’s worst—it was better than the pleasure of sin, which is evil’s best. He mentions reproach, which is one of the most bitter kinds of affliction, for many a man can bear pain but cannot bear ridicule.

Moses set down reproach and he counted it to be better than the treasures in Egypt. Yet the treasures in Egypt were the best things in Egypt—its gold, its horses, its fine linen and the many things that made Egypt famous. I say he put all these down in the schedule, and then preferred the reproach of Christ to them all. God’s fast is better than Egypt’s feast. Thus he calmly and deliberately made his decision and said, “I throw in my lot with the people of God. I take their God to be my God and where my duty to God may call me, there will I go.”

Next, dear Friends, note this—Moses had faith in a future judgment. He looked beyond the present. He “had respect to the recompense of the reward.” It is dangerous to be always looking at things from one point of view. If we could go quite round and see things from the future, looking back upon them rather than forward to them, how different they would appear! “Oh,” said a lady to her minister, “I find great pleasure in going to the play. There is the pleasure of anticipation, there is the pleasure of enjoying it and there is the pleasure of thinking it over afterwards.” “Yes,” said her minister, “I know all that, Madam. But there is one pleasure you

have forgotten, namely, the pleasure of meditating upon it on a dying bed.” She shrugged her shoulders, she could see no pleasure there.

I wish that men would estimate their pleasures by that rule. How will they look when they lie dying? How will they appear when they stand before the judgment seat of God? When I have once come into eternity and have to spend it according to the final sentence, how shall I look back upon what I have done? As a Christian man, how shall I look back upon wasted opportunities and idleness in my Master’s vineyard? As an unbeliever, how shall I regard wasted Sabbaths, rejected entreaties, a neglected Bible, a disregarded Mercy Seat? If we could only view things in that clear light which beats about the eternal future we should avoid a thousand mistakes. View the course of life as Moses did, in connection with the recompense of the reward and a resolve will be taken which will make you commence a life for God and holiness.

Let me not quit this point till I have said that Moses had a personal faith by which he realized the whole business for himself. He did not say, “Yes, there is a God undoubtedly and these are God’s people and there is an end of it.” But he said, “There is a God for me to worship, for me to trust, for me to obey. Here are God’s people. I resolve to be numbered with them. Their God shall be my God. I will be one of the sheep of His pasture, and take my part with His flock. If they suffer, I will suffer with them. If they rejoice, I will wait to rejoice till they rejoice.”

His faith led him on to personal action. He did not say, “I am placed by Providence in the palace of Pharaoh and so I am not called upon to suffer like the rest of my race.” No, no—he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He did not say, “I am so circumstanced that I need not suffer and therefore I will keep out of the general trouble as well as I can.” You know how men feel—that there is nothing like keeping on the warm side of the hedge. Moses resolved that he would suffer affliction with the people of God. Moses would be on a level with his brethren. He declared himself to be one of the despised nation. The reproaches of them that reproached Christ in His people fell upon him.

This was the faith of Moses, a real personal faith. Come, dear Friends, ask yourselves, have you all such a personal faith in God? I tell you, if your faith is not personal and practical faith, it is not worth two pence. It will do you no good, either here or hereafter. It will leave you lost to God if it leaves you still a friend to the world and an alien from the people of God. Oh, that you may say from your heart, “This God is my God forever and ever. He shall be my Guide even unto death.” Faith in Moses was the foundation of the whole building of his life. Have you faith? Then every good thing will come of it. Have you no faith? Then you have no beginning from which a happy end can come.

How can you read your title clear to mansions in the skies, when you do not, as yet, know the first letters of the alphabet of Divine Grace? You can never build up a character such as God will approve. For you have not even laid the first cornerstone of faith.

II. Our second point is this—**MOSES EXHIBITED A CLEAR DECISION.** Oh, that the Spirit of God would work the like in all of us! Note, first, the time of his choice—“When he was come to years.” We do not know the exact time to which this refers. When he was forty years of age he visited his Brethren but his mind may have been made up long before. It was “when he was come to years.” I suppose that means early in life, as soon as he was of full age. Why not earlier still? He was in Pharaoh’s court under many influences which may have prevented an earlier confession. We are not sure that God had yet spoken to his heart so as to make him feel the importance of following the Lord fully.

Anyway, it was in early life that he declined the world and chose his God. It is a grand thing for young people to decide for God soon—it will save them from a thousand mistakes and bring them a thousand advantages. Early piety leads on to eminent piety—he who begins his journey early travels far in the day. The great bulk of those who have distinguished themselves in the Church of God will be found to have been converted while they were yet young. “When he was come to years.” Does some youth here claim that he has not yet come to years? I answer—Is that so? Why, the other day you were demanding of your father certain liberties because you felt yourself quite the man.

I find that lads nowadays become men earlier than they used to do. I wish they would take upon themselves ripe responsibilities as well as covet ripe privileges, Oh, that they would act as Moses did when he came to years! If you feel you have come to years in one way, admit that you have come to years in another way. Say, “Now is the time when I must come right straight out and be a Christian man.” You young women who do not care to be called girls any longer, I pray you give your hearts to Christ. The sooner you are decided, the better. Still it is said, “when he was come to years,” as much as to say that whatever his decision was while he was yet young, that decision was carried out more practically when he was come to years.

We wish to see young people converted, but we wish it to be as thoughtful a conversion, as clear and deliberate a change as if they were advanced in age. We trust that their following years will confirm what they do in their youth. Now, what do you say, Brothers and Sisters of mature years? If you could lay aside your religious profession and begin again, would you still make today the decision which you arrived at when you were young? Oh yes, we can say and do say—We have lifted our hand unto God and we cannot go back. And instead of wishing to go back, we lift both hands now, and cry—

***“It is done, the great transaction’s done,
I am my Lord’s and He is mine.”***

We do not wish to retreat from the Covenant of our youth, or draw back from the bond of our Baptism into Christ of long years ago. We repeat the vow and cry, “Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.” Moses decided for God early in life. But he also decided when he was capable of forming a mature and deliberate judgment. Moses went about

arranging his life like a man of business and decided wisely. But we must note well the prospect which he gave up. He “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.” To be the son of Pharaoh’s daughter made him a prince of Egypt. Some have thought that the Pharaoh then reigning had no other child but this daughter and that her son Moses would have succeeded to the throne of Egypt. We cannot be sure of that, though it may have been so.

The son of a princess has noble rank and grand opportunities. Wealth was evidently to be had—the treasures of Egypt were before him. Honor was his already and as he grew older titles would multiply upon him. But he said firmly, “No. I cannot be an Egyptian. I am an Israelite and I prefer the privileges which come to me from Father Abraham to those which come by Pharaoh’s daughter. I cannot relinquish my part in the Promise and the Covenant but I can, and will, relinquish all the honors which come of Pharaoh’s court.” He did so—deliberately did so. “He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.”

A great many would say—What a fool he was to give up what others covet! I fear that many of you professors would not lose a situation for Christ. Some of you could not lose a shilling a week of extra pay for the Lord. Ah me, this is a miserable age! Go with a lancet throughout these Isles and you could not get enough martyr blood to fill a thimble. Backbones are scarce and grit is a rare article. Men do not care to suffer for Christ. They must be respectable, they must vote in the majority, they must go with the committee and be thought well of for their charity. As to standing up and standing out for Christ, it is looked upon as an eccentricity, or worse.

Today if a young man proposed to sacrifice his position for Christ’s sake, father and mother and friends would all say—“Do not think of such a thing. Be prudent. Do not throw away your life.” Once men could die for conscience sake—but conscience is nowadays viewed as an ugly thing, expensive and hampering. No doubt many advised Moses to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, but he steadily refused. He deliberately divested himself of his rank that he might be numbered with the downtrodden people of God. For a moment I will show you some of the arguments which Moses must have had to meet. In his own mind, when having come to years, he began to think the matter over, many arguments would arise and demand reply.

The first argument would be, “You will be acting very unkindly to your adopted mother—What will she say? She drew you out of the water when you might have been drowned. She took you home, she saw that you were nursed and cared for, she has had you trained and educated. She has spent no end of money on you. There is nothing you could wish for but what she has supplied it—her heart is entwined in yours—and now, having come to years, if you refuse to be called her son, it will be a very sad return for her love.”

Natural affection has often proved a serious difficulty in the way of grace. The Lord Jesus has said, “He that loves father or mother more than

Me is not worthy of Me. And many are thus unworthy.” In the case of Moses, a sense of honor would join with affection. He knew that it was right to refuse to be the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. But still, there was something to be said on the other side. For how could he disown a tie which the hands of love had fastened? Could he rend that fond connection? Could he persist in saying, “I am no Egyptian”? I doubt not that he felt, “I should be playing the hypocrite if I professed to be of Egypt, and I must tell the Princess as gently as I can, but still most firmly, that I cannot be called by her name. For I am the son of Amram, of the tribe of Levi, of the seed of Jacob.”

Moses was an Israelite, indeed. He would not conceal his nationality nor renounce it by becoming a naturalized Egyptian. Though it should tear the heartstrings of his foster mother and be even as a sentence of death to himself, yet he would take his stand. Moses thus proved his faith to be stronger than that of many who are mastered by family ties and held captive by the bonds of earthly love. Unequal yoking is the ruin of thousands. The friendship of the world is the blight of piety. Happy are they who love Jesus more than all!

Next, there would come before the mind of Moses the plausible argument, “Providence has led you where you are and you ought to keep your position.” When Moses looked back he saw a remarkable Providence watching over him in the ark of bulrushes and bringing the Egyptian princess down to that particular part of the Nile to bathe. How singular that she should see the ark and save the life of the weeping babe! Could he fly in the teeth of Providence by relinquishing the high position so specially bestowed? Thus would flesh and blood reason.

How often have I heard people excuse themselves for doing wrong by quoting what they call Providence! Arguments from Providence against positive commands are ingenious deceptions. Providence is of God, but the lesson which we draw from it may be of the devil. When Jonah wanted to flee to Tarshish he went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. How providential! Nothing of the sort. When Cain killed his brother Abel, was it Providence which found the club? Whenever a man wants to do wrong he will find opportunities at hand. But let him not excuse his wickedness by the apparent opportunity for it. Be afraid of that kind of Providence which makes sin easy.

When a Providence comes across you in doing right, do not give over your gracious purpose but know that it is sent to try you, whether you can serve the Lord under difficulty. A Providence which chimes in with your natural inclination may be a stone of stumbling by which your hypocrisy will be made clear. Moses felt that Providence did bring him into Pharaoh’s court, but he also felt that it brought him there that he might be put to the test to see whether he would come out of it for the Lord’s sake. Do not believe in the reasoning which suggests that Providence would have us slide along an easy, though evil, way.

Providence, if it is read aright, never tempts to *sin*, though it may put before us trials for our faith. Our rule of life is the commandment of the

Lord, not the doubtful conclusions which may be drawn from Providences. Yet another argument may have met Moses, for it is one which I have heard repeated till I am sick of answering it. Moses could do a deal of good by retaining his position. What opportunities for usefulness would be in his way! See how he could help his poor Brethren! How often he could interpose at the court to prevent injustice! Moreover, what a bright light he would be in his high position—his example would commend the faith of the true God to the courtiers and great ones.

Nobody could tell what an influence would thus be exercised upon Egypt. Pharaoh himself might be converted and then all Egypt would bow before Jehovah. Thus have we met with Brethren who say, "Yes, I am in a Church with which I do not agree. But then, I can be so useful." Another cries, "I know that a certain religious union is fostering evil. But then, I can serve the cause by staying in it." Another is carrying on an evil trade but he says, "It is my livelihood and besides, it affords me opportunities of doing good!" This is one of the most specious of those arguments by which good men are held in the bonds of evil. As an argument, it is rotten to the core.

We have no right to do wrong from any motive whatever. To do evil that good may come is no doctrine of Christ but of Satan. Fallen nature may wander in that way but the Grace of God delivers us from such wicked sophistry. Whatever good Moses might have thought that he could do in a false position, he had faith enough to see that he was not to look to usefulness but to *righteousness*. Whatever the results may be, we must leave them with God, and do the right at all cost.

But, dear Friends, do you not think that Moses might have made a compromise? That idea is very popular. "Now then, Moses, do not be too strict. Some people are a deal too particular. Those old-fashioned puritanical people are narrow and strait-laced—be liberal and take broader views. Cannot you make a compromise? Tell Pharaoh's daughter you are an Israelite but that, in consequence of her great kindness, you will also be an Egyptian. Thus you can become an Egypto-Israelite—what a fine blend! Or say an Israelito-Egyptian—with the better part in the front. You see, dear Friends, it seems a simple way out of a difficulty to hold with the hare and run with the hounds. It saves you from unpleasant decisions and separations.

Besides, Jack-of-Both-Sides has great praise from both parties for his large-heartedness. I admire this in Moses, that he knew nothing of compromise. First he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and secondly he made a deliberate choice rather, "to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." My Hearers, come out, I pray you, one way or the other. If God is God, serve Him. If Baal is God, serve him. If it is right to be an Israelite, be an Israelite. If it is right to be an Egyptian, be an Egyptian. None of your trimming. It will go hard with trimmers at the Last Great Day. When Christ comes to divide the sheep from the goats, there will be no middle sort. There is no place for trimmers. Modern thought is trying to make a purgatory but as yet the

place is not constructed and meanwhile you border people will be driven down to Hell. May God grant us His Grace to be decided!

Notice the lot which Moses chose. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and he chose to take his portion with the oppressed, reproached and ridiculed Israelites. I want you to see the terms in which his judgment is expressed. For no doubt the Holy Spirit tells us exactly how Moses put it in his own mind. He chose rather to suffer "affliction with the people of God." Does not that alter it wonderfully? "Affliction" nobody would choose. But "affliction with the people of God," ah, that is another business altogether. "These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

I choose the "great tribulation," not because I like it, but because these came out of it and have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "Affliction with the people of God" is affliction in glorious company. I was reading the other day the life of John Philpot who was shut up in Bishop Bonner's coal-hole in Fulham Palace. There he and his friends sang Psalms so merrily that the Bishop chided them for their mirth. They could have quoted Apostolic authority for singing in prison. When there were seven of them, Philpot wrote—"I was carried to my Lord's coal-house again, where I, with my six fellow prisoners, do rouse together in the straw as cheerfully, we thank God, as others do in their beds of down."

To be with the people of God, one would not mind being in the coal-hole. No one wants to be in Bonner's coal-hole. But better be there with the martyrs, than upstairs in the palace with the Bishop. To hear the saints' holy talk and sing with them their gladsome Psalms and with them behold the Angel of the Covenant, is a very different thing from mere suffering or imprisonment. "With the people of God"—that is the sweet which kills the bitter of affliction. Nobody here wants to go into a burning fiery furnace. But none of us would refuse to be there with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and that "fourth" who was "like unto the Son of God"!

I admire this in Moses, that he does not look at half a thing. He views it all round, and having seen it all, he forms his judgment. He did not choose affliction for its own sake but affliction with the people of God he preferred to the pleasures of sin. Note the next expression—"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Nobody desires reproach for its own sake. But "the reproach of Christ" is a very different matter. That gives a new flavor to it. Nobody wants to stand up in yonder pillory, where everybody is hurling mud and filth at the object of their scorn. But tell me that the sufferer is the Lord Jesus Christ and I will find you a host of volunteers to stand with Him and gather honor by sharing in His dishonor. "The reproach of Christ." Why, that is glory!

Thus Moses placed things in their right light and they seemed to undergo a complete change. Now. Notice what he said about the baits upon the other side—"Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." See! He calls the

pleasures of the court “the pleasures of sin.” Why, Moses, you need not fall into vice! You could be an Egyptian and yet be chaste and honest and sober and just and good. Yes, but he regards his proposed life as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter as full of “the pleasures of sin.” Now, mark this—If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, it becomes your duty decidedly to come out and stand on His side. And if you do not do so, the pleasures derived from your sin of omission will be the pleasures of sin. You are living a life of disloyalty to Christ and that is a life of sin.

“Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” That is to say, if you have not faith that you are doing right, you are doing wrong. And as Moses could not feel that he was doing right by being an Egyptian, whatever pleasure he might have gained from his remaining at court would have been “the pleasure of sin.” Then note the word, “For a season.” Did you hear the tolling of a bell? It was a knell. It spoke of a new-made grave. This is the knell of earthly joy—“For a season!” Honored for doing wrong—“For a season!” Merry in evil company—“For a season!” Prosperous through a compromise—“For a season!” What after that season? Death and judgment.

Note once again, that Moses spoke about treasures. And as a great man in Egypt he knew what wealth there was in the land. But he qualifies the treasures by saying, “treasures in Egypt.” For an Israelite those treasures were nothing, since they were in a foreign land. Treasures in the land that flows with milk and honey—these were real treasures. But treasures in Egypt were a mockery. Moses shakes his head at them. He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. So, you see, most deliberately, with great discrimination, Moses made his choice and kept to it and God blessed him in it. He was preserved in the ark of Grace from the hand of the enemy and was drawn out of the waters of temptation to be consecrated to the high service of God.

III. I want, in the last place, hurriedly to say that MOSES SHOULD BE IMITATED BY US.

First, Brethren, we should have Moses’ faith. The things which Moses believed are true, and therefore ought still to be believed. They are as important today as when he believed them. Let us lay hold upon them and feel their practical bearings this very morning. Young men, especially—I entreat you to believe in God and in His work of Grace among His people, that you may be numbered with His chosen now and in the day of His appearing.

Next, we must imitate Moses in this—that if we do believe we must come out on the Lord’s side. Now that you have “come to years,” do let it be seen on whose side you are. Let there be no doubt, no hesitation, no vacillation. But let those who see you in the house, or in business, know that you are on the Lord’s side. Let me exhort you also to see things in the eternal light. Do not look at things in their bearings upon today, or tomorrow, or the next few years. Judge by eternity. For the present the good man may be a loser. You must look further than your foot. Take the measuring line of the sanctuary and use it when you judge of spiritual things.

Note another important matter—I pray that you may get into fellowship with Christ. Oh, to know Christ and love Him—to have Him to be your Savior and then to feel that you can wear the reproach of Christ as a chain of gold! This is a great help in the life of a tried child of God. Dear Friend, if you are a Believer in Christ, give yourself up to God without reserve—say, “I will follow You, my Lord, through flood or flame. I will follow You up hill or down dale. I will follow wherever the Lord shall lead the way. I will follow at all cost and hazard.” Say this in your soul. Take God for your all in poverty and disgrace. Take God on the bleak winter’s day and say—“I am resolved, God helping me, to do His will.”

If you do this, you cannot tell what God has in store for you, nor need you give it a consideration. Moses, after all, was not a loser by his self-denial. He became King in Jeshurun and was more than a monarch in the wilderness. He refused to be Pharaoh’s son but in the Book of Exodus God said to him—“See, I have made you a god to Pharaoh.” Egypt’s haughty monarch feared his plagues and entreated his intercession. The Lord made Moses so great that among those who are born of woman he ranks among the first unto this day. Even in Heaven he is remembered. For they sing “the song of Moses the servant of God and of the Lamb.”

Young man, if you give yourself unto the Lord you can little guess what He will do with you. What you lose will be a mere trifle compared with what you will gain. As to honor—all honor and glory lie in the service of the Most High. I am come to this conclusion, my Brethren—whether I sink or whether I swim, I am the Lord’s! By His Grace I will believe His Word and cling to its inspiration, whether the Lord shall roll away my reproach or not. I would say with the three holy children, “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and He will deliver us out of your hand, 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.”

By God’s Grace, with Job my heart has said—“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” Be this the resolve of each one, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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RAHAB

NO. 1061

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 21, 1872,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not,
when she had received the spies in peace.”
Hebrews 11:31.***

***“Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had
received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?”
James 2:25.***

THESE are two New Testament summaries of the life of Rahab and they are equally honorable to her. Paul puts her among the great worthies who, by faith, worked wonders. The 11th chapter of Hebrews is a triumphal arch to the soldiers of faith and among the illustrious names inscribed there are the name of this harlot of Jericho. We are not, however, so much surprised at that, for she was evidently an instance of great faith—but we are somewhat surprised, I think, to find her name recorded by James because he is an eminently practical writer—and was writing of good *works* rather than of faith. His object is to show that the faith which justifies the soul is a faith which *produces* good works, and therefore he looks for instances of holy service of God.

We should not have thought that he would have singled out Rahab, but he has done so and this is the more remarkable because the only other person whom he mentions is Abraham—Abraham the Father of the Faithful, the Friend of God, a perfect and an upright man! James cites Abraham as standing for the one sex and Rahab the harlot for the other. I have no doubt that James knew what he was doing and that the Inspiration which guided him was infallible. Possibly Rahab was chosen to represent the Gentiles in connection with the founder of Israel who fitly stood for the Jews. While Abraham possessed a faith which manifested itself by works, so also did Rahab, the daughter of the Gentiles descended from a race doomed to destruction—a Gentile of the Gentiles.

But possibly another reason for mentioning her may be that as Abraham renounced his own kindred at the call of God and came forth from Ur of the Chaldees, separated unto the Most High, so did this woman leave all her associations with Jericho, practically renouncing her nationality, forsaking her country and leaving it to its destiny and doom while she took her part with Israel to be a partaker with the people of God in the promised inheritance. It is no small honor, then, to this remarkable woman that she has her name recorded, not only with the heroes of faith, but also that she is selected by the great practical Apostle as one of two remarkable instances of the works which *result* from faith.

Let us consider her faith and her character all the more attentively because of this high position which the Holy Spirit has accorded to her. With the commendation of Paul and the praise of James, backed as they

both were by the witness of the Spirit of God, this woman's character is well worthy of attentive consideration. May the Spirit of God bless our meditation to our profit.

I. Our first observation upon her shall be that she possessed SINGULAR FAITH. This will be apparent if we reflect that she received no instruction from her parents. Birth-right membership was not a question which touched the case of Rahab. Her parents were of the condemned race of the Canaanites. They had no faith in God, themselves, and could not inculcate it. She did not become a worshipper of Jehovah because the family had always been so. They had no family pew in the sanctuary, no Prophet's chamber in the house, no name to keep up among the Lord's people. She was the first and only one of her race called out by Grace. God had chosen her as "one of a family" by His electing love, and though we hope that Grace continued in the household for many generations, yet it first of all came by her.

Now we do not so much wonder, though I believe in many respects it is equally to God's Glory when we see the children of godly parents becoming Believers in Christ—for we remember the many prayers offered for them, the instructions which they have received, the affectionate admonitions which they have heard—and above all the godly examples which they have seen. We do not so much wonder, though indeed, even in that case it is a work of the Spirit of God as much as in any other if the conversion is genuine. But we do marvel, and we cannot help it, when we see one rising out of a family in which no true religion had ever been seen before! Here we see a lone palm in the desert, a solitary life among the tombs.

It is a struggle, as some of you know, to stand in the position of a lonely witness for God in a family. When in seeing enquirers I have to talk to young persons who are the only ones of the family attending the House of God at all—the only ones who make any pretensions to godliness—I feel great sympathy with them because I know they will have much to put up with and a heavy cross to carry. Such converts are not plants in the conservatory, but flowers exposed to the winter's cold. Yet it is right to add that I have often observed that these have become among the strongest and most decided Christians that I have ever met! Even as Rahab, though her faith was solitary and was like a lily among thorns, yet was her faith none the less strong and perhaps, all the more unwavering.

Reflect again that her faith was singular because she was not in a believing country. Not only within doors had she none to sympathize with her, but in the whole city of Jericho, so far as we know, she was the only believer in Jehovah. It is right to conclude that if there had been other Believers there, either the city would have been spared for the sake of ten righteous, or else there would have been means found for their preservation—but she was the only one there. If we could have taken a birds-eye view of the city of Jericho and had been informed that there was one Believer there, I assure you we would not have looked to Rahab's house! She would have been about the *last* person that we should have supposed had been a possessor of faith in the true God.

God has a people where we little dream of it and He has chosen ones among a sort of people whom we dare not hope for. Who would think that Grace could grow in the heart of one who was a harlot by name, as though her sin was openly known to all? Yet it grew there, like a fair flower blooming upon a dunghill, or a bright star glittering on the brow of night. There her faith grew and brought forth glory to God! I know not what god they worshipped at Jericho, but the whole city was full of idolatry and Rahab, alone, looked to the living God! The whole city was full of filthiness, and, bad as she had been, her faith must have made her loathe the sin. Jericho was neighbor to Sodom, not only as to locality but as to condition, and bad as this woman had been, it is probable that her sin was among the least of the offenses practiced there.

It is a shame even to speak of the loathsome crimes which defiled Jericho. When reclaimed by Sovereign Grace Rahab must have found herself as much alone in Jericho as Lot had found himself alone in Sodom. She was the one and only Believer amidst an idolatrous and depraved generation. May we not have hope, dear Friends, that from the lowest slums of our vast city there may come other Rahabs? Why not a Rahab in the Haymarket as well as in Jericho? May we not trust that among those who have been in our prisons, there yet may arise believers in the Lord God of Israel? May we not even hope that the fame of the Gospel may have been carried by rumor into cities unvisited by missionaries and that here and there Rahabs in unknown cities may be seeking after the Lord? There is no telling what Divine Grace may be silently doing throughout the world in culling out the ones and twos whom God has chosen! Israel dreamed not of finding an ally within her enemy's walls, yet the Lord would have it so, and so it was.

Remember, too, that Rahab's faith was remarkable because her means of knowledge were very slender and, therefore, the food of her faith was comparatively scant. She had no book inspired of God to read. She had been instructed by no Prophet—no Elijah had spoken to her in the name of God—no Jonah had gone through the streets of her city, warning men to repent. What information she had obtained she had gathered by odds and ends. She had put together the talk of the marketplace, the chat at the well and the gossip outside the city gates. And she had concluded that a nation had come out of Egypt, and that for their sakes and by their God, Jehovah, the Egyptian king had been destroyed at the Red Sea—that Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, had been overthrown in battle by this people—and that it was certain they were on their way to take the whole of Palestine to themselves because their God had given it to them.

Out of these common reports this woman had gathered evidence sufficient for faith to rest upon. The proverb has it that common fame is a common liar, but in this case the general panic with which her countrymen had been seized convinced her that the reports were true. The terms in which the advance of Israel was everywhere described convinced her that a terrible calamity hung like a cloud over the country. A cloud that paralyzed the court, the army and the people. She saw that the ground of fear was that a living God was with this people and she said within herself, "Verily, there is one God," and her conscience within responded to

that declaration. She felt it was so and light streamed in upon her spirit. She believed in Jehovah, the God of Israel, and she began to worship Him, expecting that the cause which He espoused would be successful and that those who were His enemies would certainly come to destruction. Slender, I say, was the basis—strong enough in itself—but far inferior to that line upon line, precept upon precept, which we have so long received.

Many here present have the whole of God's Book before them and yet do not believe! They have the testimony of His saints by the thousands and yet do not believe! They are earnestly entreated by living witnesses, yet do not believe! But this poor woman, with her few opportunities, became a believer in Jehovah! Take heed lest in the day of judgment she should rise up against you! She believed with far less testimony—how will you be able to excuse your own persistent unbelief? I pray you, dear Hearers, think of this! Perhaps the most wonderful thing about her faith was that she should be a woman of such a character. She was apparently the most unlikely person to become a believer in Jehovah. She was a *harlot*, a woman that was a sinner and universally known to be such!

Desperate attempts have been made to find some other meaning for the word rendered *harlot*, but they have been utterly fruitless. Both Paul and James declare, concerning her, that she was what we commonly call her. The idea that she was a hostess or tavern keeper is absurd because such a thing as an innkeeper was not known in those days, as everybody knows. To foist such an interpretation as that upon the original Hebrew is not to translate, but to misinterpret—and no one has ever attempted it with the Greek! She had doubtless been a great sinner—it is no use trying to mince the matter. Let the glory be to Divine Grace! Why should we wish to rob God of His honor in having delivered such a woman from her sin?

But after she became a believer in Jehovah, it strikes me she forsook her sin and became another character though she was still known by her old title. We read that she hid the spies among the stalks of flax. For what purpose had she stalks of flax upon her roof if she had not begun to be an industrious working woman? A little thing will often indicate character. A straw shows which way the wind blows and it seems to me to be most probable that she had forsaken her unhallowed life. And then, since hospitality had come to be forgotten in Jericho and the other Canaanite cities, she, being a follower of Jehovah and knowing that hospitality was His delight, would go to the city gate every now and then, just as Lot had been accustomed to do, and watch for strangers to see if she could entertain them.

She was under no suspicion in doing this, because her old name would stick to her and give her a license to do what others might not attempt without being suspected of treason against the crown by entertaining aliens and as such, adversaries. So I doubt not she most honestly entertained strangers and the reason why, on this occasion the spies came to her was because she was generally on the lookout to receive wayfarers who else perhaps would have received bad treatment at the hands of her wicked townsmen. So the generous spirit which true religion gave her brought her into contact with the Israelites who came to spy the land—

and they became, in God's hands, the means of her safety when the city was destroyed.

The Grace of God had, even before these men came, lifted her up out of her former self! And though her old name stuck to her, I think I see reason to believe that her old *character* was gone and she had become a new creature through the power of faith. However, she was a harlot once and the wonder is that she became a Believer! Wonders of Grace are God's delight! He loves, for Jesus' sake, to call unto Himself the lowest of the low and the vilest of the vile. The Lord still works in the same manner. Let us rest assured that Jesus still receives sinners and that publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of Heaven before the self-righteous and captious! It is very remarkable that in the pedigree of Christ there should be so many women with blotted characters—that there should be an incestuous Tamar, a harlot Rahab, an idolatrous Ruth and an adulterous Bathsheba—so that Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners, has descended His earthly parentage from the loins of sinners and so is nearly akin to them! O the depths of the Grace of God! How matchless is the condescension of the Redeemer!

Once more, Rahab's faith was singular because the subject of it was difficult. What was it she had to believe? Was it not this—that Israel would destroy Jericho? Now, between Jericho and the tribes flowed the Jordan and the Israelites had no means of crossing it. Only a miracle could divide that overflowing river. Did Rahab's faith expect a miracle? If so, it was remarkably strong. Around Jericho stood a gigantic wall. There was no likelihood of the assailants scaling it or making a breach in it. Did Rahab think that those walls would fall flat to the ground? Or did she leave the way of the capture with God, firmly believing that it would be conquered? If so, she was a woman of no small faith! I have known intelligent Christians whose faith could neither have divided a flood nor leaped over a wall—but this poor woman's faith in God did both!

She was sure that the God of the Red Sea would be the God of the Jordan and that He who smote Og, king of Bashan, could strike the king of Jericho, too! Her faith was special because it was strong and stronger than faith often is in those who have far more of a basis on which to rest it. Now, let each one of us say, as we think of this woman's strange faith, "Why should not I have the same faith in the living God? God can give it to me. Though my past life may have been greatly defiled with sin, yet why should I not put my trust in the Lord, the Savior? Is not faith the very Grace which best becomes a sinner and does most for a sinner? Has not God sent Jesus Christ into the world to redeem men from sin? Has He not redeemed many already by the power of His Spirit and the application of His precious blood? I will believe in Jesus."

Oh, may the Holy Spirit give you faith at this moment! May God's electing love single out some here who have been, if not actually yet in heart, as bad as Rahab—and may they be led by infinite mercy, having followed her in sin—to imitate her in faith! Come, you fallen, Jesus can raise you! Come, you filthy, Jesus can cleanse you! Believe and eternal life is yours!

II. In the second place RAHAB'S FAITH WAS ACTIVE. It was not a sleeping faith, or a dead faith—it was an operative faith. It was active

first, mentally. When she believed, she began to think. Some persons get converted at revivals and wild excitement and seem to me as if they either have no brains or else their heads were never entered by Grace. You have always to keep up a great excitement or you will miss them. They have no well-considered principles. If you asked them what they believe they would not know, nor would they be able to tell *why* they believe.

They probably believe because other people believe—the minister is earnest and they had a good time in general, hence their faith—but reasonable reason they have none. The best Believers to wear and endure are the thoughtful ones, men of principle, men who weigh and judge. They, of course have their conflicts all the more for their thoughtfulness, but then, on the other hand, they gather strength by the mental exercise and these are the men who are not carried about with every wind of doctrine, but who stand fast in the trying hour. Would to God we had a large army of thoughtful Believers, for then Ritualism and Rationalism would do far less mischief!

Rahab was a thoughtful woman and had quite a system of theology of her own. She knew the past—she knew the story of the Red Sea and of Og and Sihon. She knew something about God's having promised by Covenant to give the country to the Israelites and from that she gathered the present. Notice her doctrine upon present things, "The Lord Jehovah, He is God in Heaven above and in earth beneath." She laid that down as a certain fact that the Lord Jehovah who had done so much must be the God in Heaven above and in the earth beneath! And then from that she drew her inference as to the future. She believed that God would give the country into Israel's hand and she asked that when the Lord did actually do so, they would deal kindly and truly with her.

So she had a doctrine about the present, the past and the future and she had it all arranged in her own mind. Her thought was not only so active that she became a doctrinalist—one commentator even calls her a semi-prophetess—she was active in her mind as to her decision for the Lord. She said, "I belong to this town. I have citizen privileges in Jericho, but I will give them all up. God is against this city and it will be destroyed—and I shall be destroyed in it if I am against God. But He is the true God—I, therefore, side with Him and take part with His people. If He will but have me, I will put myself beneath the shadow of His wings and ask Him to cast the skirt of His garment over me. Henceforth I am no citizen of Jericho—I disavow my allegiance to its king."

When the spies came she knew her course of action. She did not regard herself as bound to take any part in the defense of the city by sending word to the king that spies had come. She considered herself as an Israelite and acted as such. Oh, I wish that some professors were half as decided as this! They know the Truth of God but they do not stand up for it! They will hear it laughed at and ill words thrown at it, yet their blood never boils with indignation against the adversaries of God! They keep very quiet and perhaps one reason is that they have nothing to say. They have not learned Christ—they have no reason for the hope that is in them and therefore they cannot give it with meekness and fear—and so their religion appears to be a dead letter as far as their mind is concerned. God deliver us from such a faith as that! May we have a faith

which thrills our entire manhood, moves our judgment, enlightens our understanding and makes us decide for the Truth of God and righteousness in whatever company we may be thrown!

But next came another form of activity. Her faith was active in her own sphere. As I have already conjectured that she became willing to entertain strangers, so when she saw the servants of God in the form of the two spies she knew at once what to do. She took them home and she did her best to hide them. She did not set up to be a heroine and say, "Now I am a follower of Jehovah I must be doing something extraordinary." She did not pack up her clothes and start off to some distant place where she could find more glittering service for Jehovah—she stopped where she was and served God there! She minded her own guests and kept her own house. I believe that home duties are one of the very best forms of the activity of faith—our business is not to do what we fancy but what the Lord appoints for us.

Of many a Christian woman it is best to have it said, as of Sarah, when they said, "Where is Sarah?" and the answer was, "In her tent." It is a good thing when a Christian feels he will not choose his work but will take the work God chooses for him—he resolves not to be somebody else, but to follow the special path which the Lord marks out for him. Now Rahab was not to anticipate Joel, and drive a tent pin through the head of the King of Jericho, nor to be a Deborah and call some Barak to the battle. She had work at home ready to hand and what her hand found to do she did with all her might. May we see in all of you who are Christians the faith which works in its own sphere! May you exhibit the religion of common things.

Do not believe in knight-errantry. Do not be spiritual Don Quixotes. God has made you what you are, a mother, or a daughter—a husband, a servant, or a master—serve God as such. There is something for you to do in your position. Extraordinary calls may come and I pray they may come to some here present, but they are not likely to be given to those who cannot use their present everyday opportunities. We may be called to very special service and have special Grace given, but it is best for us, till such calls are felt, to mind our business in the station of life in which God has placed us. Moses kept sheep till he was bid to deliver Israel. Gideon was threshing when the angel appeared to him. And the disciples were fishing when Jesus called them. They used diligence in their callings and then threw their hearts into their higher calling.

And so did Rahab. The spies came to her; she received them in peace; she hid them and after she hid them she led them down by a rope from her house on the wall—which perhaps she did before to very different characters. Then she gave them the best advice she could and was thus the means of preserving their lives. She fulfilled a very necessary part in Israelite history. Her faith was truly active and is to be commended. And let me say that she did all this to the best of her ability and used her common sense. She covered them up with flax—she put them on the housetop—she let them down after it was dark. She told them to go to the mountain. She recommended them wait three days till the heat of the search was over—she acted prudently. She did all she could and she did it with remarkable tact and shrewdness.

I never could see why true religion should be so often associated with stupidity and yet I have remarked that some gracious people either affect a babyish simplicity, or else the Lord has, indeed, chosen the foolish things of this world. If you have faith surely you are not, therefore, to act as if you had lost your reason! It seems to me that faith is common sense spiritualized—carried into the affairs of religion and that it is quite consistent—there is no imperative upon us to discontinue common sense in our ordinary affairs. We are to be wise as serpents, as well as harmless as doves.

Does not the Apostle say, “In understanding be you men”? Oh, if men had their wits as much about them when they serve God as they have when they are looking for guineas, how much more would be done in the Church and the world! But there is often a blundering in the management of Christian societies and Christian Churches which would not be tolerated for a moment in a house of business—and men are allowed to be head and foremost in Christian enterprises who would not be reckoned worth their salt for selling pins or driving pigs! We ought to be as thoughtful, as careful, as prudent, as quick, as enterprising—what if I say as go-a-head—in the service of God as we should be in the pursuits of life.

I commend Rahab’s faith because while she was thoroughly active, she was active in the way in which she could best serve the Church of God, and brought all her wits and abilities into full play. Rahab was also active at great risk. Rahab’s faith made her run the risk of being put to death, for if the spies had been discovered there would have been short work of Rahab. The king of Jericho’s sword would soon have taken off the head of the woman who dared to conceal the enemies of her country! She gladly staked all upon the Truth of God and ran all risks to save the servants of the Lord. In this she was being far superior to those, today, who will not risk their employment, their situation, their good name or even the love of a single relative for Jesus Christ’s sake.

She was thus possessed of an active faith and we may say as James does, “Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers and had sent them out another way?” Did not her works go with her faith? Was not the faith which justified her a faith which produced works? Did not the Holy Spirit work in her a manifest activity which justified her *faith* by proving it to be real, and justified *her* by showing that she was sincere?

III. RAHAB’S FAITH WAS MARRED WITH GROSS WEAKNESS. She *lied* to the men who came to the door to seize the spies. She said that two strangers had come to her but she did not know from where they came, which was a lie—and she did not know where they were gone and they had departed some time ago, and they had better be pursued—this was another falsehood and is altogether inexcusable. But at the same time, please remember that she did not know it was wrong to lie.

There were, no doubt, in her conscience, indistinct glimmerings of an idea that to lie was an evil thing, but, nevertheless, her surroundings prevented her clearly knowing it as we know it. To this very day among many Orientals it is far more usual to lie than to speak the truth. In fact, a thoroughbred aboriginal eastern never speaks the truth unless by mis-

take, and he would be very sorry for it if he knew he had done so, even by accident! Among the Hindus men cannot readily be believed upon their oaths in courts of justice. We despise a great liar, but the Easterns consider him a genius! Sad it is, but it has always been so and this very much accounts for our finding such men as Abraham and Isaac deliberately saying, under certain trying circumstances, a thing that was not.

You must judge individuals from their own standpoint, and consider their circumstances, or you may do them an injustice. I am not going to excuse Rahab's lie. A lie in Rahab, or in Abraham, is as bad as in anyone else—but in this case there is this to be said—she had not been taught, as most of us have been, that a lie is a degrading sin. Nobody had ever said to her, "To deceive is contrary to the Law of God, for His Spirit teaches us not to lie to one another, seeing we have put off the old man with his deeds." There is one thing else to be said. I have often tried to put myself in Rahab's place, and have said, "Now suppose I had been hiding two servants of God during the old days of Claverhouse's dragoons. For instance, if I had Alexander Peden and Cameron in the back room and two dragoons should ride up to my door and demand, "Are the ministers here?" I have tried to imagine what I would say and I have never yet been able to make up my mind.

I suppose I have more light than Rahab and certainly I have had more leisure to consider the case, and yet I do not see my way. I do not wonder, therefore, that she blundered. And I am not much astonished that she said what she did say, for it would most readily suggest itself to her ignorant and anxious mind. I have turned over a great many schemes of what I would have said. I do not see how I could have said, "Yes, they are indoors." That would be to betray God's servants and that I would not do. I have concocted a great many pretty-looking plans, but I confess that, upon examination, they appear to be more or less tinctured with the deceit which tries to justify or conceal deceit—and therefore I have had to abandon them as being no better than falsehood and perhaps not quite so good.

I am not sure whether Rahab's lie was not more honest and outspoken than many an evasion which has suggested itself to very clever people. In fact, as a rule, things which are not obvious and need cleverness to suggest them, are rather suspicious. Strip a Russian and you find a Tartar, and if you strip these clever plans, they peel into falsehoods, after all. I do not need to say a word of apology for the falsehood—far from it. It is wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, altogether wrong! But, for all that, before you condemn Rahab be quite sure that you do not condemn yourself, and ask yourself first, what you would have said, or what you would have done under the circumstances. To tell the truth is always right. Consequences are not so much to be thought of as the claims of the God of Truth. Sometimes plain truth has had a very wonderful effect and doubtless it would, in every case, be the best policy.

I have heard of a man, a Mr. Story, who had been brought up before Judge Jeffreys to be tried for rebellion against King James II, and there was always very faint hope of a man escaping who had once been introduced to that monster. By some means, Story had gained a great repute for honesty and Jeffrey brought him before the king to speak for himself.

As I remember the history it ran somewhat in this way—The king said, “Well, Mr. Story, you were in Monmouth’s army, were you not?” “Yes, please your majesty.” “And you were a commissary there, were you not?” “Yes, please your majesty.” “Did you not preach and make speeches to the crowd?” “Yes, your majesty.” “Pray,” said the king, “If you have not forgot what you said, let us have a taste of your fine florid speech—give us some flowers of your rhetoric and a few of the main points on which you insisted.”

“I told them, your Majesty, that it was you that set fire to the City of London.” “Upon my word,” said the king, “and pray, what else did you tell them?” “I said you poisoned your brother and that you were determined to make us all papists and slaves.” By this time the king had heard enough and asked him what he would say if, after all this, he should grant him his life and a free pardon. Mr. Story there upon declared that he should, in such an unlikely case, become a right loyal subject—whereupon he received a free pardon as an honest, though mistaken man. In his case plain speaking did what falsehood could not have done, and if, in all cases, it did not turn out so, yet our duty is clear, and, therefore, we must be prepared to do it and take the consequences.

I suppose if Rahab had possessed great faith she would have said, “It is my business to serve God but not to break God’s Laws, and as it will be breaking God’s Laws to lie, I will not do it. I will take care of His servants as far as possible, but it is His business to take care of them, after all, and I must not do evil that good may come.” Though that would have been the best course, Rahab was not yet so instructed as to have thought of it and I fear that a great many here would not have thought of it either. Her fault was by no means one which we can afford to throw stones at—avoid it carefully—but do not censure it self-complacently.

IV. Rahab’s was A FAITH THAT WAS NOT ABOVE THE USE OF OUTWARD SIGNS AND SEALS. Please note this. There are persons in the world who altogether despise the outward ordinances. They may be good but they are not wise. Rahab, first of all, required from these spies an oath that they would preserve her and next they gave her a token, a scarlet line, which was to be hung in her window. This was the blood red flag of Israel. Was it not hoisted on the Passover night so that the angel might pass by and deliver the people?

She felt great comfort when she had placed the token in her window. She was not superstitious—she did not believe that anything mystical was in the red cord—but she put it there because she had been told to do so. Now, the highest faith in Christ is perfectly consistent with the obedient use of Christian ordinances. We are resting on the precious blood of Christ, not upon sacraments! God forbid we should ever build our hope upon Baptism or on the Lord’s Supper. What are these things in themselves but very vanity if we repose confidence in them? At the same time the Lord has given us Baptism as the emblem of His death, His burial and His resurrection. If we believe we have been buried with Him and are risen with Him, let us hang this scarlet cord in our window.

He has given us the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper to be the emblem of His death—let us eat the bread and drink the wine in memory of Him. We do not *trust* in the emblems in the slightest degree. We abhor the

idea! Still, we put the scarlet cord in our window and thus let all men know that we believe in Jesus. We are not ashamed to show His death till He come. Yes, and we enter the house, that is the Church, and we delight to dwell there, numbered among God's people! We are not ashamed to be known to be members of the Brotherhood of the Lord Jesus Christ! Do not seek to get a faith that would cast off the assistance which God's Spirit appoints you! Everything that is of man's invention put aside—but that which is of God's ordaining is for your benefit—and you are bound to hold to it even though it is little as a scarlet line in the window.

V. HER FAITH WAS SAVING FAITH. I have shown how it was grievously marred but it was effectual, notwithstanding. She was saved when all the city wall went down. Her house was on the wall but there it stood. Must it not have seemed strange? The walls began to rock and shake and then down they fell with a thundering sound, and upward flew dense clouds of dust—but above all there stood the piece of the wall on which was Rahab's house—like an island in the midst of a tempestuous sea!

The Israelites dashed over the ruins of the wall, pursued the doomed men with fury and slew them, for they had been ordained of God to be their executioners. Not one escaped! But no sword came near to Rahab's bosom. No death took away one of her kindred! She was saved! She was taken out of her house with her friends and put outside the camp of the Israelites BUT afterwards received into it. She was married to Salmon, a prince of Judah, and afterwards had the high dignity of being one of the ancestors of our Lord Jesus Christ!

So, dear Brothers and Sisters, true faith in Christ, despite its weakness will save us! It separates us from the world, joins us unto God's Israel, marries us to the true Prince of Judah, gives us kinship with the Lord Jesus Christ—and what higher dignity is there to receive?

IV. With this I shall close when I have mentioned the last point, and that is HER FAITH BECAME ACCEPTABLE WITH GOD SO THAT SHE WAS THE MEANS OF THE SALVATION OF OTHERS. Oh, I like this in Rahab, that she did not bargain for her own safety, alone! Her sin had not hardened her heart as sin does in many cases. She thought of her father, her mother and her brothers and her sisters. Now, wherever there is a real child of God there will be anxiety for his family. If you do not want to have your children saved you are not saved yourself!

I have seen professors who thought it quite enough if they, alone, went to Heaven. I knew a man who would walk 20 miles on Sunday to hear "the truth"—nobody preached it but at one place. But when he was asked where his family went, he said that it was no business of his—God would save His own elect. Such people are not the children of God, because God's children are not *worse* than heathen men and publicans, for they care for their own households. Rahab was a good daughter—with all her wrong she loved her father and her mother. She was a good sister and desired her brother and sisters to be saved.

O you Christian people, seek to be good in your relationships at home! I won't give a penny for you if you are not a good husband or a good wife. Away with your Christianity if it makes you a bad child. A domineering, surly father—a rebellious child, a gossiping wife, an idle servant, a tyrannical master—these may belong to Satan, but God will not own them!

Rahab, with all that was wrong about her, had an intense love for her kindred. But notice, love them as she might, she could not *save* them unless she got them under the red flag. If any of them stopped in the streets when the Israelites were slaying the people, they might say, "We belong to Rahab," but the reply would be, "We cannot help that, the oath we took was to spare all in the house where the red line was in the window, and if you are not there you cannot be spared."

It will be of no use, when you die, to say, "Spare me, O avenging Angel, my mother prayed for me! My sister agonized for my conversion." No, you must *personally* get into Christ yourself and have a real faith in Him or no prayers of others can be of any use for you. But the mercy was that somehow Rahab was helped by God to bring all her family in. Her father did not say, "No, my Girl, I do not believe in it." Some of you have fathers who say that. Pray hard for them! And the mother did not say, "My Child you are mad. I have always thought you a little affected in the brain. Do not come teaching your mother." No, but mother came, too.

When the Israelites marched round the city the six days and the people of Jericho laughed and said what fools they were to think they were going to make the walls tumble down by walking round them, she still confided in God—and I dare say she had some difficulty in persuading her lively sisters and her argumentative brothers to believe, too. They would say, "Rahab, are you quite clear about this? Is it not all a mere farce?" Somehow, such was the influence God gave her, such was the power of her faith—that they all remained in the house and with their families were saved.

The house, I dare say, was filled as full as could be from top to bottom and glad was Rahab to see it. God grant I may have all my family thus preserved! I am sure every child of God here is breathing the same prayer—"God of Rahab, give me my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters and all my kindred." The Lord hear your prayers, and bless you for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

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RAHAB'S FAITH

NO. 119

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 1, 1857,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them who believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.
Hebrews 11:31.***

IN almost every capital of Europe there are varieties of triumphal arches or columns upon which are recorded the valiant deeds of the country's generals, its emperors, or its monarchs. You will find, in one case, the thousand battles of a Napoleon recorded and, in another, you find the victories of a Nelson pictured. It seems, therefore, but right, that faith, which is the mightiest of the mighty, should have a pillar raised to its honor upon which its valiant deeds should be recorded! The Apostle Paul undertook to raise the structure and he erected a most magnificent pillar in the Chapter before us. It recites the victories of faith. It begins with one triumph of faith and then proceeds to others. We have, in one place, faith triumphing over *death*—Enoch entered not the gates of Hades but reached Heaven by another road from that which is usual to men. We have faith, in another place, wrestling with time—Noah, warned by God concerning things not seen as yet, wrestled with time, which placed his deluge a 120 years away. And yet, in the confidence of faith he believed against all rational expectation, against all probability—and his faith was more than a match for probability and time, too! We have faith triumphing over *infirmity*—when Abraham begot a son in his old age. And then we have faith triumphing over *natural affection* as we see Abraham climbing to the top of the hill and raising the knife to slay his only and beloved son at the command of God. We see faith, again, entering the lists with the infirmities of *old age* and the pains of the last struggle as we read—“By faith, Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph and worshipped leaning on the top of his staff.” Then we have faith combating the allurements of a wealthy court—“By faith Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” We see faith dauntless in courage when Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king and equally patient in suffering when he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. We have faith dividing seas and casting down strong walls. And then, as though the greatest victory

should be recorded last, we have faith entering the lists with sin, holding a tournament with iniquity and coming off more than a conqueror! "Rahab perished not with them who believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." That this woman was no mere hostess but a real harlot, I have abundantly proved to every candid hearer while reading the Chapter. I am persuaded that nothing but a spirit of distaste for Free Grace would ever have led any commentator to deny her sin.

I think this triumph of faith over sin is not the least here recorded, but that if there is any superiority ascribable to any one of Faith's exploits, this is, in some sense, the greatest of all. What? Faith, did you fight with hideous lust? What? Would you struggle with that fiery passion which sends forth flame from human breasts? What? Would you touch with your hallowed fingers foul and bestial debauchery? "Yes," says Faith, "I did encounter this abomination of iniquity, I delivered this woman from the loathsome chambers of vice, the wily snares of enchantment and the fearful penalty of transgression. Yes, I brought her off saved and rescued, gave her purity of heart and renewed in her the beauty of holiness. And now her name shall be recorded in the roll of my triumphs as a woman full of sin, yet saved by faith."

I shall have some things to say, this morning, concerning this notable victory of faith over sin such as I think will lead you to see that this was, indeed, a super-eminent triumph of faith. I will make my divisions alliterative, that you may remember them. This woman's faith was *saving* faith, *singular* faith, *stable* faith, *self-denying* faith, *sympathizing* faith and *sanctifying* faith. Let no one run away when I shall have expounded the first point and miss the rest, for you cannot apprehend the whole power of her faith unless you remember each of those particulars I am about to mention!

I. In the first place, this woman's faith was SAVING FAITH. All the other persons mentioned here were doubtless saved by faith. But I do not find it especially remarked concerning any of them that they perished not through their faith. While it is particularly said of this woman that she was *delivered* amidst the general destruction of Jericho, purely and only through her faith and, without doubt, her salvation was not merely of a temporal nature, not merely a deliverance of her body from the sword, but redemption of her soul from Hell! Oh, what a mighty thing faith is when it saves the soul from going down to the pit of Hell! So mighty is the ever-rushing torrent of sin that no arm but that which is as strong as Deity can ever stop the sinner from being hurried down to the gulf of black despair! And when nearing that gulf, so impetuous is the torrent of Divine Wrath that nothing can snatch the soul from Perdition but an

Atonement which is as Divine as God, Himself! Yet faith is the instrument of accomplishing the whole work. It delivers the sinner from the stream of sin and, laying hold upon the Omnipotence of the Spirit, it rescues him from that great whirlpool of destruction unto which his soul was being hurried.

What a great thing it is to save a soul! You can never know how great it is unless you have stood in the capacity of a savior to other men. Yonder heroic man who, yesterday, when the house was burning, climbed the creaking staircase and almost suffocated by the smoke, entered an upper chamber, snatched a baby from its bed and a woman from the window, bore them both down in his arms and saved them at the peril of his own life—he can tell you what a great thing it is to save a fellow creature! Yonder noble-hearted youth who, yesterday, sprang into the river at the hazard of himself and snatched a drowning man from death—he felt, when he stood upon the shore, what a great thing it is to save a life! Ah, but you cannot tell what a great thing it is to save a soul! It is only our Lord Jesus Christ who can tell you that, for He is the only One who has ever been the Savior of sinners! And remember, you can only know how great a thing faith is by knowing the infinite value of the salvation of a soul! Now, “By faith, the harlot Rahab was delivered.” That she was really saved in a Gospel sense as well as temporally seems to me to be proved from her reception of the spies which was an emblem of the entrance of the Word into the heart and her hanging out the scarlet thread was an evidence of faith, not inaptly picturing faith in the blood of Jesus, the Redeemer. But who can measure the length and breadth of that word—*salvation*? Ah, it was a mighty deed which Faith accomplished when he bore her off in safety! Poor Sinner, take comfort! The same faith which saved Rahab can save you! Are you literally one of Rahab's sisters in guilt? She was saved and so may you be, if God shall grant you repentance. Woman, are you loathsome to yourself? Do you stand at this moment in this assembly and say, “I am ashamed to be here. I know I have no right to stand among people who are chaste and honest!” I bid you remain. Yes, come again and make this your Sabbath House of Prayer. You are no intruder! You are welcome! For you have a sacred right to the courts of mercy. You have a sacred right—for here sinners are invited and you are such! Believe in Christ and you, like Rahab, shall not perish with the disobedient but even you shall be saved!

And now there is some gentleman in the audience who says, “There's a Gospel for you. It is a kind of sanctuary for wicked men unto which the worst of people may run and be saved.” Yes, that is the stale objection which Celsus used against Origen in his discussion. “But,” said Origen,

“it is true, Celsus, that Christ’s Gospel is a sanctuary for thieves, robbers, murderers and harlots?” But know this, it is not merely a sanctuary, it is a hospital, too, for it heals their sins, delivers them from their diseases and they are not afterwards what they were before they received the Gospel! I ask no man, today, or any day, to come to Christ and then continue in his sins! If so, I would ask him to do an absurdity! As well might I talk of delivering a Prometheus, while his chains are allowed to remain upon him and bind him to his rock. It cannot be! Christ takes away the vulture from the conscience, but he takes away the chains, too, and makes the man wholly free when He does it at all! Yet, we repeat it again—the chief of sinners are as welcome to Christ as the best of saints! The fountain filled with blood was opened for sin-stained ones! The robe of Christ was woven for naked ones! The balm of Calvary was compounded for sick ones—life came into the world to raise the dead! And oh, you perishing and guilty souls, may God give you Rahab’s faith and you shall have this salvation and shall, with her, stand yonder where the white-robed, spotless hosts sing unending hallelujahs to God and the Lamb!

II. But mark, Rahab’s faith was a SINGULAR FAITH. The City of Jericho was about to be attacked. Within its walls there were hosts of people of all classes and characters and they knew right well that if their city should be sacked and stormed, they would all be put to death. But yet, strange to say, there was not one of them who repented of sin, or who even asked for mercy except this woman who had been a harlot. She and she, alone, was delivered—a solitary one among a multitude! Now, have you ever felt that it is a very hard thing to have a singular faith? It is the easiest thing in the world to believe as everybody else believes—the difficulty is to believe a thing, alone—when no one else thinks as you think—to be the solitary champion of a righteous cause when the enemy musters his thousands to the battle! Now this was the faith of Rahab. She had not one who felt as she did, who could enter into her feelings and realize the value of her faith. She stood alone. Oh, it is a noble thing to be the lonely follower of the despised Truth of God! There are some who could tell you a tale of standing up alone. There have been days when the world continually poured a river of infamy and calumny upon them, but they stemmed the torrent and, by continued Grace, were made strong in weakness! They held their own until the current turned and they, in their success, were praised and applauded by the very men who sneered before. Then did the world accord them the name of “great.” But where lay their greatness? Why, in this—that they stood as firm in the storm as they stood in the calm! That they were as content to serve God, alone, as

they were to run by fifties. To be good, we must be singular. Christians must swim against the stream. Dead fish always float down stream, but the living fish forces its way against the current!

Now, worldly religious men will go just as everybody else goes. That is nothing. The thing is to stand alone, like Elijah, when he said, "I only am left and they seek my life"—to feel in one's heart that we believe as firmly as if a thousand witnesses stood up by our side! Oh, there is no great right in a man, no strong-minded right, unless he dares to be singular! Why, the most of you are as afraid as you can be to be unfashionable! You spend more money than you ought because you think you must be respectable. You dare not move in opposition to your friends in the circle in which you move and, therefore, you involve yourselves in difficulties. You are blindfolded by the rich fabric of fashion and you tolerate many a wrong thing because it is customary. But a strong-minded man is one who does not try to be singular but who *dares* to be singular when he knows that to be singular is to be right. Now, Rahab's faith, sinner as she was, had this glory, this crown about its head, that she stood alone—"faithful among the faithless found."

And why should not God vouchsafe the same faith to you, my poor sinning but contrite Hearer? You live in a back street, in a house which contains none but Sabbath-breakers and irreligious men and women. But if you have Grace in your heart, you will dare to do right. You belong to an infidel club. If you should make them a speech after your own conscience, they would hiss you. And if you forsook their company, they would persecute you! Go and try them—dare them. See whether you can do it. For if you are afraid of men, you are taken in a snare which *may prove your grief and is now your sin!* Mark you, the chief of sinners can make the most daring saint. The worst men in the devil's army, when they are converted, make the truest soldiers for Jesus! The forlorn hope of Christendom has generally been led by men who have proven the high efficacy of Grace to an eminent degree by having been saved from the deepest sins. Go on and the Lord give you that high and singular faith!

III. Furthermore, this woman's faith was a STABLE FAITH which stood firm in the midst of trouble. I have heard of a Church clergyman who was once waited upon by his church warden, after a long time of drought and was requested to put up the prayer for rain. "Well," he said, "my good man, I will offer it, but it's not a bit of use while the wind's in the east, I'm sure." There are many who have that kind of faith—they believe just as far as probabilities go with them, but when the promise and the probability part, then they follow the probability and part with the promise! They say, "The thing is likely, therefore I believe it." But that is

not faith—that is sight! True faith exclaims, “The thing is unlikely, yet I believe it.” This is real faith! Faith is to say, “Mountains, when in darkness hidden, are as real as in day.” Faith is to look through that cloud, not with the eyes of sight, which see nothing, but with the eyes of faith, which see everything and to say, “I trust Him when I cannot trace Him. I tread the sea as firmly as I would the rock. I walk as securely in the tempest as in the sunshine and lay myself to rest upon the surging billows of the ocean as contentedly as upon my bed.” The faith of Rahab was the right sort of faith, for it was firm and enduring!

I will have a little talk with Rahab this morning, as I suppose old Unbelief did commune with her. Now, my good Woman, don't you see the absurdity of this thing? Why, the people of Israel are on the other side of Jordan and there is no bridge—how are they to get over? Of course they must go up higher towards the fords. And then Jericho will be for a long time, secure! They will take other cities before coming to Jericho. And besides, the Canaanites are mighty and the Israelites are only a parcel of slaves—they will soon be cut in pieces and that will be the end of them! So why do you harbor these spies? Why put your life in jeopardy for such an improbability? “Ah,” she says, “I do not care about the Jordan. My faith can believe across the Jordan, or else it were only a dry-land faith.” By-and-by they march through the Jordan dry shod, then faith gets firmer confidence. “Ah,” she says secretly within herself, what she would willingly have said to her neighbors, “Will you not *now* believe? Will you not *now* beg for mercy?” “No,” they say, “the walls of Jericho are strong—can the feeble host resist us?” And lo, on the morrow the troops are out and what do they do? They simply blow a number of rams' horns! Her neighbors say, “Why, Rahab, you do not mean to say you believe, now? They are mad!” The people just go round the city and all hold their tongues except the few priests blowing rams' horns. “Why, it is ridiculous! It were quite a new thing in warfare to hear of men taking a city by blowing rams' horns!” That was the first day. Probably the next day Rahab thought they would come with scaling ladders and mount the walls. But no, rams' home again, up to the seventh day—and this woman kept the scarlet thread in the window all the time—kept her father and mother and brothers and sisters in the house and would not let them go out. And on the seventh day, when the people made a great shout, the wall of the city fell flat to the ground!

Rahab's faith overcame her womanly timidity and she remained within, although the walls were tumbling to the ground! Only Rahab's house stood alone upon the wall, a solitary fragment amidst an universal wreck and she and her household were all saved. Now would you have thought

that such a rich plant would grow in such poor soil—that strong faith could grow in such a sinful heart as that of Rahab? Ah, but here it is that God exercises His great husbandry! “My Father is the Husbandman,” said Christ. Any husbandman can get a good crop out of good soil. But God is the Husbandman who can grow cedars on rocks, who can not only put the hyssop upon the wall but put the oak there, too, and make the greatest faith spring up in the most unlikely position! All glory to His Grace! The greatest sinner may become great in faith. Be of good cheer, then, Sinner! If Christ should make you repent, you have no need to think that you shall be the least in the family. Oh, no—your name may yet be written among the mightiest of the mighty and you may stand as a memorable and triumphant instance of the power of faith!

IV. This woman's faith was A SELF-DENYING FAITH. She dared to risk her life for the sake of the spies. She knew that if they were found in her house she would be put to death! And though she was so weak as to do a sinful deed to preserve them, yet she was so *strong* that she would run the risk of being put to death to save these two men! It is something to be able to deny yourselves. An American once said, “I have got a good religion. Its the right sort of religion. I do not know that it costs me a cent a year! And yet I believe I am as truly a religious man as anybody.” “Ah!” said one who heard it, “the Lord have mercy on your miserable stingy soul—for if you had been saved, you would not have been content with a cent a year.” I hazard this assertion—that there is nothing in the faith of that man who does not exercise self-denial. If we never give anything to Christ's cause, work for Christ, deny ourselves for Christ, the root of the matter is not in us—I might call some of you hypocrites—you sing—

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

Yes you *could* but you *would not*. You know better than that, for you do not, as it is, give all! No, nor even half, nor yet the thousandth part! I suppose you think you are poor, yourselves, though you have got some thousand pounds odd a year. And so you keep it yourself, under the notion that, “He that gives to the poor lends to the Lord.” I don't know how else it is you make your religion square with itself and be at all consistent. This woman said, “If I must die for these men, I will. I am prepared, bad name as I have, to have a still worse name. As a traitor to my country, I am prepared to be handed down to infamy if it is necessary, but having betrayed my country in taking in these spies, I know it is God's will it should be done and do it I will at every hazard.” O Brothers and Sisters, trust not your faith unless it has self-denial with it! Faith and

self-denial, like the Siamese twins, are born together and must live together—and the food that nourishes one must nourish both! But this woman, poor sinner as she was, would deny herself. She brought her life, even as that other woman who was a sinner brought the alabaster box of precious ointment, and broke it on the head of Christ!

V. Not to detain you too long, another point very briefly. This woman's faith was a SYMPATHIZING FAITH. She did not believe for herself, only. She desired mercy for her relations. She said, "I want to be saved, but that very desire makes me want to have my father saved and my mother saved and my brother saved and my sister saved." I know a man who walks seven miles every Sabbath to hear the Gospel preached at a certain place—a place where they preach *the* Gospel. You know that very particular, superfine sort—the Gospel—a Gospel, the spirit of which consists in bad temper, carnal security, arrogance and a seared conscience! But this man was one day met by a friend, who said to him, "Where is your wife?" "*Wife?*" he said to him. "What? Does she not come with you?" "Oh, no," said the man, "she never goes anywhere." "Well but," said he, "don't you try to get her and the children to go?" "No. The fact of it is, I think if I look to myself, that is quite enough." "Well," said the other, "and you believe you are God's elect, do you?" "Yes." "Well then," said the other, "I don't think you are, because you are worse than a heathen and a publican, for you don't care for your own household! Therefore I don't think you give much evidence of being God's elect. God's elect love their fellow-creatures." As sure as your faith is real, it will want to bring others in! You will say, "You want to make proselytes?" Yes. And you will reply that Christ said to the Pharisees, "You compass sea and land to make one proselyte." Yes, and Christ did not find fault with them for doing so! What He found fault with them for was this—"When you have found him, you make him ten-fold more the child of Hell than yourselves." The spirit of proselyting is the spirit of Christianity and we ought to be desirous of possessing it! If any man will say, "I believe such-and-such a thing is true, but I do not wish anyone else to believe it," I will tell you it is a lie! He does not believe it, for it is impossible, heartily and really, to believe a thing without desiring to make others believe the same!

And I am sure of this, moreover, it is impossible to know the value of salvation without desiring to see others brought in. Said that renowned preacher, Whitefield, "As soon as I was converted I wanted to be the means of the conversion of all that I had ever known! There were a number of young men that I had played cards with, that I had sinned with and transgressed with. The first thing I did was I went to their houses to see what I could do for their salvation, nor could I rest until I had the

pleasure of seeing many of them brought to the Savior." This is a first fruit of the Spirit. It is a kind of instinct in a young Christian—he must have other people feel what he feels! Says one young man, in writing to me this week, "I have been praying for my fellow clerk in the office. I have desired that he might be brought to the Savior but at present there is no answer to my prayers." Do not give a penny for that man's piety who will not spread itself! Unless we desire others to taste the benefits we have enjoyed, we are either inhuman monsters or outrageous hypocrites! I think the last is more likely. But this woman was so strong in faith that all her family were saved from destruction! Young woman, you have a father and he hates the Savior. Oh, pray for him! Mother, you have a son—he scoffs at Christ. Cry out to God for him! Yes, my Friends—young people like myself—we little know what we owe to the prayers of our parents! I feel that I shall never be sufficiently able to bless God for a praying mother! I thought it was a great nuisance to be had in at such a time to pray and, more especially, to be made to cry, as my mother used to make me cry. I would have laughed at the idea of anybody else talking to me about these things. But when she prayed and said, "Lord, save my son Charles," and then was overcome and could not get any further for crying, you could not help crying, too. You could not help feeling—it was of no use trying to stand against it! Ah, and there you are, young man! Your mother is dying and one thing which makes her deathbed bitter is that you scoff God and hate Christ! Oh, it is the last stage of impiety when a man can think lightly of a mother's feelings! I would hope there are none such here but that those of you who have been so blessed as to have been begotten and brought forth by pious men and women, may take this into consideration—that to perish with a mother's prayers is to perish fearfully! For if a mother's prayers do not bring us to Christ, they are like drops of oil dropped into the flames of Hell that will make them burn more fiercely upon the soul forever and ever! Take heed of rushing to Perdition over your mother's prayers!

There is an old woman weeping—do you know why? I believe she, too, has sons, and she loves them. I met with a little incident in company the other day after preaching. There was a little boy at the corner of the table and his father asked him, "Why does your father love you, John?" Said the dear little lad, very prettily, "Because I am a good boy." "Yes," said the father, "he would not love you if you were not a good boy." I turned to the good father and remarked that I was not quite sure about the truth of the last remark, for I believe he would love him if he were ever so bad. "Well," he said, "I think I would." And said a minister at the table, "I had an instance of that yesterday. I stepped into the house of a woman who

had a son imprisoned for life and she was as full of her son, Richard, as if he had been prime minister, or had been her most faithful and dutiful son." Well, young man, will you kick against love like that—love that will bear your kicks and will not turn round against you but love you straight on still? But perhaps that woman—I saw her weep just now—had a mother who has gone long ago and she was married to a brutal husband and at last left a poor widow. She calls to mind the days of her childhood, when the big Bible was brought out and read around the hearth and, "Our Father which are in Heaven" was their nightly prayer. Now, perhaps, God is beginning some good thing in her heart. Oh, that He would bring her, now, though 70 years of age, to love the Savior! Then would she have the beginning of life over again in her last days, which will be made her best days!

VI. One more head and then we have done. Rahab's faith was a SANCTIFIED FAITH. Did Rahab continue a harlot after she had faith? No, she did not! I do not believe she was a harlot at the time the men went to her house, though the name still stuck to her, as such ill names will. But I am sure she was not afterwards, for Salmon, the prince of Judah, married her and her name is put down among the ancestors of our Lord Jesus Christ! She became after that a woman eminent for piety, walking in the fear of God. Now, you may have a dead faith which will ruin your soul. The faith that will save you is a faith which sanctifies. "Ah!" says the drunkard, "I like the Gospel, Sir. I believe in Christ." Then tonight he will go over to the Blue Lion and get drunk. Sir, that is not the believing in Christ that is of any use. "Yes," says another, "I believe in Christ." And when he gets outside, he will begin to talk lightly, frothy words—perhaps lascivious ones and sin as before. Sir, you speak falsely—you do not believe in Christ. That faith which saves the soul is a real faith and a real faith sanctifies men! It makes them say, "Lord, you have forgiven me my sins. I will sin no more. You have been so merciful to me, I will renounce my guilt. So kindly have You treated me, so lovingly have You embraced me, Lord, I will serve You till I die. And if You will give me Grace and help me to be so, I will be as holy as You are." You cannot have faith and yet live in sin. To believe is to be holy! The two things must go together. That faith is a dead faith, a corrupt faith, a rotten faith, which lives in sin that Grace may abound! Rahab was a sanctified woman. Oh that God might sanctify some that are here! The world has been trying all manner of processes to reform men—there is but one thing that will ever reform them and that is faith in the preached Gospel! But in this age, preaching is much despised. You read the newspaper. You read a book. You hear the lecturer. You sit and listen to the pretty

essayist. But where is the preacher? Preaching is not taking out a manuscript sermon, asking God to direct your heart and then reading pages prepared beforehand—that is reading—not preaching!

There is a good tale told of an old man whose minister used to read. The minister called to see him and said, “What are you doing, John?” Why, I’m prophesying, Sir.” “Prophesying? How is that? You mean you are reading the prophecies?” “No, I don’t. I’m prophesying. For you read preaching and call it preaching and I read prophecies and on the same rule, that is prophesying.” And the man was not far from right. We need to have more outspoken downright utterances of Truth of God and appeals to the conscience—and until we get these, we shall never see any great and lasting reform! But by the preaching of God’s Word, foolishness though it seems to some, harlots are made righteous, drunkards are reformed, thieves are made honest and the worst of men brought to the Savior! Again let me affectionately give the invitation to the vilest of men, if so they feel themselves to be—

***“Come you needy, come and welcome!
God’s free bounty glorify—
True belief and true repentance,
Every Grace that brings us near —
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ and buy!”***

COME! Your sins will be forgiven, your transgressions cast away and you shall go and sin no more, God having renewed you—and He will keep you even to the end! May God give His blessing, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

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

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

OBTAINING PROMISES

NO. 435

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 16, 1862,
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Who through faith obtained promises.”
Hebrews 11:33.*

THE promises of God are to the Believer an inexhaustible mine of wealth. Happy is it for him if he knows how to search out their secret veins and enrich himself with their hidden treasures. They are to him an armory containing all manner of offensive and defensive weapons. Blessed is he who has learned to enter into the sacred arsenal, to put on the breastplate, and the helmet, and to lay his hand to the spear and to the sword. They are to the Believer a surgery in which he will find all manner of restoratives and blessed elixirs. He shall find in them an ointment for every wound, a cordial for every faintness, a remedy for every disease. Blessed is he who is well skilled in heavenly pharmacy and knows how to lay hold on the healing virtues of the promises of God!

The promises are to the Christian a storehouse of food. They are as the granaries which Joseph built in Egypt, or as the golden pot wherein the fresh manna was preserved. Blessed is he who can take the five barley loaves and fishes of promise and break them till his five thousand necessities shall all be supplied, and he is able to gather up baskets full of fragments. The promises are the Christian's Magna Charta of liberty—they are the title deeds of his heavenly estate. Happy is he who knows how to read them well and call them all his own.

Yes, they are the jewel room in which the Christian's crown-treasures are preserved—the regalia—secretly his today, but which he shall openly wear in Paradise. He is already a king who has the silver key with which to unlock the strong room. He may even now grasp the scepter, wear the crown and put upon his shoulders the imperial mantle. O how unutterably rich are the promises of our faithful, Covenant-keeping God! If we had here the tongue of the mightiest of human orators, and if that tongue could be touched with a live coal from off the altar, yet still it could not utter a tenth of the praises of the exceeding great and precious promises of God!

No, they who have entered into rest and have had their tongues attuned to the lofty and rapturous eloquence of cherubim and seraphim—even *they* can never tell the height and depth, the length and breadth of the unsearchable riches of Christ which are stored up in the treasure house of God—the promises of the Covenant of His Divine Grace.

See, then, my Brethren, how necessary it is that you and I should know the heavenly art of, by faith, “obtaining promises.” Furthermore, all things under the Covenant of Grace are by promise. The Law had blessings for works. What shall I say? It had only curses for transgressors, since the blessings were never obtained by any who were under the Law. But the Covenant of Grace says not, “Do this and live,” but it says, “I will,” and “you shall.” It says not, “He that does these things shall live by them,” but, “at such-and-such a time will I visit you and you shall be blessed.”

Mention anything you will which is contained in the Covenant and I will show it is by promise. Do we speak of adoption? "Now we, Brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise, these are counted for the seed." Do you speak of inheritance? Then, "God gave it to Abraham by promise," we are the "heirs of promise." "And this is the promise that He has promised us, even eternal life." The Covenants are described by Paul as being, the "Covenants of promise."

Even the Gospel, itself, is in the first chapter of the Romans, at the second verse, spoken of as "the Gospel of God, which He had *promised* afore by His Prophets in the Holy Scriptures." Life eternal is described as the "*promise of eternal life.*" We, Brethren, look for the "*promise of His coming.*" And after that, we, "according to His *promise* look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness." If we should begin at the beginning and run on till we come to the close of the catalog of Divine blessings which are bestowed upon us through Grace, we might say of them all, "These are *promised* Covenant mercies."

How necessary then—in what a tenfold degree is it absolutely necessary that you and I should know how to *obtain* the promises and see them fulfilled. For if not, failing to obtain the promises, we have lost all things and are of all men the most miserable.

I would try, this morning to explain the text, understanding it in two senses. First, some reader might think it means *obtaining the promises in themselves*. Perhaps, a more thoughtful reader would perceive that it may be better understood as *obtaining the fulfillment of the promises*. The phrase means certainly both, but we think that the mind of the Spirit is most fully expressed by the second sense.

I. It is certain that holy men of old, and that good men now, do BY FAITH, OBTAIN PROMISES.

Let us give you an instance—the memorable case of Abraham. Abraham is bid by God to offer up his son Isaac. He was already an heir of the promises, but not as yet had they been revealed to him in their utmost length and breadth. Obedient to the Divine command, Abraham prepares to offer up his son Isaac, his only son, on whom his hope of posterity depended, counting that God was able either of stones to raise up children, or to raise up Isaac again from the dead. He unsheathes the knife to slay his son.

He is prevented from the consummation of the deed. God accepts his sacrifice and rewards it with a promise. If you will at your leisure read in Genesis 22, commencing at the fifteenth verse and proceeding onwards, you will see it was then that God conferred on Abraham that great charter wherein it was written, "In blessing I will bless you and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the Heaven and as the sand which is upon the seashore. And your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Because you have obeyed My voice."

Now, it was his act of faith which, not meritoriously, but of Divine Grace, obtained that noble promise. Brethren, if you would obtain a promise, your faith must do exploits. When you have made some sacrifice for God, and have been willing in the ties of human reason to do God's will as God bids you, you shall then stand on a vantage ground from which you

may reach another and a higher promise than as yet you have ever been able to grasp in the hand of your faith.

It is true the promise is not through the Law but through the righteousness of faith. But to him, who like Abraham, staggers not at the promise through unbelief, it shall surely be given to be "heir of the world." To him that has, shall be given, and he shall have abundantly. The Spirit of God shall whisper into your soul some promise which shall come home with as much power to you as though an angel from Heaven had spoken it to you. And you shall, through one act of faith, obtain the promise which before was beyond your reach.

Another notable instance is given us in the case of David, where it was not so much faith, as an act consequent upon faith, which brought him the promise, namely, a noble wish to serve God by building a house for Him. David had been storing up much gold and silver that he might build a house for God, for he said, "Behold I dwell in a house of cedar but the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord remains under curtains." He was not permitted to build the house, but as a reward for his desire to do this for his God, Nathan was sent and then it was that the Covenant was made with David, in which he rejoiced even when expiring, because it was "ordered in all things and sure."

Then Nathan said to him, "And it shall come to pass, when your days are expired that you must go to be with your fathers, that I will raise up your seed after you, which shall be of your sons. And I will establish his kingdom. He shall build Me an house and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his Father and he shall be My son. And I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before you: but I will settle him in My house and in My kingdom forever: and his throne shall be established forever more."

Now, Brethren, if you and I would obtain the promise, if we would have them spoken home to us with a force as great as if they consisted of novel words for the first time uttered by some seraphic lips, we must resolve to do some great thing for God. And He who expects the Grace-indicted wishes of His children, will in return lead them into some inner chamber of new delights which they had not known before. To quote yet another instance. Joshua was about to invade the land of Canaan, and therefore before his arduous enterprise the Lord gave him a new promise. His faith led him to the brink of Jordan, the borders of the promise land, and then and there he, by faith, obtained a blessed promise, which we will read for our comfort, remembering that venturing in the path of duty upon great enterprises, we may expect like he to win new promises.

"There shall not any man be able to stand before you all the days of your life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with you: I will not fail you, nor forsake you. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shall you divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the Law, which Moses My servant commanded you: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper where ever you go.

"This book of the Law shall not depart out of your mouth. But you shall meditate therein day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then you shall make your way prosperous and then you shall have good success. Have not I commanded you? Be

strong and of good courage. Be not afraid, neither be you dismayed: for the Lord your God is with you where ever you go.”

One more instance may not be amiss. God sometimes gives His people fresh promises by faith just before a trial is about to come upon them. It was so with Elijah. God said to him, “Go to the brook Cherith, behold I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.” This was at the beginning of the famine. There he abode and God fulfilled the promise, for by faith Elijah had obtained it. Acting upon faith, still dependent upon God, he abides at Cherith, and as the result of this faith, God gives him a fresh promise, “Arise, get you to Zarephath: I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain you.”

The faith which received the first promise obtained the honor of a second. So with you and with me. If we have had a little promise, and up till now have realized it. If we have lived upon it, and made it the stay and support of our souls, surely God will give us another and a greater one and so, from promise to promise, speeding our way, we shall find the promises to be rungs of the ladder which Jacob saw—the top whereof shall reach to Heaven. Doubt and be distrustful about the promise that you have, and you cannot expect God to increase His Revelation to your soul.

Be afraid, stagger through unbelief at that which was laid to your heart yesterday and you shall not have a new one tomorrow. Oh, that we had power to act as Samson did, who, having the promise of God that he should smite the Philistines—with the jaw-bone of an ass laid them heaps on heaps, never reckoning the odds, but having God with him in child-like simple faith—he dashed upon his foes and overcame them. We should go from strength to strength, receiving Grace upon Grace if we had faith to mount from promise to promise.

But, I hear someone say, “is there such a thing as receiving promises now? They are in the Bible and we can read them, but can they ever come to us as if they were our own?” Oh, yes, dear Friends, and that is the best way in which God’s people get at the sweetness of them. I believe in God the Holy Spirit. I believe in His immediate operations in the soul of man. This is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit and would therefore be strange if He did not speak in us, now, as much as in the age of types and shadows.

I am not a disciple of the Quakers, although I believe I am a descendant of one of their early martyrs, but in some matters I heartily agree with them, as, for instance, in their testimony to the special and direct monitions, directions, and illuminations of the Holy Spirit. Surely, I know that God the Holy Spirit has dealings with His people today, as much as ever He had with the Prophets of old. There are times when He takes an old text out of the Word and re-writes it upon their souls, so that it is as really a Revelation fresh from Heaven, as though it had never been written in that Book before.

Bilney, that blessed martyr of Jesus Christ, was much wounded in conscience, by reason of the great sin which, through the weakness of the flesh, he had committed, by subscribing to Popish errors. At that time he could get no comfort of soul because of his deep and continual sense of sin. The Spirit of God took this text and made it a balm for all his wounds, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.”

Bilney kept that. Believing it to be as much his own as if it had never been uttered by Paul, he went to the stake and burned right bravely for Christ, in the strength of the promise so opportunely given to him. Beza says that once, when he had been long in great sorrow and deep distress, this text came with power to him—"My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all. And no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand."

Mr. Calamy gives us an instance of a young woman who died triumphantly, being sustained by that well-known word of our Divine Lord, "Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." That man of God, Watts Wilkinson, spoke of that promise, "What I do, you know not now, but you shall know hereafter," as being often a very sweet consolation to him in mysterious dispensations of Providence. It is not for me to speak at any length of what texts have been my own. But there have been turning points in my history in which I have had promises from God which have been *to me* as marked and as distinctly from Heaven as if they had been spoken by seer or Prophet who met me in the way.

Never shall I forget one instance, which accounts for my being here at this very hour. When I had resolved to enter college, walking across Midsummer Common, just outside of Cambridge, revolving in my mind the joys of scholarship and the hope of being something in the world, that text came to my heart, "Seek you great things for yourself? Seek them not." "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you."

All was given up. Everything was renounced, the finest prospects seemed to melt into thin air, merely on the strength of that text, believing that God, even our God, would most certainly fulfill to me His promise if I could keep His precept. Now, if I had told that to another, he might have laughed—but to me it was as solemnly the Word of God as if the heavens had opened and I had seen them written out in lightning flashes, or heard the thunders of God roll through the sky.

I suppose some of you have known the same. One other instance I cannot fail to narrate. When the cholera was here last time, I wended my way from house to house among the sick and dying. I was one day sad at heart and thought surely my own time was come, for I had seen many deaths and had been at many graves. Walking down the Dover Road, I saw in a window, upon a paper fastened to the glass with four wafers, this verse—"Because you have made the Lord, even the Most High, your habitation, there shall no evil befall you, neither shall any plague come near your dwelling."

I stopped, attracted by the paper in the window and read it. And this verse I am certain was as much a Revelation to my own heart, and I as much obtained that promise as though an angel had brought it with swift wings from on high. Your experience, Brother and Sister Christians, will furnish similar instances. We may be sneered at as fanatics by those who do not understand spiritual impressions from the Holy Spirit, but we know, and we speak only of what we have tasted and handled of the good Word of God. There is such a thing as still obtaining the promise afresh

from Heaven—money from the mint of God like new coin all unworn. Faith, and faith, alone, can know the secret of obtaining promises.

Thus I have tried to explain the first meaning of the text.

II. As for the second meaning, it is somewhat more practical. By faith these men obtained not merely the giving of the promise but, **THE FULFILLMENT OF IT.**

Now, I shall want your earnest attention, and I hope also your memories will be at work while I try to give some practical regulations for obtaining the fulfillment of the promise. Some persons, however, who have bad memories may think they will get no good. I remember what an old preacher once did when visited by one of his members who said he feared he gained no good, for his memory was bad. In the opinion of all who saw his holy and heavenly walk, he was one of the most profitable of hearers.

Two dirty glasses were produced, and into one of them the minister poured water and after rinsing a while, he poured it out again and setting it down by the side of the other, he said, "Has not the water had effect even though none remains? So let us hope that you may get good even should your memory retain but very little."

God's promises may be divided into two classes. Some of them are unconditional. They are promises of Divine Grace, and of these, faith does not obtain the fulfillment—God fulfils them according to His own sovereign will and pleasure—according to the purpose of His Grace. I mean promises such as those which relate to the calling of the elect at God's time, their being brought out from death to life. Their quickening, their conviction, and regeneration. Now, man being, before Divine Grace, utterly dead, powerless, and lifeless—it is clear that no faith on his part obtains these promises nor even helps to obtain them. But God, when the predestinated hour is come, says, "it is a time of love," and beholding the infant cast out and in its blood, He says unto it, "Live!"

I ought to add, indeed, that even those promises which might be called conditional, are only conditional in a certain sense. For whereas they are conditional in one passage of Scripture, you find them unconditional in another. They are conditional only in the order of our attainment and enjoyment of them. But in the plan, purpose, and decree of God, they are all based on unconditional oaths and declarations of eternal love. God says, "I will" and "they shall"—and here the promises all rest.

With regard to many of the promises which have some sort of description appended to them, we must by faith answer the description, or we cannot claim the blessing. Most of them have this condition—"For these things will I be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." There are three ways of "obtaining the promise." Many of them only need the outstretched hand to grasp them. You may go with believing faith at once and take the promise, "Ask and you shall receive." There are many of the promises so readily attainable, that if you are in Christ, you may, this morning, see them fulfilled by simply believing them.

Believe them to be true and you shall have what they promise you. Some of God's promises are like checks—you present them at the counter—and the cash is given. You have but to take the promise stamped by God's own hand, signed and sealed, believe it to be God's, and you shall have the mercy now. This is true of a very large number of the promises. Of some others I must give a second direction. You must not simply

believe them but exercise importunate prayer about them. "Knock and it shall be opened."

These promises are not to be had for the mere believing. Of some kind of devils it was said, "This kind goes not out but with prayer and fasting." Of some sort of promises it may be said, "This kind is not fulfilled but by prayer and importunity." You must knock, and if the gate opens not, you must knock again and continue to do so until God shall give you the favor. You are certain to have the blessing if you know how to wrestle with the angel and declare that you will not let him go unless he shall bestow it upon you.

A third kind of these promises are not even to be fulfilled by prayer or by faith alone. You must obtain them by earnest seeking after them. "Seek and you shall find." Where God has appended to the promise a something that is to be done, diligently do it, and you shall obtain the blessing. I hold in my hand a book which is very precious to me. It is my treasure house, next to the Bible the most valuable. Indeed, because it is all Scripture—*Clarke's Scripture Promises*. When I have a trial or trouble, since the promises are here all put under different heads, I can turn at once and find just the promise I want. There are many of these sparkling jewels which cannot be won by prayer, nor be obtained by an act of faith alone.

For instance such as these—"Those things which you have both learned and received and heard and seen in Me, do. And the God of peace shall be with you." Now, that promise requires something to be *done* by the Christian, and then the God of peace shall be with him. "Blessed are they that do His Commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city." If we refuse to obey God's Commandments, our faith will be a dead faith, and our prayers will be presumption. We must obey the Lord's will and then we shall have the blessing. "Whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His Commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."

If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love." "Who is among you that fears the Lord, that obeys the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God." But here, you see, with regard to promises of this kind—and they are very numerous, indeed—the *act* of faith must be matured into the *work* of faith. It is not the bare act of faith that gets some promises, not the utterance of faith in prayer. But with these there must be the *work*, and the *fruit*, and the *patience* of faith, or otherwise the clusters hang too high for our reach.

Those three rules contain the essence of what I have to say. But to guide beginners in the Divine life a little more fully, let us give a few other regulations.

1. Child of God, Babe in Divine Grace, would you like to obtain the promises? Take this advice first—*meditate much upon them*. There are promises which are like grapes in the winepress. If you will tread them, the juice will flow. Many a time a Believer, when he is like Isaac walking in the fields, meditating in the cool of the day upon a promise, unexpectedly meets his Rebekah. The blessing which had tarried long comes on a sudden home. He sought retirement to meditate upon a promise, and lo, "being in the way God met with him." Thinking over the hallowed words will often be the means of fulfilling them.

“I was in the spirit on the Lord’s day,” says John, “and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.” Just so. It was his being in the Spirit, his meditating upon *spiritual* things, that made him ready to behold the King in His beauty and to hear what the Spirit says unto the Churches. Specially, young Christian, meditate much upon those promises which relate personally to Christ. While you are thinking them over, the faith which you are seeking will insensibly come to you. That word which says, “the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleans us from all sin”—think that over, masticate and digest it—and in the very act of meditation, faith will be born in your soul!

Many a man who has thirsted for the promise while he has been considering the Divine Record, has found the favor which it ensured, gently distilling into his soul—and he has rejoiced that ever he was led to lay the promise near his heart. I think it was Martin Luther who said that some passages of Scripture are like trees which bear fruit, but the fruit does not easily drop. You must get hold of the tree, says he, shake it, and shake it again and again! And sometimes you will need to exhaust all your strength—but at the last shakedown drops the luscious fruit. So do you with the promise, shake it to and fro by meditation and the apples of gold will fall. Let the promise, like the problem of the philosopher, be revolved in your soul, and at last your spirit shall leap for very joy while you say, “I have found it, I have found it, the very thing that my soul has sought after!”

2. Secondly, young man in Christ Jesus, do not only meditate upon the promise but *seek in your soul to realize it as being the very word of God*. Say to your soul, “If I were dealing with a man’s promise I should look most carefully at the man who had covenanted with me. If I had a bond or note of hand I should estimate most carefully the credibility, the respectability and solvency of the man whose name was endorsed thereon. So with the promise of God. My eye must not be so much fixed upon the greatness of the *mercy*—that may stagger me—as upon the greatness of the *promises*—that will cheer me.

My Soul, it is God, even your God, God that cannot lie, who speaks to you. This Word of His which you are now considering is as true as His own existence. He is a God unchangeable, and therefore this promise has not been revoked. He has not altered the thing which has gone out of His mouth, nor called back one single consolatory sentence. Nor does He lack any power. It is the God that made the heavens and the earth who has spoken to me and said, “Thus and thus will I do.”

Nor will He, nor can He, fail in wisdom as to the time when He will bestow the favors, for He knows when best to give and when better to withhold. Therefore, seeing that it is the Word of a God so true, so immutable, so powerful, so wise—I will and must, by His Grace, believe the promise. See, my Brethren, you have already arrived at the faith which obtains the promise. I think we ought to be ashamed of ourselves, every one of us, that we dare to doubt God.

Thinking this over the other day a horror of great darkness fell upon my soul, while I mourned that ever I should have been guilty of the infamous blasphemy of doubting God. To doubt an honest man is to cast a slur upon him. But to doubt God, who cannot lie? To doubt God who by an oath has sworn? What? Is this to make God a liar, or even a perjurer? Our soul shrinks back from infamy so cursed. Did ever fiend in Hell commit a

more detestable iniquity than that of doubting the veracity of a God of perfection and truth?

Come, Soul, there is the promise. There it stands before you. You say, "I dare not believe it." But I say, "How dare you doubt it? From where did you get your arrogance? How can you speak so exceedingly proud as thus to think of God and say of Him, that He has promised what He cannot or what He will not perform? Lay much to heart, then, young Christian, the fact that the promise is the very Word of God, and surely you will not find it hard to believe and so to obtain the promise.

3. Then, in the third place, *be sure that you do, in the power of the Spirit of God, what the precept annexed to the promise asks of you.* Follow the example of Moses. Moses knew that there was a promise given to the people of Israel, that they should be the world's blessing. But in order to obtain it, it was necessary that Moses should practice *self-denial*. What did he do? He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, counting it better to suffer the reproach of Christ than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. If the promise commands you to deny yourself, you can not obtain it without doing so. Do it and you have obtained it.

Or, suppose that the promise requires at your hand *courage*. Don't be afraid. David felt he had a promise from God that He would keep him. He knew that in his past experience God had been faithful. "Your servant slew both the lion and the bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them." He advanced to the conflict and the Lord was his Deliverer. Go forth with your sling and your stone, for you will never obtain the promise if you are afraid to face your gigantic foe.

Or does the promise require *obedience* at your hand? Be obedient. Remember how Rahab, the harlot, hung out from her window the scarlet line, because that was the test of her faith. So you do the same. Whatever Christ has said unto you, do it. Neglect no command, however trivial it may seem. What if it is a *non-essential*! What have you to do with that? Do what your Master tells you, asking no questions, for he is an ill servant who questions his Lord's commands. Doubtless, you too, like the Ethiopian eunuch, shall go on your way rejoicing when you have been obedient.

Or is the promise made to those who bear a good report of the land? Remember who Caleb and Joshua were, the only two who obtained the promise out of all the host that came out of Egypt, because they alone, "faithful among the faithless found" honored God and would not dare to distrust Him. So you do the same—honor God. Let a scoffing world hear your unvarying testimony that your God is good and true. Let not your wretched face whisper to men that you have a hard master. Let not your groaning and your murmuring make young men suspect that God is tyrannical to His own children, and that they have no joys, no comforts, no delights.

Be not as the hypocrites are, of a sad countenance—bow not your head like a bulrush—afflict not your soul, for this is not the service which God demands of you. Better the palm branch than the willow. Fairer the wedding garment than the mourner's weeds. He whom we serve is no Egyptian taskmaster, His yoke is easy, His service pleasure, His reward unspeakable. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice."

Be not cast down and troubled, as though the child of God had a cruel parent and a miserable home. Lift up your heads, for your redemption draws near, and to the timbrel and the harp, march on to the promised

inheritance of the people of God. So shall you by joy of heart, not bringing up an evil report of the land, inherit the promise.

4. But, fourthly, another rule. Some of the promises you will not inherit even so, unless you shall *imitate the men who by faith and patience inherit the promise*. Good old Spurstow says some of the promises are like the almond tree, they blossom hastily in the very earliest spring. But says he, there are some that are like the mulberry tree, they are very slow in putting forth their leaves. Then what is a man to do if he has a mulberry tree promise that will not put forth its leaves? Why he is to wait till it does. If the vision tarries, wait for it till it comes—it will not tarry, the appointed time shall surely bring it.

But some men, because God hears not their prayers today, turn like silly children and cannot think that their Father is true. Oh, be men and add to your faith, patience. Wait for His coming as the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, knowing that there is a time for every purpose under Heaven. And while it is always your time to sow, wait till God appoints the time to reap. It is yours now to pray—He shall give you your time to dance when you shall rejoice because the promise has been fulfilled.

5. In the next place, take care if you would get the promise, that you *select one that is suitable to your own case*. Being much troubled in heart upon one occasion, there was one promise which came home to me. It was this—“His soul shall dwell at ease,” and in the strength of that promise my soul learned to dwell at ease in the midst of reviling and misrepresentation and persecutions multiplied. You may find a choice word which will meet your condition, that will just suit you. Have you had five troubles, six, and seven? What do you say to this—“He shall deliver you in six troubles, yes, in seven there shall no evil touch you.”

Have you two troubles at once, both of them enough to overwhelm you? You have it here, “When you go through the fires you shall not be burned.” That is one trouble warded off. “When you go through rivers they shall not overflow you.” Here is another trouble subdued. There are two at once, fire and water—one to burn and the other to drown. “I will be with you,” says He, and that word meets both. Is it sickness—“I will make all your bed in your sickness.” Is it failure in business, crops, harvest and the like? “At destruction and famine you shall laugh.”

Or is it death? “Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” Get hold of that promise which is suitable to your case. You ask, is there one? Why, do you need a *list* of blessings? You have them here in the catalogue of promises—promises of peace, honor, success, plenty. Promises of preservation from trouble, support under it, deliverance out of it.

Promises in sickness, child-bearing, old age, famine, want, war, slander, reproach. Promises to the stranger, the exile, the poor, the helpless, the fatherless, the widow, the prisoner, the captive, the dying. Promises of justification, pardon of sin, adoption, union and communion with the Church, access to God. Promises of wisdom, knowledge, Divine teaching—promises beyond mention! Promises of every Grace and of every blessing—we cannot pause to mention them all. The fiery sword at the gate of the garden turned every way to keep men out of Paradise. Oh, blessed be God,

this sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, turns every way to keep our enemies from breaking our peace!

There are very few medicines which will heal all things. In fact, none. But we may say there is a promise in the Scripture for every disease—no matter what it may be—there is one meant expressly for that case. And if there should be a person who is the only man in the world who ever had a certain trouble, still he will find a promise exactly to fit his case—for this Inspired Book is an universal medicine. Here, O sick souls, are all kinds of remedies, and it is not possible that human need should be wider than the Divine supply.

Still, Brethren, get the one promise that suits you and that one will be more useful to you than all the rest. Ahab had a great garden. He put Naboth's into it. He had large vineyards, and corn fields, and orchards, and subject-kings and tributaries. But Ahab suffered famine. There was a poor woman, she had nothing, only a little cruse, that was all. No fields, no orchards, no granaries. That one little cruse, however, was inexhaustible, and she lacked nothing. Ah, blessed be God! There are times with the child of God when everything else is gone—he has only one little cruse—one promise left, but that an inexhaustible one!

And he and his house shall live upon it—he shall go in the strength of it all the days that the famine shall last. It is not having *many* promises. It is appropriating *one*, and pleading it before God, that shall make us mighty.

6. Again, young Believer, would you obtain the promise? Then *be careful that you are thankful for promises you have already obtained*. We must thank God for the mercies we have, or else we shall not have others. In the early days when the Puritans settled in New England they were always having fast days. They had a fast day because their bread was getting short. Another fast day because the Indians invaded them. Another fast day because a ship had not arrived that they expected. And they had so many fast days that they began to get exceedingly weak.

At length, one very wise Brother said, "Don't you think it would be as well, now and then, to vary the thing and to have a feast day occasionally? Would it not be quite as acceptable to God if instead of mourning over mercies we want, we were to thank Him for mercies enjoyed?" So they instituted what is called the Thanksgiving Day, which became a perpetual ordinance afterwards—the thanksgiving for mercies received.

Brethren, there is reason and wisdom in such a course. How dare you go and ask for anything else till you have been thankful for what you have? What do you do with poor people who depend upon you? You gave the man some relief yesterday and he walked away with an ungrateful face, shrugging shoulders, as much as to say, "That's all?" Sometimes when you have given charity to a very greedy person, have you not seen him stand and look at it? What has been your rule when he comes next time?

You have sent him away empty and very properly is he punished. But how is it the Lord does not treat you the same? You ask Him for a mercy and you get it. And then you either look at it as though it were not worth having, or else you enjoy it for a time, and then forget you have ever had it—and never think of thanking Him. And then you knock at His door again and expect that He will wait upon your lusts when you will not wait upon His Throne with thanksgiving. Oh, let us be thankful for the bless-

ings we have, and *then* we shall attain Divine Grace to win the promise we have not.

There is a young man up there who had a little light yesterday. He had been in the darkness before. Thank God for the first gleam, young man, and you shall have the full daylight soon. There is a young woman there who has been bowed down with a great weight of sin, but her conscience is somewhat at peace. She hopes she has a little faith in the Lord. Oh, bless God for that little faith, and you shall find it grows. But if you will not thank Him, it may be for many a day you shall walk in darkness and see no light till you shall come to value God's mercies at their proper rate.

7. And lastly, not to keep you longer, if you would have your faith stirred up, look at the examples of all who in olden times and in our own time, by faith, have obtained the promise. Sinner, look at the many now in Heaven who had no more to trust to than you have—the naked promise of God. God says to them as He does to you, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” They trusted Christ and they are saved. Do you the same and you shall find Him true—

***“I ask them from where their victory came,
They with united breath,
Ascribe their conquests to the Lamb,
Their triumph to His death.”***

And you saints of God! Look to your noble ancestors. What a pedigree is yours! Through what a host of martyrs, confessors, Prophets and Apostles has our blood descended! And all these bear their testimony that not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord God has promised. Among them all there is no exception. Not one of them will impugn the veracity of God. They tried Him on the rack, in the gloomy dungeon, and at the stake. They tried Him in the Roman amphitheatre, when their bones were cracking between the jaws of lions. They tried Him in Nero's garden, when the pitch smeared on them was flaming up—an awful sacrifice to God.

They tried Him when then they lay in moldy dungeons rotting, or burning with fever. They tried Him in the tracks of the wild goats, when they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, tormented. They tried Him in the bitterness of life and in the agonies of death, and they all say to you—“Trust in the Lord. Believe in Him, so shall He bring it to pass and you shall attain the promise.

Falter not, hesitate not—waver not—but with the unstaggering faith of Abraham, say, “He that has promised is able also to perform,” and you shall see it with your eyes and you shall eat thereof. You shall have His Presence and blessing in this world and in the world to come, life everlasting. God help us so to do for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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THE BEST STRENGTHENING MEDICINE

NO. 2209

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JUNE 21, 1891,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Out of weakness were made strong.”
Hebrews 11:34.

THOSE who out of weakness were made strong are written among the heroes of faith and are, by no means, the least of them. Believers “quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong.” Who shall tell which of the three grand deeds of faith is the greatest? Many of us may never have to brave the fiery stake, nor to bow our necks upon the block, to die as Paul did, but if we have Divine Grace enough to be out of weakness, made strong, we shall not be left out of the roll of the nobles of faith—and God’s name shall not fail to be glorified in our persons.

Brothers and Sisters, as Believers in the Lord Jesus, *we are called to two things*, namely, to do and to suffer for His name’s sake. Certain saints are summoned to active marching duty and others are ordered to keep watch on the walls. There are warriors on the field of conflict and sentries in the box of patience.

Both in doing and in suffering, if we are earnest and observant, *we soon discover our own weakness*. “Weakness” is all we possess. “Weakness” meets us everywhere. If we have to work for the Lord, we are soon compelled to cry, “Who is sufficient for these things?” And if we are called to suffer for Him, our weakness, in the case of most of us, is even greater—many who can labor without weariness cannot suffer without impatience. Men are seldom equally skilled in the use of the two hands of doing and bearing. Patience is a Grace which is rarer and harder to come at than activity and zeal. It is one of the choicest fruits of the Spirit and is seldom found on newly-planted trees. The fact soon comes home to us that we are weak where we most of all desire to be strong.

Our longing is to be able both to do and to suffer for our Lord—and to do this, *we must have strength from above—and that strength can only come to us through faith*. I have read you this glorious 11th of Hebrews which describes the mighty men of faith, the men of renown. They accomplished all their feats by a power which was not in them by nature. They were not naturally strong either to do or to suffer. If they *had* been, they would not have required faith in God! But being men of like passions with ourselves, they needed to trust in the Lord and they did so. They were quite as weak as the weakest of us, but by their faith they laid hold on

heavenly strength until they could do all things. There was nothing in the range of possibility, or, I might say, nothing within the lines of *impossibility*, which they could not have performed! They achieved everything that was necessary in the form of service and they bore up gloriously under the most fearful pressure of suffering, simply and only by faith in God, who became their Helper.

You and I may be very weak at this time, *but we can be made strong out of just such weakness*. We need not wish to have any strength of our own, for by faith we can reach to any degree of power in the Lord! We can have all imaginable strength for the grandest achievements desirable, if we have faith in God. Upon this simple but most practical matter I am going to speak to you at this time. We all wish to be strong. Medicines, lotions, foods, baths and all sorts of inventions are advertised as means of increasing strength. We are all, in heavenly things, so weak that the idea of being made strong should be very attractive to us.

Let us learn, then, how others “out of weakness were made strong.” And let us follow on to enjoy their privilege by copying their conduct. Let me ask you to note, first, *faith makes men strong for holy doing*. And, secondly, *faith makes men strong for patient suffering*. We shall go over the ground which I marked out in my introduction.

I. To begin with—**FAITH MAKES MEN STRONG FOR HOLY DOING**. Here, indeed, all our strength must come to us by faith in the thrice-holy God.

The first duty of a Christian man is *to obey God*. Obedience is hard work to proud flesh and blood. Indeed, these ingrained rebels will never obey through our own efforts. By nature we love our own will and way and it goes against the grain for us to bring ourselves into such complete subjection as the Law of the Lord requires. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” Who among us has done this? Who among us *can* do this unless a power outside of himself shall come to his aid? Only faith takes hold of the Divine strength and only by that strength can we obey! Hence faith is the essential point of holiness. Ah, my dear Friend, if you start on the voyage of life, by Divine Grace, with the resolve that you will follow the track marked down on the chart by the Lord, your God, you will find that you have chosen a course to which the Lord’s hands, alone, can keep you true!

The current does not run that way. Before long you will find that the wind is dead against you and the course to be followed is hard to keep. What will you do, then, if you have not faith? When duty is contrary to your temperament, what will you do without faith? When it involves loss of money, or ease, or honor—what will you do, then, if you have no faith? If you believe that God is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, you will persevere, but no other way. Suppose the right course should expose you to ridicule, cause you to be spoken of as a fanatic, or mocked at as a hypocrite, or despised as a fool—what can you do without faith? If you trust the living God, you will do the right thing and bear the loss or the shame. But if your faith fails you, self-love will create such respect for

your own good name, such fear of ridicule, such unwillingness to be singular, that you will slide from your integrity and choose a smooth and pleasing road.

Though you may think it a very ordinary thing to obey God in all things, you will find that a man had need to set his face like a flint in order to keep the right road—and the only way in which he will be able to hold on his way will be by having faith in God! Let him say, “God commands and, therefore, I must do it,” and he will be strong! Let him feel, “God commands and, therefore, He will bear me through,” and he will be strong! Let him say, “God commands and He will recompense me,” and he will be strong! We are not saved *by* obedience, for obedience is the *result* of salvation! We are saved by faith, because faith leads us to obey! Faith is weakness clinging to strength and becoming strong through so doing. Faith in God made the cripple at the Temple gate stand, walk, leap and praise God—and even so does faith make our sin-crippled manhood obey the will of the Lord with exultation.

Taking another view, we would remark that faith makes us strong to *fulfill the relationships of life*. We are not alone by ourselves and we can neither live nor die apart, for God has linked us with others. We either curse or bless those around us. If we have faith in God, we shall bless our children, as Isaac and Jacob blessed their sons. Faith leaves a legacy of benediction to its heirs. If you have faith in God, you may bless your brothers while you live, as Joseph did—faith has housed many a family which otherwise had starved. If you have faith in God, you can lead others out of the bondage of sin and through the wilderness world, as Moses led the children of Israel, for faith is a great guide. But you can do nothing aright for others without faith in God for yourself and them.

Do I address a wife who has a godless husband? Have faith in God about him! Do not try to deal with your husband otherwise than by faith in God. If you attempt his conversion apart from heavenly power, you might as well try to take leviathan with a hook! Dear Father, have you children who are unruly, irreligious, defiant? Do the young men refuse to be advised? Are your girls light and trifling? Go to God in prayer and faith! He that knows the care of a household knows how easily a parent can do serious mischief with his children by his very efforts to do them good. One parent is too indulgent, another is too severe. Take the children to God, take them to God, I pray you! It is *here* that your strength lies. Strength to do right at the head of a household must come by Divine gift—and that gift will only be placed in the open hands of faith! If we believe for our whole house, the promise will be fulfilled to us and to our house, for it is made to faith. May faith enable us, each one, like David, to bless our household!

Do I speak to a young apprentice here who fears God and who lives in an ungodly family? Do you feel bewildered as to how to behave yourself? Orders are given you which cause you great searching of heart. You have to question in your inmost soul whether you can conscientiously do as your employer requires. I beseech you, have faith in God that He will di-

rect you and also have faith to follow that direction when you receive it! It is a very perilous spot, that beginning of life, when the youth first leaves the home of piety and finds himself where the fear of God is not in the place. If, as a decided Believer, he takes his stand—and if he is firm and steadfast for his God—he will make a man and his later years will be bright and useful. But if he begins to give way a little and if he tries to trim his sail to the wind, he will never attain to a holy character!

We read of the children of Ephraim that, being armed, and carrying bows, they turned back in the day of battle and, therefore, they were never to be relied on in the time of war. He who is not firm at starting is cutting out for himself a poor pattern of life. That which begins with shamefacedness, equivocation, hesitation and compromise will ripen into apostasy. Such a wretched faith has no influence on the man's self and it will have no influence upon others! Father, mother, husband, wife, sister, brother, servant, master—whatever your relation, I beseech you, if you feel weak in the discharge of your duty, exercise faith in God about it—and out of weakness you shall be made strong!

There is a high and blessed duty and privilege—I will call it both—which is to every Christian the necessity of his life, and that is *to pray*. Can you pray, my Brother? If you know how to pray, you can move Heaven and earth! Can you pray, my Brother? Then you can set almighty forces in operation! You can suffer no need, for everlasting supplies await the hands of prayer—"Ask, and it shall be given you." You cannot miss your way, for you shall be guided in answer to prayer. You shall hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk you in it." "O Sir," you say, "I cannot pray prevailingly." Then you are not like Jacob, good at wrestling. You cannot take hold upon the angel and win the victory. Do you feel in prayer as if the sinew of your strength were shrunk and your knee out of joint? Well, then, let me bring the text before you. Out of this weakness in prayer you can only be made strong *by faith*. Believe in God and you will prevail with God. Believe in His promise and plead it. Believe in His Spirit and pray by His help. Believe in Jesus, who makes intercession, for through *Him* you may come boldly to the Throne of Grace!

Faith alone can repair feeble knees. "According to your faith be it unto you." To pray without faith is formality—no, it is vanity! To be weak in prayer is a disease which will bring on many other maladies. Seek faith to become Masters of the Art of Prayer. I would rather be Master of the Art of Prayer than M.A. of both universities! He who knows how to pray has his hands on a leverage which moves the universe. But there is no praying without believing. If you believe not, you may be heard—it is more than I can promise you. But if you believe, *you shall* be heard, for God refuses no believing prayer! To refuse to keep His own promise when it is pleaded would be to falsify His Word and change His Character—and neither of these things can ever be!

Have you strong confidence—"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things?" Jesus said, "If you, then, being evil, know how to give good

gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" Believe in prayer and you will pray believingly! Some do not think that there is much in prayer. Poor souls! May the Lord teach them better! O my Brothers and Sisters, believe up to the hilt in prayer and you will find it to be the most remunerative work on earth! He that trades with God in prayer enters upon a business whereof the merchandise is better than silver or gold! Prayer makes us "rich towards God," and this is the best of riches—but it must be *believing* prayer. "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." Have you a poor, faint heart in this sacred exercise? Be assured that only by faith, out of this weakness, can you be made strong.

It may be that certain of my hearers feel that they cannot attain to the matters I have mentioned, for they are as yet battling to reach the position of servants and pleaders. Faith is the great force which is needed by those whose principal work is to *overcome sin*. When God began with many of us, He found us very low down beneath the flood of evil. It may be that an awful temper broke over us in surging waves. We have to rise superior to it. Possibly He found us plunged in the great deeps of an evil habit. Was it drunkenness? Was it gambling? What was it? It had to be left beneath—we were called to rise out of it. Some are permitted to sink a long way down in sin—and when God begins with them, they have a desperate ascent even to reach common morality—what must the conflict be before they attain to spirituality and holiness? It is hard for those to rise to the surface who have been plunged in the deeps. If a man has been sunk down in black waters full of filth, a thousand fathoms deep, and if he has been long imprisoned in dark caves where no light has come, what a wondrous power would that be which should raise him to the sunlight!

The Spirit of God comes to many when they are in much the same condition. And what a work it is to bring them up from the horrible midnight and to give strength to rise out of the inky waters! I have seen many a soul wearying to ascend—receiving a little light and a little more light and a little more light—but yet far from being clear of the dark waters of iniquity! Dear Struggler, you will never overcome sin except by faith in Jesus Christ. Trust Him! Trust in the precious blood—that is the great sin-killer! Trust His pierced hands to pierce the hands of your lusts. Trust His wounded side to cut through the heart of your evil desires. Your hope lies there—where Jesus died, where Jesus rose again, where Jesus has gone into Glory. You may resolve to overcome a sin and, perhaps, any one sin you may conquer for a time. But sin itself, as a force, in all its armies, is never to be overcome, save through the blood of the Lamb! You will never be able to cut down this huge upas tree except with the axe of Christ's atoning Sacrifice. Take that and every blow will tell, but no other instrument will avail! God strengthening you, you shall, out of weakness, be made strong to overcome sin, though it is backed by the world, the flesh and the devil. Entrenched in your nature, though your sins may be, you will drive out these Canaanites and free your heart from their dominion!

I have often met with persons awakened by Divine Grace to see the evil of a certain act and they have said, "I do not know how I shall ever break off the habit." Yet they have very easily escaped from it. I remember one who was very foul-mouthed and habitually used oaths. I hardly think that, for years, he had spoken without ill language and yet, from the moment he turned unto the Lord, he never used an oath—and he also noted that he never had a temptation to do so! I remark that the particular form of sin known as blasphemy is one of the first to die and to be buried out of sight. Other sins die hard, but this is shot through the head by true repentance and faith in Jesus! Some sins cling to a man like the fabled tunic of Hercules which could not be torn away, but burned into his flesh and bones whatever he might do. How long a well-beloved habit lingers at the door after the heart has given it a bill of divorce! As a dog, which is chased away from the house, returns again and again to its former master, so does an evil lust return even to the soul that loathes it. How weak we are in this matter! How slow to cut off right hands and pluck out right eyes! But yet it must be done and only faith can do it—by calling in the aid of the Almighty One. Trust in Christ to overcome, by His Spirit, that which He has put away by His death. In Him we shall find succor—and by faith out of weakness we shall be made strong!

I change the run of my discourse altogether by remarking that there is another thing that falls to the lot of Christian men, a matter of the very first importance, namely, *to spread the Gospel*. "Yes," says one, "I acknowledge that it is an urgent service to make known to others what the Lord has done for me, but, somehow, I cannot discharge my conscience by fully doing as I would. I tried the other day to say a good word and I am afraid that I made a failure of it. I stammered a good deal and I said little that I thought to say—and some things I said seemed to weaken what I did say. I resolved, the other day, that I would see a man whom I had known, and tell him that I was a changed character. But when I reached his house, I drifted into other talk and went the way in which *he led me*. I could not come to the point."

Many would make a similar confession if they made a clean breast of it. Many of the truest children of God are, at first, possessed by a dumb spirit and it needs the Lord Jesus to cast it out. But do you not think that we are too apt to attempt to spread the Gospel in *our own strength*—and need we wonder if we break down? If we were by faith to begin, humbly waiting upon the Lord for words, and taking hold upon Divine strength, might we not accomplish far more than we now do? I have heard of one brought to Christ who was a very great sinner—of so stiff a neck that he never would be approached by anybody who aimed at his conversion. He hated the very mention of religion! He answered all appeals very coarsely. But one of his neighbors felt forced to go to him very early in the morning and to say to him, "I beg your pardon for intruding so early, but I lay awake all last night thinking about you; and I cannot rest till I tell you something."

He answered, "What were you thinking about *me* for? I don't need any of your thoughts." "Oh," said the other, "I felt so sorry to think that, if you were to die, you would die without hope, that I was obliged to come to you." The bearish man grumbled, "Mind your own business." "But," said the other, "it is my business. I think my heart will break unless I see you saved." All the answer was, "Go away with you. Don't come here with your cant!" The Brother went home weeping, but he was not the only one who felt his heart breaking. The bearish one went away from his forge and said to his wife, "I can always answer these religious fellows. I do not care for your parsons a bit. but that neighbor of ours has been in here and he says he shall break his heart unless I am converted—and *that beats me.*" He was beaten. Out of a sort of kindly pity for his neighbor's weak-mindedness, with a mixture of an unacknowledged feeling on his own account, he went to hear the preaching of the Word of God and was brought to Jesus!

"But," says one, "I know if I were to try to speak to any of *my* neighbors, I should break down." Friend, I am not careful in that matter, nor need you be. If you are in real earnest, you might possibly do more by a breakdown than by anything else. Only break the ice and begin—and you shall find my text to be true in your case, also, and out of weakness you, too, shall be made strong! God does not need *your* strength—He has more than enough power of His own! He asks for your *weakness*—He has none of that, Himself, and He is longing, therefore, to take your weakness and use it as the instrument in His own mighty hands! Will you not yield your weakness to Him and receive His strength?

Permit me to speak to some aspiring spirit here, and say—Dear Friend, would you like to do *something great for God*? Have you heard the motto of our early missionaries—"Attempt great things for God"? Does that thought burn within your heart? Do you long to be of some use? "Oh, yes," says one, "I would attempt great things for God, but I am terribly weak." Make the attempt by faith in God, for it is written, "Out of weakness were made strong." If you feel incapable, throw yourself upon the infinite capacity of God! So long as you are willing to be used. So long as God has given you an anxiety and travail of spirit for the souls of others, you need not fear, but may, with faith, get to work in all your feebleness, for as your day your strength shall be! Has not the Lord said, "My Grace is sufficient for you: for My strength is made perfect in weakness"? And is not that Word of God true?

I would make one more application of my text, which is capable of being used in a thousand directions. "Out of weakness were made strong." This will be experienced *in bearing witness for the Truth of God*. Suppose that you are called to testify for the Truth of God in the midst of those who doubt, disbelieve, or even deride it? You look to those who agree with you and they are lukewarm. You turn to old associates and they do not share your concern. Friends tell you that you are making much ado about nothing, or that you are uncharitable, narrow-minded and bigoted. I need not repeat the accusations—they have been so often hurled at myself that I

know them by heart! They say, "The man was born too late! He is behind the age! He fights for a worn-out creed! He is out of place in a world of progress!" What then? Is there anything galling to you in all this? Indeed there is, unless faith is strong—and then the bullets turn to pellets and the stones are soft as sponges!

When they talk to you like that, do not begin bristling up and declaring that, after all, you are as wise and as strong as your opponents, though that may readily be the case, but accept all their remarks upon your folly and weakness and say to yourself, "Out of weakness were made strong." Hold to God's Word by faith and you will be strong! God will vindicate His own cause, but it may be His way to let error prevail for a while. Bide your time when the cause is an eternal one, for you can afford to do so. If we had been in Egypt at the time when Pharaoh started out to follow the Israelites to the Red Sea. If we had been clothed with all power, we would have stopped Pharaoh's chariots and horses before they left Egypt—and thus we should have nipped his enterprise in the bud. We would have taken off the chariot wheels at once, so that they could not follow after the children of Israel. That is what *we* would have done, but Jehovah did something better! He allowed the Egyptians to pursue, overtake and threaten to divide the spoil—and He allowed them in their pride to go down after Israel into the depths of the sea!

Then, and not before, He overthrew them, so that Israel sang, "The horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea." This was a grand thing for the tribes in their later journeys through the wilderness. The timid Israelites would always have been afraid that Pharaoh would follow them and capture them, but when the forces of Egypt and all her chosen captains were drowned beneath the waves, all fear of them was gone forever! The victory was complete. Meanwhile, the tremendous blow made their future antagonists in Canaan to tremble. In the conflict with evil, *we* would overcome it early and put it to the rout at the first attack. But it may be that God will allow error to proceed further and let it seem to triumph, so that by its own presumption it may place itself where it may be the more effectually crushed, never again to afflict the Church.

It is for us, in our weakness, to go forward as the Lord leads us—and the day of the resounding timbrels and the twinkling feet will come in due time—and Jehovah will be magnified when even humble maidens "sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously." Be steadfast, unmovable! Never mind the craft, policy and number of the foe! God's time is best! He knows better than we do when to strike for victory. Out of weakness we shall be made strong if we fully rely upon the faith "once for all delivered to the saints."

I would entreat you, each one, to make an application of the text to yourself in every work of faith and labor of love in which you may be engaged.

II. Now, Beloved Friends, suffer me a few words upon the other cheering fact, namely, that FAITH MAKES MEN STRONG FOR PATIENT SUF-

FERING. The patience of hope is a very important part of Christian life and faith is the essence of it.

Many are called to suffer much in *daily life*. Ah me, what a world of misery there is in this great city, among even good and gracious people! A man might study London till he turned his brain. The poverty and the suffering of even godly people in London would be a subject too harrowing for those of you who have specially tender hearts. Let us not forget those members of Christ's mystical body that are in the fire—"His feet are like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." Few, if any, are without sorrow, and many saints have a double portion of grief in their pilgrimage. Sitting here with your Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you look very cheerful, but I may be addressing those whose life is one protracted struggle for existence. Assuredly, you will not hold out without true faith—and much of it! You must endure, "as seeing Him who is invisible." You must joy in God, or you will not joy at all. Earthly comforts are not yours, but if you grasp the spiritual and the eternal, you will not repine.

If in this life you only had hope, you would be, of all men, most miserable. But having that hope, you are among men most happy. The solitary place shall be glad for you and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. Commend me to firm faith for power to bear the daily cross! He that believes has everlasting life and the joys which come of it. Trust in your God, in His love to you, in His care of you and then you shall be as the lilies, which toil not, and spin not, and yet are clothed—or as the ravens which have no store and yet are fed. Behold, by faith, the Heaven prepared for you and know for sure that you will soon be there among the angels! And you will defy cold, hunger, nakedness, shame and everything else. Your faith, out of weakness, shall make you strong.

Certain saintly ones are called to bear *great physical pain* and I commend to them, from practical experience, the power of faith in God under acute agony. This is the sweetest support in the presence of a threatened operation. How grim those surgeon's lancets seem! Ah me, I knew a patient once—I still know her—who, when the lancets had been used upon her, caused the doctor's case of instruments to be filled up with roses! God alone can help you to fill up with roses that grim memory of danger and suffering! Oh, how sweet to feel that if God has sent diseases to your house, He has made them a chariot in which benedictions have been brought to you! Go not to *wine* for comfort in the hour of depression! Above all things, dread the intoxicating cup in all its forms! You need not even appeal to friends for consolation. What do they know about your inward sorrow? There are seas of suffering which the sufferer must navigate alone. No other sail is within sight. Scan the horizon and nothing is to be seen but wave after wave. Now is the hour for faith in the great Lord who holds even lonely seas in the hollow of His hands. He knows your poor body and He permits it to be frail and permits your heart to be trembling because He will glorify Himself in His tenderness to your weakness, wherein He will make you strong! JEHOVAH-ROPHI is His name—"The

Lord That Heals You.” Give yourself up to Him and you shall yet sing of His loving kindness and tender mercies!

But there are other forms of suffering than these of daily life and of bodily pain. Possibly I speak to some who are suffering the evils of *persecution*. No cruel tyrant can burn Believers now, nor even cast them into prison, for Christ’s sake, but there are enough ways for the seed of the serpent to show its enmity to the seed of the woman. “Trials of cruel mockings” are still common. There are many ways in which the devil’s whip can reach the back of the child of God. Persecution is still abundant and many a man’s foes are of his own household. I will rehearse no stories of Christian women with jeering husbands, nor of godly youths who endure scoffing and far worse, but many a house is still a place of martyrdom. Gracious Sufferers, may the Lord keep you from anger and unkindness! By faith, alone, can you bear persecution and turn it to account for the good of others.

Do not attempt to escape by yielding what is right and true, but ask the Lord to help you to stand fast for Him. If it is true that the Lord still has His martyrs, let it be seen that they are as brave as ever. Not now do they gather in the great amphitheater, where sits the emperor in state, with all the proud citizens of Rome in the nearer gallery, tier on tier, and the multitude up yonder gazing with their cruel eyes into the vast arena below. Not now do I see them lift up the great iron door and let loose the monsters that come forth roaring, hungry for their prey. Not now do I see, standing in the middle, a man and his wife and children, all unarmed. Not now do I hear the shouts of the mob, as they exult that Christians are given to the lions. This is all over. Christ, in His suffering members, has conquered Caesar and pagan Rome, for out of weakness Believers were made strong.

A softer spirit has come over the human mind, but there is as much enmity against God as ever, and now it finds a less public arena and a meaner mode of torture. Today the tried one suffers alone and misses the encouragement of Christian eyes. At times he has to feel that it were better for him to fight with beasts at Ephesus than to bear the taunts, threats and slanders of ungodly kinsfolk. My Sister, my Brother, have faith in God in your hidden sorrow! Cry to Him in the secret of your soul and you will bear your load, yes, you will bear it calmly, and you will win those who hate you! Of your secret martyrdom, angels will be spectators and Christ will suffer in you—therefore, fear not. Out of weakness you shall be made strong by faith.

We have among us those who are not exposed to persecution, but have to stand against *assaults of unbelief*. That which Believers in past ages have accepted as the Truth of God is not believed in many places, nowadays, and so it comes to pass that one brings to us a bit of skeptical science which he has picked up from Huxley or Tyndall. Another comes with a criticism that he has found in some of the modern divines who are the devil’s instruments for spreading infidelity. And a third appears with a vile blasphemy from one of the coarser assailants of religion—and each one

demands an immediate answer to his quibble, or his difficulty. Do they really expect that we are to answer, on the spur of the moment, every objection that they are pleased to raise? I confess that I do not believe that one human brain is capable of answering every objection that another human brain could raise against the most obvious truth in the world. Do not try to answer quibblers, but if you do, mind that *faith* is your weapon! If you take the wooden sword of your own reasoning, you may easily be beaten. Believe for yourself, because God has said it, and speak as the Lord guides you. Fix it in your mind, “This is God’s Book. This is His Infallible Revelation and I believe it against every argument that can possibly be urged against it. Let God be true, but every man a liar.” This will be sure defensive ground, but if you get off that rock, you will soon find yourself sinking or staggering! For an *offensive* weapon, take “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God”—and if this does not serve your turn, nothing will. Have a thorough, entire and childlike faith in the Revelation of the Most High and you will be made strong in those mental conflicts for which, in yourself, you are so weak.

Again, it may be that I am speaking to sad ones who suffer under *mental depression*. Some of us are, by constitution, inclined to that condition. I have sometimes envied those good people who are never excited with joy and, consequently, seldom or never despond. “Along the cool, sequestered vale of life they hold the even tenor of their way.” Happy people! At the same time, when I rise, as upon eagle’s wings in joyous rapture, I feel right glad to be capable of the blissful excitement! Yet if you soar to the skies, you are very apt to drop below sea level. He that can fly, can faint. Elijah, after he had slain the prophets of Baal, was found fleeing into the wilderness from the face of Jezebel. If you are so constituted that you rise and fall. If you are a creature that can be excited and that can be depressed and, worse still, if you happen to have been born on a foggy day and to have swallowed so much of that fog that you have found it shading your spirit many a time since, then you can only be strong by *faith*!

If you are one of those plants which seldom bloom with bunches of bright flowers, but have your blossoms hidden and concealed, be not disquieted. If you are never mirthful and seldom able to call yourself joyful—the only cure for depression is faith! Settle this in your heart—“Whether I am up or down, the Lord Jesus Christ is the same. Whether I sing, or whether I sigh, the promise is true and the Promiser is faithful. Whether I stand on Tabor’s summit, or am hidden in the vale of Baca, the Covenant stands fast and everlasting love abides.” Be assured, beyond all questioning, that he that believes in the Lord Jesus is not condemned! Believe in Him, though you see no flashes of delight nor sparkles of joy. We are safe because we are in the City of Refuge—not because we are, in ourselves, ill or well. If you will stand firm in Christ Jesus, even in your weakness you will be made strong!

It may be that certain of you are called to suffer in your minds, not because of any wrong thing in yourselves, but *for the sake of others*. Some years ago I preached a sermon to you from the text, “My God, My God,

why have You forsaken Me?” and in a mournful degree I felt what I preached, as my own cry. I felt an agony of spirit, for I was under an awful sense of being forsaken of God. And yet I could not understand why I was surrounded by such thick darkness. I wished to clear myself if any sin remained upon me, but I could not discover any evil which I was tolerating. When I went back into the vestry, I learned the secret of my personal distress, for there was an elderly man, in a horror of great darkness, who said to me, “I have never before met with any person who has been where I am. I trust there is hope for me.” I bade him sit down and I talked with him. I saw him afterwards and I hope I guided him from the verge of insanity into the open, healthy place of peace through believing in my Master.

I fear I should never have touched his case if I had not been in the miry clay myself. Then I understood why I must feel like one forsaken. The Lord was leading me where I would be taught to know my man and should be made willing to sit side by side with him in the dark prison house and lend him a hand to escape. Since then, in presenting myself to my Lord for service, I have said to Him, “Make me useful to the doubting and the feeble-minded. I do not bargain for comfort, peace and joy, if I can be more helpful to Your poor, weary children without them. Place me where I can best answer Your purpose by being made to sympathize with Your troubled people. I only want to bring them to Heaven, to the praise of the Glory of Your Grace. And as for me, let me rejoice or suffer, as best suits their case.” For this a man must have faith in God and he must be sure that his trials, endured through his office, will have great recompense of reward. If you are chosen to be a leader and a helper, or a mother in Israel, be satisfied to endure hardness with the full belief that it is all right and that God will not only bring you through, but will also bless *somebody else* by the means of your tribulations.

My time is ended, although I had much more to say. I can only pray the Lord to give you Divine Grace to believe in Him. If I should never again have the pleasure of speaking for my Lord upon the face of this earth, I should like to deliver, as my last confession of faith, this testimony—that nothing but faith can save this 19th Century—nothing but faith can save old England. Nothing but faith can save the present unbelieving church. Nothing but firm faith in the grand old Doctrines of Grace and in the ever-living and unchanging God can bring back to the Church a full tide of prosperity and make her to be the deliverer of the nations for Christ. Nothing but faith in the Lord Jesus can save you or me. The Lord give you, my Brothers and Sisters, to believe to the utmost degree, for His name’s sake! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Hebrews 11.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—531, 533, 682.**

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GOD'S CURE FOR MAN'S WEAKNESS

NO. 697

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 24, 1866,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Out of weakness were made strong.”
Hebrews 11:34.***

SOME kinds of weakness are of God's appointment and necessarily incident to manhood. They are not sinful, and therefore we may continue to be subject to them without regret. In reference to such weaknesses it may be that after beseeching the Lord even thrice to remove them it may be for our good that they should remain. Then will our gracious God give us, in place of removing the weakness, this reply, “My grace shall be sufficient for you.” This is a case of in weakness being made strong, and there are many of God's saints who daily experience so blessed a privilege. They are weak, and continue weak. They have infirmities which they once wished to have removed but which now they are content to bear, for now they are of the same mind with the Apostle—they glory in their infirmity because when they are weak they are strong.

But, dear Friends, there is another kind of weakness which *is* sinful—a weakness which springs not from nature but from *fallen* nature—not from God's appointment, but from our sinfulness. And out of this we should desire to be delivered. We cannot pray for strength in sinful weakness, but must earnestly plead for strength to come out of it and to be made strong. This seems to me to be the particular blessing which faith is said to have obtained in the text, “out of weakness were made strong.” It is the inestimable privilege of many a Christian to be strong in weakness when the weakness is only one of infirmity, but it is an equally precious gift to be made strong out of weakness when that weakness is of a sinful kind.

Looking round the Church at large, with as impartial an eye as we can summon, we are afraid that for the most part it is nowadays comparable to a huge infirmary rather than a camp filled with brave soldiers. Both ministers and private members of the Church are very generally weak in one way or other. They are living, but they are sickly. They are working for God, but they are working in a feeble, inefficient manner. If I look upon the camps of the Lord's enemies, whether Puseyite or Broad Church, I see intelligence and vigor so apparent that I am apt to think that never was error more earnest, more active, more intense than just now!

There is a reality about the efforts of our opponents which may well alarm us—and when I look to the camp of the Lord Jesus Christ I lament a predominant lukewarmness, a want of enthusiasm and deficiency in force, which, if it does not betoken a departure from God in *heart*, cer-

tainly indicates very great feebleness in the vital parts—producing comparative weakness in all the parts.

I desire this morning to speak to those who are weak—weak where they ought not to be—and who feel a growing tendency to rest content in that weakness. I would stir up those who are beginning to imagine that weakness is the normal and proper state of a Christian—that to be unbelieving, desponding, nervous, timid, cowardly, inactive, heartless, is at worst a very excusable thing. I want, if God wills, to show to the sinfully weak ones that their condition is not proper at all. I want to show that it is a work of faith to lift us out of it—not to help us in our evil weakness—but to deliver us *out* of it and to make us strong, reversing our present condition by enabling us to be mighty in the work of God.

Since the text teaches that faith is the grand cure for spiritual feebleness, I shall, first, cite a few cases of cure. In the second place I shall analyze the remedy. In the third place I shall endeavor to administer it, and in the fourth place I shall say a word of praise to the Physician who prescribes it.

I. At the outset we have said that faith is the cure for spiritual weakness, and I have to MENTION CASES OF CURE. I shall not now cite cases from the Old Testament of bodily cures which have been worked by faith, though I might mention Hezekiah, who, being sick unto death, was, by faith in God's promise, restored to life and his period of existence lengthened fifteen years.

In the Apostolic times it was through faith that many sicknesses were made to fly before the healing touch of the Apostles. That power of healing has probably become extinct, or is lying dormant in the Church—yet there are still indications that faith has some power in that direction. I cannot but think that when honest John Wickliffe, raising himself up in the bed of sickness, said to the monks who surrounded him, expecting him to die and tempting him to recant, "I shall not die, but live to declare the wicked deeds of the monks"—I cannot but think that his *faith* had much to do with his cure.

Had he been a man of a timorous, wavering frame of mind, his sickbed might have been his deathbed—but the vital forces were all thrown into energetic action by the mental energy of his faith and the crisis was safely passed. I do not know how far faith may still operate upon the bodily frame, for there is certainly an intimate connection between the soul and the body. Those wondrous cases recorded in the life of Dorothea Trudel of Zurich indicate the singular power of faith to assist in the cure of the body by its calming influence on the mind.

That admirable woman, who has but just departed this life, became the founder of a hospital in which cures were worked mainly by the means of prayer and faith—cures which have been substantiated in the best possible manner, namely, by her enemies having dragged her before the law courts of Zurich for practicing medicine without a diploma, when she

proved that the only medicine used was directing the mind to Christ and proclaiming the Gospel, by which a holy calm spread over the mind and the body derived manifest benefit.

Such cases, and others which we have noticed, go to show that if we had more faith in the living God it might sometimes be possible for the soul to so overmaster the body that out of weakness we might still, in Hezekiah's fashion, be made strong. These hints are not, however, to the point, and relate rather to a *theory* than to the revealed Truth of God. That faith strengthens Christian men has been proved often in the history of the Church of God. The Church's weakness springs mainly and mostly from a want of faith in her God and in the Revelation which God has entrusted to her.

When men believe intensely they act vigorously. And when their principles penetrate their very souls and become precious to them as life itself, then no suffering is too severe, no undertaking is too laborious, and no conflict too heroic. They will enter upon impossibilities—laugh at them and overcome them—when once they know of a surety that the principles which move them are most certainly from God. This seems to me to be the great work which Luther did in his day under God, the Holy Spirit's power. He brought back the Church to the strength of *faith*, and then her whole force returned.

The man knew but very little of the Truth of God. Upon the doctrine of justification by faith he was clear as the sun at noonday, but he was half a Romanist in most other respects. But this one all-important thing he did for the Church—he made her believe in God and in God's Truth with a vigorous decision which had almost ceased from among men. Though he knew not all the weapons of the Divine armory, yet the one he *did* know he wielded with such bravery of faith and such tremendous dogmatism that his resolute soul shamed others into steadfastness!

See the man as he goes into Worms, defying a host of devils, though they were as many as the tiles on the roofs of the houses! See him standing up in the Diet of Worms and alleging that he could not retract, so help him God! See him in his earlier days, nailing up his theses upon the church doors as sailors nail their colors to the mast—or rending the Pope's bull in pieces and casting it into the fire! As men resolved on conquest break down the bridges behind them and render retreat impossible, it was the man's faith in God that helped him to do great exploits, and the Church learned from him to believe that "God everywhere has sway, and all things serve His might."

When the Church once more believed firmly, her spirit returned to her and like a giant refreshed with new wine, she recommenced her race. In the modern revival under Whitfield and Wesley the restoration of faith was the source of restored strength. Those Brethren, differing in doctrine as they did, had this point in common, namely, that they were intense believers in the indwelling power and Presence of the Holy Spirit in the

Church. Men had been disputing and trying to prove or disprove everything. Sermons were frequent upon such topics as whether there was a God or not.

Now you never find Whitfield or Wesley wasting time over such matters! They were so full of God's Spirit, and could see Him so clearly everywhere at work, that they felt no need of proving it. While men were discussing as to whether the Scriptures were inspired and divines were writing books upon the evidences, these men preached the Gospel and infidelity fled before them! An age destitute of spiritual life generally amuses itself by trying to prove what is not worth proving, or wasting its energy upon external things to the neglect of the inward—an age *spiritually* alive takes itself to the Lord's work and treats all doubt as folly and sin.

The followers of Whitfield and Wesley, instead of proving with diffidence and apologizing for the Gospel with half-heartedness, came forth with, "Thus and thus said the Lord." They mounted their pulpits as mo! They proclaimed the Truth of God and men owned its power till from one end of the land to the other the dry bones arose to life and stood as an exceeding great army.

Brethren, our Churches must come back to the old faith and to a firm belief in it! If you do not believe the articles of your faith, reject them and do not be sham believers. If the doctrines which you profess are indeed, true, grip them, hold them fast, get them engraved upon your souls and burnt into your consciences. Have faith in God and the Truth—that the Truth of God cannot be destroyed nor God defeated. Vitality and power in your faith will soon send force and life into all the other parts of your spiritual manhood!

What has been proved upon the largest scale has been true in all other instances. For instance, the weakness of depraved human nature always gives way before the energy of that faith which the Spirit works in us. The sinner, aroused in his weakness, sighs dolefully—

***"I would but cannot sing,
I would but cannot pray.
I would but cannot
Break the bonds of sin.
I would but cannot melt my heart
And soften it in penitence."***

When the sinner is pointed to the Cross and comes to trust himself with Jesus—viewing the blood sprinkled and the righteousness worked out—then the man *can* pray, *can* sing, *can* melt in penitence or can rise up in flames of love!

The inability of human nature is instrumentally removed by the energy of faith. It was through believing that you became strong. If you had continued to live by work, or by feeling you would have been still as weak as ever—but when you looked out of self to Christ and trusted Him it was *then* your strength came to you! The same is true of subsequent spiritual weakness. Christians who are alive unto God and are endowed with some

Divine strength, are attacked at times with a spiritual, universal decline. Just as we sometimes see a strong and healthy person growing pale and wan, losing appetite and falling into sickness until he becomes a mere skeleton because a general sapping and undermining of the constitution has come upon him, so have I seen it with Christians.

They do not lose life, but they do lose all their energy and become as listless and lifeless as some of you probably now are in body through the heat of the air. Then they can scarcely walk, much less run, and mounting with wings as eagles is quite out of the question. Such persons will bear witness that the only way of recruiting their strength is by *faith*. They must come again to the first principles and trust their souls anew with Jesus—believing over again with a novelty of energy the old doctrines of the Gospel! They must go to God as to a real God in believing prayer and then they will not long remain weak.

Out of weakness faith is sure to make us strong, and the change effected in us is equal to that which we see in a man who, having been long confined to his couch, at last returns to his labor showing no tokens whatever of disease. I have still been dealing with the great principle of the text on a large scale—we will now particularize a little more. Take a few forms of *weakness*. Many Believers who are vigorous in many respects are troubled with a hesitancy in their *testimony*—they cannot speak up for Jesus. Whenever they try to say a good word—nervousness, or something akin to it—restrains them. They say with Moses, “Lord, I am slow of speech.” They hesitate, or are still.

There is no cure for hesitancy in the confession of Christ equal to faith! Observe Moses. He is so hesitating that God gives him Aaron to be his spokesman! But read through the history and Moses is the better orator of the two. Aaron has a golden mouth, but by degrees the confidence that Moses feels in his commission enables him to rebuke Aaron. And when Aaron goes up to Mount Hor to sleep in the arms of God, Moses stands up and in that last sermon he delivered, and that Psalm he sung before the assembled multitude you cannot detect the slightest trace of slowness of speech! The man overcome his weakness by *faith*—a holy faith gave him a holy *courage*—and the tongue once bound became unloosed. I should advise some of you to try it. A strong dose of the essential oil of believing taken every morning and evening would enable you to tell sinners all around what a dear Savior you have found.

Another common weakness among Christians is timidity. Modesty is beautiful but it may degenerate to cowardice. It is well to be humble—it is never well to be weakly fearful. Some are always afraid. They dare not try this and dare not try that. And if they happen to be placed in office where they can influence others by their counsels, they are shockingly bad officers because they are always keeping the Church back from victory from a fear of defeat. What is a sure cure for timidity? Faith—belief in the Truth of God, in the right, in God, in invisible energy—in helps which we cannot

see and aids which we should not have dreamed of. This shakes off timidity.

Take as a specimen Barak. Barak is slow to go up against the enemies of God till Deborah, the mother of Israel, says she will go with him. Women sometimes lend superior courage to men, and the weaker sex proves itself the stronger. Look at Barak! After he has once believed in the power of God he marches to the fight and wins the victory! And he is commemorated in soul-stirring words by the poetess, "Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake, utter a song; arise, Barak, and lead your captivity captive, you son of Abinoam." Mighty to conquer was the man who was timid to fight! When faith gave him courage it made him triumph. Carry a vial of strong faith along with you and a good draught thereof will drive off fainting fits. This is the true strong water, the genuine elixir, the famous cordial, the heavenly aqua vitae.

A frequent form of weakness is despondency which is so common in English Churches as to be as much a national disorder as consumption. It is not so common among you as it was, but still more so than I could wish. We are not so joyful and frivolous as our Galician neighbors, and we are not quite so go-ahead as our trans-Atlantic friends. I am afraid as Englishmen we have a natural tendency to become despondent. I know I feel it myself, and in the circle where I move it is not at all uncommon. Brethren, despondency is not a virtue! I believe it is a vice—I am heartily ashamed of myself for falling into it—and I am sure there is no remedy for it like a holy faith in God!

Asaph, of old, was very subject to this weakness and he said to himself, "Why are you cast down, O my Soul, why are you disquieted within me?" But what was the medicine he took? "Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance." That was the remedy and David prescribes it too, when he says, "Trust in Him at all times, you people. Pour out your hearts before Him." Despondency hamstring a man. It makes him weak in the arena of conflict when he ought to be like a well-trained athlete struggling with his foe and contending for the mastery. Christian, beseech your Lord to increase your faith in Him, your trust in the unseen, your reliance upon His promise and fidelity—for when you get more faith you will rise superior to that weakness—and out of the weakness you will be made strong!

Impatience, too—impatient murmuring—is another form of Christian weakness in which we must not expect to be made strong in Divine Grace, but must plead for Grace to get out of it. It strikes me that Job may naturally have been an impatient man. He utters many very tart and snappish things to his friends—not one whit more sharp than they deserved—but he held fast to his integrity as if he had been a very Pharisee at first. But notice how strong he was and how clear of his weakness, when by Divine Grace, he could say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him!"

There was the medicine, you see—*trusting* in God. Job, full of faith, sitting on a dunghill, is a far more splendid sight than the Great Mogul upon his throne. I do not believe Heaven and earth ever saw a more majestic spectacle than the Patriarch on the dunghill covered with boils, scraping himself with a potsherd and yet saying, “Shall I receive good from the hands of the Lord, and not receive evil?” Princes, potentates and kings—your power never reached to this! And even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed so gloriously as poor Job!

Brothers and Sisters, if we had more faith in God that He makes all things work together for good to them that love Him, we should not grow so impatient! We should bear the pain, the cross and the loss with greater equanimity—feeling—“My Father sent it. My Father overrules it. Good will come of it.” Perhaps you are weary of this list of weaknesses, but I must add one more, namely, weakness in overcoming besetting sins. I hope we are not among those who make light of sin.

A genuine Christian dreads sin. He will not say, “Is it not a little one?” for he knows that a little sin is like a small dose of a very potent poison. He knows it is sufficient to destroy our peace and comfort. There are some sins which really seem as if we could not get the mastery over them. I will name one—a passionate disposition. A person who is of quick temper may get into the condition of thinking, “Well, I was born so and cannot help it. I always shall be of a quick temper.” You always will be if you think that, but it strikes me that the Grace of God must have power to overcome evil tempers, and that your hope will be in believing that yours can be overcome and in struggling to mortify this among the other affections of the flesh.

I know, personally, men who were once very passionate but are now gentle. They were once likely to take fire as readily as tinder to a spark, but now they would stand fire right well. And if I had to select patient men, I would select those very men who were notorious for their fearful tempers in years gone by. “Well,” my dear Friend, you will say, “I cannot do it, Sir.” No, I know you cannot. But there is One who can. The eternal God who is your helper can surely help to make you a reasonable being and rid you of this madness—for anger is temporary insanity. Surely God can make you morally sane and bring you back to a calm state of mind—only believe in His power and seek to be wholly sanctified by His Grace—spirit, soul and body—and you will see that as He cast a legion of devils out of a man in days gone by He can now cast this devil out of you so that you will not be pestered with it any longer.

You may have to watch it as a householder watches a thief, but you will get it out of doors and keep it at arm's length. Oh for Divine Grace to get our temper under foot and keep it there, that though it may have a tendency to rise we may keep it down! Anyway, whatever may be our besetting sin—and we all have something against which we ought to strive—there have been cases in which such weaknesses have been cured by

faith. We have not time to stop to mention any modern instances but we know many. I trust some of us could cite our own history as an instance of what faith in God can do. "Out of weakness they were made strong."

II. We will turn to our second head and ANALYZE THE MEDICINE. The subject is so very wide that I must confine myself to one instance and shall speak of the medicine as it would be mixed and compounded for a man struggling at very dreadful odds against a gigantic system of evil. He is very weak but through faith he becomes strong. One of the first ingredients of faith's medicine is a sense of right. Everybody admits that when a man is sure that right is on his side he finds strength in that belief.

Even if two men are going to court with one another, the one who knows that his case is founded upon justice enters the court with much more strength of mind than he who is conscious of several flaws in his suit and only trusts to the blessed uncertainty of the law. There is truth in the old saying that "a good conscience is the best armor." It is not of very great use in a real battle for, unfortunately, bullets have no respect for saint or sinner—when in the way they are pretty sure to kill anybody who stops them—but a good conscience is of the utmost value in the battle of principle.

A man who cannot argue, yet knows he is right will somehow or other stand his ground. He says, "my opponent has more wit than I have. He understands logic better than I, but I know I am right." And to know you are right necessarily gives you strength. Faith is a belief in the rightness of that which God reveals, a trusting in its truth. And who does not understand that a man who believes, therefore, becomes strong?

A second ingredient is heavenly authority. Everybody knows that a man who is naturally weak will often act very bravely when he has authority to back him. Let the Christian combatant feel—as feel he will when he has faith—that he is armed with Divine authority and you will not wonder if from a dwarf he rises to a giant! "This," he says, "is not my quarrel. I believe it to be God's war—the Truth of God which I maintain at such hazards is no dogma of my own invention—it is God's own offspring. God has sent me to fight for it—God puts the words into my mouth."

A man, thus conscious that he has a mission from Heaven, cannot be afraid! He must be mighty! And when a man feels, in addition to that, that God's decree appoints him to accomplish a certain end. That God's promise declares that he shall succeed. And that from the eternal nature of truth it cannot sustain defeat—then surely he stands like a rock in the midst of the billows and he cannot waver! He casts all thought of fear to the winds.

Mixed with this is a consciousness of heavenly companionship which makes the Believer courageous. Many a man who would have been afraid to go to battle alone has marched along very cheerily because of the many thousands who are hurrying to the same battle. The Christian feels that he has the companionship of his God and Savior. Jesus' name is "Em-

manuel, God with us." The best of all is God is with us. If we suffer, Jesus suffers in one of His members. If we are slandered and reproached for Jesus' sake, it is the Cross of Christ which we are carrying, and Jesus bears it with us. We hear the more than angel whisper, "Fear not, I am with you."

Come then, let us sing as we march onward—

***"If on my face for Your dear name,
Shame and reproach shall be,
I'll hail reproach and welcome shame,
If You remember me."***

In addition to all this faith has an expectation of supernatural help. Faith hears the wheels of Providence working on her behalf. Mohammed, in his earlier career, though his faith was but mere fanaticism, yet gave great courage to his men by the daring things which he said and did. As he threw the handful of dust into the air he believed that his foes were blinded, and his soldiers won an easy victory. He declared that he heard the noise of angels' horses as they came to the fight and no sooner had he thus spoken than every man grew brave.

Now the Christian, not in imagination, but in spiritual *fact*, can hear the wings of angels flying to the rescue of Divine Truth. Here I see today the hand of a man, but I see also with it the wing of an angel! God works for His people. The evil He hinders and restricts. The good He speeds and multiplies. Therefore, strong in invisible succors, we must not wonder that out of weakness the Believer is made strong!

I must not omit one powerful ingredient in faith's life-draught—it is the prospect of ultimate reward. Faith bows her head in the day of battle when the poisoned arrows fly like hail. She whispers to herself, "I may fall, but I shall rise again." And she vows, by the eternal God, that when she rises it shall be with the same banner in her hand for which she fought. She knows that in the end she cannot, must not, fall—that she shall conquer! When a man fears defeat he will probably bring it upon himself, for his fear ensures it. But when a man does not know how to be defeated, the little petty disasters of the way all contribute to his ultimate victory.

So, Christians, you who are warring for God and His Truth, I hope you will not despair because of the gloomy aspect of the present age. It may appear as if infidelity and Puseyism together would eat out the very heart of God's Church, but courage, my Brethren, courage! These foes will eat up one another one of these days, or there shall rise a man out of their own ranks who will be their downfall. We may yet live to thank God for the apparent retrograde movements of today, for upon this the Lord may ride to a brighter ultimate triumph! Faith is strong because she is sure of victory! Faith takes to herself this thought—that in the victory she shall share her reward.

What will men not do for a crown? Even for an ivy crown the Grecian athlete would strain every nerve. Now they did it for a corruptible crown—but we for an incorruptible! Faith makes the crown of eternal life glitter

before the Believer's eyes. It waves before him the palm branch. Sense pictures the grave, loss, suffering, defeat, death, forgetfulness—but faith points to the resurrection, the pompous appearance of the Son of Man, the calling of the saints from every corner of the earth, the clothing of them all in their triumphant array and the entrance of the blood-washed conquerors into the Presence of God with eternal joy! Thus faith makes us, out of weakness, to become strong.

Let me remind you that the essential ingredients of faith's comfort are just these—faith sees the invisible and beholds the substance of that which is afar off. Faith believes in God—a present, powerful God full of love and wisdom effecting His decrees—accomplishing His purposes, fulfilling His promises, glorifying His Son. Faith believes in the blood of Jesus, in the effectual redemption on the bloody tree. It believes in the power of the Holy Spirit, His might to soften the stone and to put life into the very ribs of death! Faith grasps the reality of this Book—she does not look upon it as a sepulcher with a stone laid on it—but as temple in which Christ reigns, as an ivory palace out of which He comes riding in His chariot, conquering and to conquer.

Faith does not believe the Gospel to be a worn-out scroll, to be rolled up and put away. She believes that the Gospel, instead of being in its dotage, is in its youth! She anticipates for it a manhood of mighty struggles, and a grand maturity of blessedness and triumph. Faith does not shirk the fight—she longs for it because she foresees the victory. I would compare faith to an emperor of whom we have read that he summoned his counselors and generally judged as to whether he should go to war by their opinion. But he did it in the following manner—if they warned him that it would be a very fearful war, if they said that the enemy's cities would never be taken, that the armies on the other side were too numerous to be conquered, and the provinces too extensive to be held—he would reply, "We will do it then, for if there is anything which you gentlemen think to be easy, it is beneath the dignity of the emperor and the troops whom he commands. But if you reckon it impossible *there* is a clear field for honor!"

Was it not a man fit to be a soldier of such a prince, who when told that the Persian arrows were so numerous that they would obscure the light of the sun, replied, "We shall fight splendidly in the shade." Surely he was akin to Alexander, who, when they said that the Persians were as the sands on the seashore, replied, "One butcher is not afraid of a whole flock of sheep." So let it be with us! Let us feel that we are men of another mold than to be afraid. Let us feel that believing in God we do not know how to spell "coward." And as to fear of defeat or fear of man—we give that up for the craven dogs who slink at their master's heels, and wear their master's collar, and eat the garbage which his bounty throws to them.

We care not for the things that are seen! We have learned to live upon angels' diets and to eat the bread which comes down from Heaven. Our motto is, "Courage! Courage!" And our belief is that the day shall come—

***“When the might with the right
And the right with the might
Forever more shall be.
And come what may
To stand in the way,
That day the world shall see.”***

III. The third point is to ADMINISTER THIS MEDICINE, but no time remains, and besides I cannot do it. You must go to Him who compounded it, namely, the blessed Spirit of the living God, and take with you this prayer, “Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.” And this other one, “Lord, increase our faith.” But I will give you a few hints. Some of you are going through a present personal difficulty—you are embarrassed in money matters, or a child is sick, or the wife is dying, or some other Providential trial is vexing you—you are saying, “I cannot bear it!”

I will not pray with you that you may be comforted in that sinful weakness but I will, and do beseech you to ask for faith in that Father's hand which wields the rod that you may get out of the weakness, and may now be made strong to suffer with holy patience what your loving Father's wisdom appoints for you. Others have a spiritual duty before you, but you are shirking it because of its difficulty. You do not like to “go through the ordeal”—that is what you call it. You are disobediently timid.

Now, I shall not ask God to comfort you in that weakness—you know your Master's will, and you do it not—may you be beaten with many stripes and may the stripes be blessed to you. I will ask that, knowing your duty, you may rise out of that weakness by believing that God will help you to obey, and so out of weakness you may be made strong. Some of you are called, where you live, to contend earnestly for God and for His Truth. You have many adversaries and your weakness makes you withhold your testimony. You have been trimming a good deal—you have been worshipping that modern Diana called Charity—which is the devil in the form of an angel of light—instead of bringing out all the Truth of God, you have given up the corners of it.

I shall not ask that you may have any comfort in such weakness. May you be ashamed of having been ashamed of Christ and of His Cross! But I do plead with God for you that believing the very sweepings of His Truth to be precious, and the very cuttings of the diamond of the Gospel to be worth fighting for, you may escape from your weakness and be made strong in life and death to declare God's truth boldly.

Some of you are always doubting your Father's love, the faithfulness of Christ and your own interest in Him. I will not comfort you in such a state. I will not pray God to comfort you while you are in it, but I do ask you to pray that you flee from such weakness. Do not doubt your God till you have cause to doubt Him. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, if you will never distrust the Lord Jesus till He gives you an occasion for distrust and till there is something in His Character which should rationally excite your

suspicion, you will never disbelieve again! I pray you seek more faith and you will rise out of your fears.

You who are afraid of dying—and there are some such here—shall I ask that you may be made strong while in that weakness? No. I dare not! Jesus Christ did not come to give you comfort while you are under the fear of death. He came to deliver those who, through fear of death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage. The plea shall be, therefore, that you may have such faith in God and such a view of the Canaan on the other side of the flood that you may look forward with delight, or at least with resignation, to the time when you shall pass the river and be forever with the Lord! The text says out of weakness, Brothers and Sisters, and oh, may God grant that some of you who have been lying spiritually on a sickbed may through this sermon be made to take up your bed and walk! May all weakness be left behind even as the child leaves the little garments of the nursery behind him when he becomes a man.

IV. My last work was to PRAISE THE PHYSICIAN, and who is this? Who is it that has taught us to believe? It is our Father who is in Heaven who has taught us and bids us trust Him—blessed be His name! Join with me—you need not sing with those *lips*—let your *heart* sing as you say, “Blessed be our heavenly Father who has given us precious faith in Him. Source of all goodness, foundation of all confidence, we adore You for teaching us the sweet art of trusting You!”

Let us also, with equal thankfulness, bless the Lord Jesus, for we had never been capable of faith in the invisible God if there had not been a Mediator by whom we might come to Him. Blessed be those wounds and those agonies, and that death which is the door of our faith in the Father's love! Blessed, moreover, be that mysterious Person, the Holy Spirit, for faith is His gift and if it is to be increased in us, He must increase it. “O blessed Spirit, be You forever praised for putting such a jewel as faith into our poor hearts! And blessed be Your power for keeping it there, for Satan would long ago have stolen it! And blessed be Your energy which shall keep it till I am beyond the reach of the foe.”

Brothers and Sisters, do not let what I have said this morning merely pass your ears. I am persuaded that though I have not put it as I could wish there is a great deal of practical value in the truth which I have stated. You must be strong. This is not an age in which weak Christianity will do. It is strong energetic religion that we need now, and you cannot obtain it except by gaining strong faith and much of it. Plead for it, and then, when you shall have obtained it, the world shall feel your power, God shall be glorified, and Christ's name shall be lifted high.

You who have no faith at all may learn something here. It is only by faith that the impotence and inability of human nature is overcome so that the soul receives Christ unto salvation. May the Holy Spirit work that faith in you to your eternal salvation, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

“THEY WERE TEMPTED”

NO. 1528

DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 14, 1880,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“*They were tempted.*”
Hebrews 11:37.

LAST Lord’s-Day I tried to draw the fair portrait of a believing man [Sermon #1526, *The Fair Portrait of a Saint*] putting his feet into God’s steps and keeping God’s way even unto the end. This morning we shall show in what circumstances such men were produced. We shall discover that they were not nursed upon the lap of ease, but were born and reared and perfected amid storms of opposition. We shall again see “the lily among thorns.” The gracious characters of which we read in Scripture were not created by favorable circumstances—they owed nothing to their position or age—their character was formed from *within*. Their faith was not produced by the tenderness of Providence—they were not put into a conservatory like fair flowers which cannot endure the frost—we might rather say that they were helped to their robustness by the rough winter blasts which swept over them.

They were warriors of peace—pilgrims who traveled armed to the teeth making no holiday march, but contending with giants and dragons. Whoever else may find life a sport, the saints have found it to be real and earnest. Their path has been no mere parade, but grim and grisly dangers have beset them—“they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were slain with the sword.” One form of the opposition which they encountered is the subject of this morning’s meditation—“They were tempted.” Do not forget that the leading principle of a godly man is *faith* and, according to this chapter, faith is the force by which brave deeds are done and great sufferings are endured.

All the world appears to be in arms against the man of faith. Ishmael, the child of human strength, mocks Isaac who is born by the power of faith according to promise. Yet faith is able to bear all attacks and to flourish under them, even as the Israelites in Egypt multiplied the more as their oppressions were increased. The sufferings of Believers, which are mentioned by Paul, are varied and exceedingly intense. And this is one of them—“they were tempted.” The speedy weapon of stone, or sword, or saw gratified the malice which sought their death, but *tempting* them satisfied a subtle hate which stabbed at their character and their faith.

In temptation there is for the soul all the deadliness which the slaughter weapon brings to the body. It is blessed to observe that the faithful also survived this danger. A torrent roared against them and they stemmed it with resolute confidence. They did not drift with the current, nor drown in its floods. Dealing with this one form of opposition, “they were tempted,” I shall be able to say a great many more practical things

than if I were preaching upon, “they were stoned,” or, “they were sawn asunder,” for those things happen but now and then. But this record that, “they were tempted,” is repeated in us *all* and, especially in you who have lately set out on the heavenly pilgrimage. You have got far enough to discover that you are not to be allowed to go to Heaven if Satan can prevent it, nor suffered to remain a Christian if by any means the men of this world can cast you down.

You are being tempted. May the practical words I shall be able to speak be applied with power by the Holy Spirit to your comfort and help.

I. First I will call attention to THE UNIVERSAL TRUTH OF THE STATEMENT now before us. It is *not* true that all the saints were scourged, nor all imprisoned. Neither were all stoned, nor all slain with the sword. But it *is* true of the whole cloud of witnesses that they were all tempted. The word, “tempted,” bears two meanings. First of all, that of being tried or afflicted and, secondly, that of being persuaded or enticed to sin. In the first aspect of it God did tempt Abraham, that is, He *tried* him and this He does with all His people. God had one Son without sin, but He never had a son without trial!

“What son is there whom the Father chastened not?” “Of which you are all partakers,” says Paul, when he speaks of chastening. “For whom the Lord loves, He corrects, even as a father the son in whom he delights.” His own elect are made to feel His refining fires, for He declares of each one “I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction.” All the sheep of Christ bear His private mark—He sets the cross of affliction upon them all. “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” “In the world you shall have tribulation.” Before you shall find me a man who has never known trouble I think you will have ridden many a horse lame and searched far and wide for, “man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.” And I will guarantee that the wonderful untried person is as much a stranger to God as he is to affliction!

Within the sacred enclosure of the elect of God you shall not be able to discover one whom the Lord has not, in some way or at some time afflicted in love. Count it not, therefore, a strange thing, my dear Brothers and Sisters, that you should have a cross to carry! Do not begin to kick against the pricks as though some unusual suffering were laid upon you when the Lord touches you with the goad of sorrow. You are one among many and among the many there are worthy ones who bear heavier loads than yours! Envy none, but feel a brotherhood with all the faithful, for they, too, “were tempted.” As for the other sense of the word, “tempt”—the bad and hard one. In that sense, also, the statement is universally true. All the people of God have been tempted to sin. Satan no sooner perceives a child of God renewed in heart and cleansed from defilement than he endeavors, if he can, to mar the work of the Holy Spirit; to ruin the happiness of the Believer and to weaken his usefulness by leading him into sin.

The Prince of the power of the air, though he cannot be everywhere himself, manages with his host of underlings to be so nearly omnipresent that he tempts us all in turns and some of us very fiercely. Woe unto the man who is beset by the arch enemy, himself, if he is not abiding in fel-

lowship with the Lord Jesus! If the Lord is away from the Believer it will go hard with him when Apollyon, himself, meets him in deadly duel. The fiend is stronger and craftier than we are and unless the Lord covers our head in the day of battle we shall find his fiery darts too terrible. This, however, is some comfort, that every Believer now with God has crossed swords with the devil—He has not suffered one to pass unmolested—“they were tempted.”

Nor is it only Satan who tempts the saints. The world is always tempting God’s people and there is no position in life which is free from peril. A man sick of the fever dreams that if he can be placed in another bed he shall feel better—it is but a dream. He turns and tosses to and fro upon his pillow, but as Watts well says—

***“It is a poor relief we gain
To shift the place but keep the pain.”***

In this mortal life we may change our position, but we shall never get away from temptation. Temptations are with kings upon their thrones and with peasants at the plow—they come of plenty and they come of poverty—they are born of success and they are born of defeat. Whether our path is rough or smooth, we are liable to be tripped up unless an unseen hand shall hold us up. This is true of all who have gone before us—“they were tempted.”

At times Providence permits those who are in authority to exercise great power of temptation. So it was with the saints of old—those who were in power accounted them as sheep for the slaughter. The rulers of the synagogues and then the magistrates, rulers and emperors set themselves against God and against His Christ and those who held the reins of government were determined that they would put down the reign of Christ and utterly destroy His people. Princes and potentates became the willing servitors of Satan, threatening and bribing those who had espoused the faith. So far as open, legalized persecution by the State is concerned, we are happily free from it—but of those who in the martyr days bore high the banner of the Cross it may be said with emphasis—“they were tempted.”

But, Brothers and Sisters, if there were no devil and if there were no wicked world it would still be true that the saints are tempted, for every man is tempted when he is “drawn away by his own lusts” and there is that within the best of men which might make them into the worst of men if the Grace of God did not prevent it! O child of God, you are, on one side, fair as an angel and the Grace of God gleams upon you and makes you bright as your transfigured Master! And yet on the other side of you, you are black as a devil and if the Grace of God were taken from you, you would as much dishonor the name and Cross of Christ as did the false apostate who took the thirty pieces of silver! Every good man is two men—he finds one fighting against the other—the old man, according to its corruptions and lusts, daily warring with the new-born man within him which cannot sin because it is born of God.

Now it is true, not only of you and me, but it has been true of all the people of God, that they have had inward conflicts and spiritual contests

within themselves of the most painful kind. The saints were tempted. They were persuaded to sin by Satan, by the world and by the propensities of their nature. And of all the blood-redeemed host it must be said, “they were tempted.” Ought not this fact restrain every man from a self-indulgent despair? Do you know what I mean? I mean this—a man says, “Well, I cannot help it! I am in such a place of temptation that if I give way I may well be excused.” Not so, Sir! “They were tempted” and yet they did not fall, but held fast their integrity! They who today are waving the palm of victory were tempted even as you are and it is idle for you to say that victory is impossible seeing they have proved the reverse!

Using the same weapons and helped by the same Spirit, your temptations, which are the same as theirs, will be overcome by you even as theirs were vanquished by them! Get up and fight like men! Dream no longer of impossibilities which might excuse you—what has been done by one, by the help of God, can be done by another! This leaves us without any excuse for yielding to temptation. I know we commonly think that if we can prove that we are tempted there is not much blame attached to us but it is not so! It is most true that those who tempt others are guilty of the greater sin, but the sin of those who are tempted and *yield* to the temptation is great enough—great enough to crush them into eternal destruction unless they repent of it! Other people have been tempted as you have been and yet they have resisted the temptation and have remained in obedience to God and, therefore, if you yield to the evil influence you are without excuse.

The multitude of holy men and women who are now before the Throne of God are all witnesses against you, for they show what can be done and what can be done in you, too, the Grace of God being with you. This fact that all the saints have been tempted should put an end to all murmuring upon that score. Somebody says, “Mine is a hard lot! I have to follow Christ under great disadvantages. My foes are those of my own household.” Yes, your lot may be difficult, but if you could just peep within the pearly gates and see that brilliant company who are the peers of the realm of Heaven, you would see none but those who once were tempted!

Do you dare demand a better lot than theirs? Remember your Master was tempted and shall the disciple wish to be above his Master, or the servant above his Lord? Is there to be some easy bye-road to Heaven made for you, turned from end to end and rolled every morning?—

***“Must you be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease
While others fought to win the prize
And sailed through bloody seas?”***

You must not expect it! You must fight if you would reign! You must carry the cross as others carried it if you are like they, to wear the crown! The temptations which were endured by saints in all ages must forever prevent our complaining if hooks are baited for us and snares laid for our destruction!

One sweet thought arises here. Since the best of saints were tempted, this prevents our conceiving that to be tempted is, in itself, a sin. I have known feeble-minded Christians bemoan themselves and cry, “If I were

not exceedingly sinful I should not have these hideous thoughts and dreadful suggestions! If my heart were not full of evil, I should not have these blasphemous ideas forced into my poor, unwilling brain.” Beloved, it is not so! If your heart were wholly the devil’s, he might not care to worry you and, indeed, you would not be worried, but would *love* sin! It is because you are *not* his, because you are desperately struggling towards holiness and virtue that, therefore, he tempts you. It is no sin to be tempted—the sin is in yielding to temptation!

Your Lord was tempted and yet in Him was no sin. Thrice did Satan assail our Lord—three evil courses did he plausibly suggest, but he found nothing in Him to work upon! There was no tinder for his sparks to light. Be, therefore, greatly comforted, by God’s Grace, you who find evil thoughts rushing through your minds like a torrent. You try to fight against these temptations and yet they return again and again till your heart is well-near broken with them—do not, therefore, condemn yourself for them so long as you abhor them. You are not a castaway because you are tempted, for all the saints in Gory were tempted, too. Yes, I think, dear Friends, if any of us here present meet with great trials in life and with very strong temptations to turn back to the world—if God gives us Grace to keep towards the New Jerusalem we may even glory in these trials!

We ought to pray, “Lead us not into temptation,” for temptation is not to be sought for but to be looked upon as an evil, seeing that flesh is frail. But when it assumes the form of *persecution* and our Lord helps us to endure it, steadfast in the faith, we may even rejoice and leap for joy! If your name is slandered, or you become a loser in wage, or in estate, or in comfort for Christ’s sake, you may greatly rejoice—for now you have *fellowship* with Jesus and His suffering followers! You are entering the confederacy of the bravest of the brave. Now shall you share in “that lordlier chivalry” which belongs not to mailed knights, but to spirits purified and ennobled by the Holy Spirit! These are the blessed ones who endure temptation, who, when they are tried, shall receive the Crown of Life which fades not away! Forget not, then, the universal truth of the statement before us—“They were tempted.”

II. Secondly, let us consider THE UNLIMITED BREADTH OF THE STATEMENT. “They were tempted”—it does not say how. If one form of temptation had been mentioned, we should have surmised that they did not suffer in other ways, but when the statement is, “they were tempted,” we shall not be wrong in concluding that they were tried in any and every form. Whatever form temptation may take, in some or in all the saints, that temptation has been endured. We may say of Christ’s mystical body as we may say of Christ’s self—“tempted in all points like as we are.” Brothers and Sisters, the saints who are in Heaven were tempted in all ways!

They were tempted by threats, but they were equally tempted by promises. They were put into prison, or they were banished. They were deprived of their goods and of their good names, but they stood fast and firm and would not yield up Christ, threaten as men might. Then they were tried by bribes—if they would forsake Christ and turn from the Truth of

God they would be rich and honorable, they would be restored to their families, they would have, in some cases, every indulgence which the monarch could grant. They were equally deaf to either form of solicitation—they could not be driven and they could not be drawn! However the net might be spread they could not be taken in it.

Standing at the stake, with the flames kindling and the firewood beginning to burn, the tempting monk has held up the crucifix and said, “Kiss it! Kiss it and your life shall be given you and you shall have great honors!” But they put away the idol from them and would not dishonor God by worshipping any material substance, whatever it might be. Or else the martyr, on his way to die, has been confronted by his wife and children, kneeling down and praying their father to have pity upon *them*, if none upon himself, and not to die and leave a widow and fatherless children. But though natural love struggled in their hearts, they leaped over that temptation, for they loved Christ better than their dearest relatives. They were tempted in the most subtle fashion—reason and rhetoric, threat and scorn, bribe and blandishment have all been used and used in vain. Against them the enemy has sent forth the arrow which flies by day and the pestilence which walks in darkness, but the Lord has kept their soul alive and they have glorified His name!

Yet very sorely “they were tempted.” They were tempted both with trials peculiar to themselves and with trials common to us all. We are apt, sometimes, to say that this age is not congenial to the strength of Grace and I think there is truth in the remark. We are a set of dwarfs and it seems hard to grow to the stature of a man in Christ Jesus in the atmosphere which daily surrounds us. We have fallen upon an evil age in which principle is treated like a football in the streets and bluster rules the hour. But the ages in which saints lived long ago had their peculiar temptations, too, and they were tempted. Every period since the world began has had its own form of spiritual danger—as weapons of war have changed so have temptations—but the old enmity remains.

Not always does the swordsman make his cut at the head. Sometimes he stabs at the heart, or at another time he drives at the feet—always aiming to wound, but not always aiming at the same part of the man. One age is dark and ignorance would chill the heart; another is philosophical and by its false wisdom would overlay the Gospel. The points from which the wind blows may differ, but it always blows against the servants of God who are traveling to Heaven. Say not therefore, O child of God, that others who lived before you were not tempted as you are, for they endured temptations which to them were as keen and as powerful as any which have fallen on you!

They had, also, special temptations arising out of their individual constitutions. We have, every one of us, some weak point. One man is not readily made angry, but he is too cold. Another is sensitive, but he is too speedily wrathful. One man is full of love and affection, but he lacks decision. Another is resolute, but fails in tenderness. Side by side with the special excellence of any character we usually discover a remarkable weakness calling for great watchfulness! And of all those who are now in

Heaven it may be said they were tempted—tempted in some characteristic point and with some besetting sin.

Beloved, if you have to endure the same, mark well that you follow a well-trod path. As they had their peculiar temptations, so they had the common trials of the most ordinary life. Look at Abraham—not only does he stand alone in the sacrifice of Isaac, but he stands with us in our common afflictions. He is tried in his relatives—his nephew Lot is ungrateful to him and leaves him. He is tried in his servants—the family is set by the ears by Hagar. He is tried in his wife, for she complains against him wrongfully. He is tried in his children, for Ishmael mocks Isaac. His dwelling in tents brought with it quite as much discomfort and trial as our dwelling in houses. Flocks and herds involve as much care as shops and workrooms.

Just such domestic troubles as you and I experience were known to Jacob and David. One man is very like another and nothing can be more unwise than to set up saintly men who lived ages ago upon a sort of shelf, as if they were unapproachable and inimitable and belonged to a different race! These heroes are our *brothers*, their battles are our battles, their victory shall be ours. Our Divine Master Himself, when He was assailed by the devil in the wilderness, was attacked by those same temptations which have been used against us—we, too, have been tempted to use wrong means to supply our pressing needs, to presume upon the Providence of God and to commit idolatry in order to gratify ambition. These are arrows which have rattled on the harness of many soldiers of the Cross.

Our Lord Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, bore the brunt of the battle and in the matter of temptation He condescended to fight upon the same level with ourselves. “He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.” So that the text stands good in all its length and breadth that all those who have won the everlasting Victory were tempted, even as we are now.

III. Thirdly, let us notice THE SPECIAL POINT OF THE TRIAL. All these temptations, according to the connection of our text, were aimed at the *faith* of these holy men. Paul is writing of the victories and sufferings of faith and, therefore, we are sure that these temptations were a test and trial of their faith. It is wonderful how God takes care that the victories of faith shall somehow or other be kept in mind. There was a period after the Prophets had ceased to prophesy and before Christ came in which the Israelite church had to contend against antichrist and other enemies. In the Apocrypha you have the account of some few of the martyrdoms of those who held fast to God and to His Truth.

They are not put in canonical Scripture—they neither belong to the Old Testament nor to the New—but here Paul immortalizes them, for the Lord will have them remembered. Those who were stoned and sawn asunder for the Truth’s sake shall not be forgotten. If the details are not given, they shall yet be recorded in the gross on the sacred pages. Since that time, dear Friends, as if Paul had been writing prophecy rather than history, the people of God have had to pass through sufferings which, if I were to

repeat them now, would break your hearts with grief because of the horrors of cruelty which human ingenuity has invented.

Man has seemed to turn into a devil and sink below a fiend in the barbarities which he has perpetrated against the servants of God. All this has been aimed at the destruction of faith. The Jews were tempted to worship idols—they must offer incense to a false God—but they would not. In later years Christians must pay homage to the image of the emperor—this they would not do—they would die a thousand deaths sooner than worship a false God! By-and-by they were called upon to deny the Deity of Christ and by tens of thousands they perished sooner than deny that fact! In later years it came to this—that they must submit to superstition—they must assert that they believed in transubstantiation, which they could not believe in, nor thus insult their God!

They must submit themselves to men who said they were priests and could forgive their sins—which they felt was a forsaking of the great High Priest to *think* of doing it—and so they died rather than deny the faith. The story of the lives of these heroes is recorded in such half-inspired books as Foxe’s “Book of Martyrs” and the like. Read it and let your children read it till both they and you have learned fidelity to Christ! The main point of the adversary’s attack was always their *faith*—therefore let us learn where to set our guard. Let us see to it that we become strong in faith, for that is true strength. Feed your faith well. Know the Truth of God and know it thoroughly. Read the Scriptures and understand them. Make sure of the eternal Truths of God.

Live much upon the promises of future bliss. A sight of the unfading crown will make you cheerfully forego the withering flowers of earth. The sorrows of the way will grow light as the eternal weight of Glory is revealed. You will think less of the commendation or censure of men if your ears already hear the great Master saying, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

IV. I cannot dwell long on this point, though I had wished to do so, but must now call your attention, in the fourth place, to THE INTENSITY OF THIS TRIAL. That I gather from the position of our text, which is very strange. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with sword. It has seemed to commentators to be so singular that to be “tempted” should be, as it were, sandwiched in between, “sawn asunder” and being “slain with the sword,” that they have thought there must be an error in the text. Certainly at the first blush, the words look rather out of place, but they are not so. Some learned men have imagined another Greek word to be the correct one, since it involves a very slight alteration and then the passage would run—“They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were burnt, they were slain with the sword.”

I do not see any reason for desiring an alteration. It seems to me to be plain that the original is, “they were tempted,” and what is written must stand. The more we think of it, the more we shall see that being tempted is worthy to be put side by side with being sawn asunder and being slain with the sword, for many of those who are daily tormented with temptations will tell you that it is as painful to bear as any form of death. If you

live in a place where you hear little else but blasphemy from morning to night you will soon say, “I think I should prefer being in a prison to this. The cut of a whip or the wound of a sword would scarcely cause more pain than to hear the name of Jesus Christ profaned and to see every holy and precious thing trampled on!”

When the ungodly persecute cruelly, as they can do, even now, without violating the law of man, they can tease and worry your very soul. They can embitter every morsel that you eat, make home to be a torture-chamber and the work-room an inquisition. They will maliciously track you in all your steps with jests and jeers and slanders and hard speeches and make you live like Marcus Arethusa, among the bees which, at last, stung him to death. Believe me, some of God’s people have found that to be tempted in that sense has been as bad as to be stoned, or to be slain with a sword! In fact, there are times when they have said, “If we could be taken out and our heads could be cut off at one stroke with a sword, it would be a happy release from this life-long agony.”

Alas for gentle, timid, loving spirits who have to endure such temptation! I think Paul did well to put this here, not only because of the painfulness of it, but because of the danger of it, for it is certain that under temptation of the more insidious kind more professed Christians have been led away than ever were frightened from the faith by racks, or torments, or fear of death. It is a very sad fact that when Queen Mary died there were persons lying in prison condemned for heresy who had, some of them, been great sufferers for the faith and bold confessors of it and yet when released they did not abide in their steadfastness.

Queen Mary died and Elizabeth ascended the throne and they obtained their liberty and, alas, some of them, returning to the comforts of home, became altogether worldly persons and forsook the faith for which once they would have even dared to die. I have known some unhappy cases of the same kind, where persons have been persecuted by their families for following Christ and have stood up for Him right manfully so that I have felt great admiration for them for their consistent courage. I have lived to see these very individuals delivered from the yoke of bondage, able to start in life for themselves and to do exactly as they pleased and, alas, soon after persecution ceased they have grown cold and have forsaken the ways of God! What a strange creature is man!

Lord, what a deceitful heart I have! O that You would search it and try it, lest it be so that I follow You in stormy weather, but leave You when the south wind blows! I think the Apostle put in this clause just where we find it because more deadly to the Church have been the blandishments of the world’s wealth than all the raging of her cruelty. Her stakes, her racks, her gallows have never injured the Church so much as her witcheries, her smiles, her fashions and her patronage. Yet this was borne by saints of old, for, “they were tempted.” “Well,” says one, “you describe these Christian people as having had very hard times of it, for they were tempted and tempted very severely, too.” Yes, it is true, but we do not pity one of them. If you saw those gallant men who wear the Victoria cross for valor and you were told of their perils and sufferings, you would not pity *them*.

They could not have worn the coveted cross given them by their Queen if they had not bravely endured hardship and peril. We do not pity men who have performed daring exploits, nor may we pity those servants of God who suffered the utmost cruelties, but now rest from their labors and wear their honors in Heaven. The question is—Can *you* aspire to take a place among them? To be a true Christian is no small thing and, before you pretend to be a follower of Jesus, count the cost! Are you willing to endure temptation without yielding? Can you scorn the world’s bribes and defy its threats? Will you set your face like a flint for Christ and holiness? Has Grace made you a lion-like man? Have you a strong determination worked in you by the Holy Spirit? If not, you may run well for a time, but you will turn back and prove an apostate. I pray God that you may be of that noble stock which the Lord has chosen and may have in you that noble nature which only the Holy Spirit can impart, so that, though you shall be tempted, you shall hold out till life’s last hour, invincible through the Grace of God!

I want, in conclusion, to answer the question which naturally arises—Why, then, does God permit His people to encounter so much temptation? Why is the road to Heaven so beset with foes? I answer that there are a great many replies to that question, for the Lord answers many designs at one and the same time. First, persecution and temptation are a sort of sieve to sift the Church of God. As it is, we have enough hypocrites among us and if the way to Heaven were strewn all along with loaves and fishes, we should have the devil, himself, going on pilgrimage! There must be these fiery persecutions so that the hypocrites may be purged out. I guarantee you there were not many hypocrites in the catacombs of Rome when, to be a Christian involved almost certain death! They crept into their assemblies at the dead of night and there gathered to sing hymns to the name of Jesus and few were the traitors’ tongues which joined in the singing!

When in our own country any man who had a Bible must die for it and, therefore, men hid their Bibles behind the wainscot, or under the floor, few were very eager for Bible-reading. The mocking, the jesting, the jeering which goes on in the world is the sieve constantly moving to shake off the chaff and let the good wheat remain. If we could stop that winnowing fan we should hardly wish to do so! I am sure if I could give some of you new converts a pass from here to Heaven so that nobody should ever laugh at you and you should never suffer anything for Christ, I would not do it! I feel I would be doing you a serious injury if I could secure you against every trial.

Think of a soldier when he enlists. Suppose he should say to the sergeant, “Sergeant, will you give me a guarantee that I shall never fight?” I think the officer would reply, “You had better not enlist.” Even so I say to you we cannot guarantee you that you shall not be tempted and if you need such a guarantee as that, you are not the kind of man we want—you are not the sort of man that is ever likely to win the unfading Crown! Trial and temptation also discover the reality of conversion. Look at this. Here is a man ridiculed for his religion and for his sobriety. He will not touch a

drop of the drink which formerly cast him down to his destruction and, therefore, his fellow workmen laugh at him. All sorts of epithets are hurled at him while he is at work.

He goes to a place of worship on Sunday and for this he must be jeered at to the last degree. Who is this man that bears this so patiently? Why, the very man who, 12 months ago, could drink as much as any of them and used to jeer at others! The very man who for 20 years before never entered the house of God! Now, the fact that he can stand against temptation is one of the very best evidences that he is born again and made a new creature in Christ Jesus! And those who see such a change confess that this is the finger of God. What else could have changed him so completely as to make him stand against the very thing which he took part in so short a time ago? We may thank God for the temptations since it helps to evidence the reality of the conversion!

Again, it is by this that men are left without excuse, inasmuch as they refuse the Light of God. I sometimes wonder why ungodly men cannot let Christian people alone. We do not interfere with you! Have we not as much right to do as we like as you have to do what you like? But no! The moment a Christian appears among working men, they are all upon him as though they were so many dogs worrying a hare! What does this show but that they know the Truth of God and *hate* it? They know the Light, but would gladly quench it and, therefore, they put from them the candle which God sends them. They treat His blessing as if it were a curse! Did you ever read in the Scriptures of God's thinking better of men than they deserved? “No,” you say, “that cannot be!”

Yes, but there is a case, a parabolic case, of course, where the Lord is represented as judging men too easily. “Last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, they will reverence my son.” But they did not reverence him! They took the heir and slew him and cast him out of the vineyard. There are people of God who are naturally so amiable, kind and good that you feel sure all must love and esteem them and yet, because of their religion, even such must be persecuted. The beloved Brother cannot escape without sarcasm. The dear Sister that was everything, before, must now be made the subject of jeers and the husband or the wife, however much beloved, is not spared. This leaves the ungodly altogether without excuse—it is God's purpose that it should do so!

Meanwhile, it does saints good, for painful as it is to them, it drives them to prayer. Many a man lives near to God in prayer who would not have done so if he had enjoyed an easier position. His prayerfulness strengthens him! His having to summon Divine aid to sustain him under trial makes him grow in faith and in every Grace! And he becomes a better Christian. I believe that persecution is overruled by God for displaying the work of the Divine Spirit. Men see in Christian patience, in Christian fortitude, in Christian courage and in Christian zeal what the Holy Spirit can work, even in such poor raw material as our human nature! God is magnified by the successful struggling of His people out of love to His name.

Moreover, Brothers and Sisters, the life of the Church is the life of Christ extended and drawn out in His people. He was “holy, harmless,

undefiled and separate from sinners,” yet He, “endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself,” and if we keep close to Christ we must expect to share His lot. Ours should be the prolonged echoes of the music of Christ’s life, “linked sweetness long drawn out.” Oh that God would help us till Christ Himself shall come to keep up the blessed strain! It seems to me the trials and the temptations of this life are all making us fit for the life to come—building up a character for eternity. You have been in a piano plant—did you ever go there for the sake of music? Go into the tuning room and you will say, “My dear Sir, this is a dreadful place to be in! I cannot bear it! I thought you made music here.” They say, “No, we do not produce *music* here, we make the *instruments* and tune them here and in the process much discord is forthcoming.”

Such is the Church of God on earth. The Lord makes the instruments down here and tunes them and a great deal of discord is easily perceptible, but it is all necessary to prepare us for the everlasting harmonies up yonder. Have you thought what a wonderful creature a man is—a perfect man, made fit to dwell in Heaven? He is the last product of Divine wisdom, the noblest work of God! There is an angel, he is perfectly holy, but he never knew what sin was and there is little wonder that he clings to that which has been his nature these many centuries! Besides, He is not encumbered by a body of dust, full of passions and appetites which are the inlets of sin.

But here is a being with a soul, encumbered with materialism and it *has* known sin, known it terribly and yet it is forever bound to do right beyond fear of turning aside! How is this to be achieved? Take away its free agency, says one. No, that would spoil it! It would be no longer a man if free agency were destroyed. This being is perfectly free to do whatever he pleases throughout eternity and yet he will never wish to do a wrong thing again! It is a wonderful work for God to fashion such a creature! He begins to do it in regeneration and continues the work in sanctification—and all the endurance of trial and all the patience manifested by the tried ones work together to prepare a character which can endure the strain of everlasting bliss and perform the holy service incident thereto!

I speak for every Christian here—I am to stand, one day, so near to God that between Him and me there will be but one Person and that Person the Lord Jesus Christ, my Lord and Mediator! I am, in Christ, to have dominion over all the works of God’s hands and to be crowned with glory and honor! Angels are to be my servants and Heaven my inheritance! Shall I never grow proud? Shall no self-exaltation creep in? No! The character will be fixed for holiness as though engraved in eternal brass and yet the man will be free! It may be that all the afflictions and temptations which God permits to pass over us here below are forming us for eternal bliss. Thus is the corn ripening for the garner, the fruit mellowing for the basket! Here the engraving tool and the hammer bring out the beauties which shall shine in the courts of the Lord forever when, of us, also, the record will be written—“they were tempted.”

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THE RULE OF THE RACE

NO. 2037

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, AUGUST 5, 1888,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

“Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.”
Hebrews 12:1, 2.

THE Apostle says, “Let us run.” He has in his mind’s eye the Olympic games, where all the different tribes of Greece were gathered together in general assembly to display the prowess of the race. Among the athletic exercises were footraces. The Apostle makes this footrace an illustration of the Christian life. We must run with patience along the appointed course if we would win the prize of our high calling.

He stands with us at the starting block and earnestly says to us, not “Run,” but, “Let us run.” The Apostle himself is at our side as a runner. The presence of such a comrade is most inspiring. It is good doing good things in good company. “Let us run,” says he, “with patience the race that is set before us.” Who will back out of a race wherein so great a saint takes his place at our side? You who aspire to be associated with the excellent of the earth, press forward side by side with an Apostle! “Let us run,” from Paul’s lip, puts wings upon our heels.

Before we start, with a wave of the hand the Apostle directs us to the spectators who throng the sides of the course. There were always such at those races—each city and state yielded its contingent and the assembled throng watched with eager eye the efforts of those who strove for the mastery. Those who look down upon us from yonder heavens are described as “so great a cloud of witnesses.” These compass us about. Thousands upon thousands who have run this race before us and have attained their crowns, behold us from their heavenly seats and mark how we behave ourselves.

This race is worth running, for the eyes of “the nations of them which are saved” are fixed upon us. This is no hole-and-corner business, this running for the great prize. Angels and principalities and powers and hosts redeemed by blood have mustered to behold the glorious spectacle of men agonizing for holiness and putting forth their utmost strength to copy the Lord Jesus. You that are men, now run for it! If there is any spiritual life and gracious strength in you, put it forth today—for Patriarchs and Prophets, saints, martyrs and Apostles look down from Heaven upon you.

Our Apostle, anxious that we should so run that we may obtain, points to certain burdens and impediments which he foresees will hinder us and he says, “Let us lay aside every weight.” Note how he includes himself, so

that his warning may not sound like upbraiding. We cannot win if we are weighted—the pace will have to be very swift and we cannot get to it, or keep it up, if we have weights to carry. Unloaded we shall find the race taxing all our powers. But weighted, we shall be doomed to failure. Oh, to lay aside all worrisome care, fretfulness, ambition, anger, greed and selfish desire! These were never worth the labor they have cost us.

Now that we have become running men, we must have done with them. Down they must go till the last ounce is on the ground. Like the Greek footman, we would strip. And instead of adding weight, we would diminish even our own bulk, that we may fly along the course. O you that would win, heed the caution and “lay aside every weight,” whether it be great or small. And press towards the mark! Run for it, Man! You had need do nothing else but run.

Still attentively considering us, the Apostle notes that even when the weights are laid aside there is a garment about us which will assuredly twist about our feet and throw us down. Sin, as well as care, must be laid aside. It does easily beset us and therefore we must be the more careful to be rid of it. Our original sin, our natural tendencies, our constitutional infirmities—these must be laid aside as garments unsuitable for men who are running the heavenly race. We cannot win Heaven and wear sin. Heaven is for the holy—“there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles.”

Darling sins must go first—these, as they are most loved, will have the most power to hinder. Every kind of sin must be watched against, struggled against and mastered. “Sin shall not have dominion over you.” We hope to see all our tendencies to sin killed and buried—buried so deep that not even a bone of a sin shall be left above ground. This will be Heaven to us. Do I not hear you say, “May God help us”? This must be a tough race which requires such stripping as this. If every weight of care must be laid aside and every rag of sin, who is sufficient for these things? How can we, poor limping mortals, run in such a race as this?

Even the starting is beyond us—how much more must perseverance in it outreach our strength! See, my Brethren, how we are driven to Free Grace—how we are driven to the power of the Holy Spirit? The race which is set before us most clearly reveals our helplessness and our hopelessness apart from Divine Grace. The race of holiness and patience—while it demands our vigor—displays our weakness. We are compelled, even before we take a step in the running, to bow the knee and cry unto the strong for strength. We dare not retreat from the contest. But how can we begin a struggle for which we are so unfitted? Who will help us? To whom shall we look? Does not all this very admirably introduce the verse which is specially my text—“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith”?

But the Apostle has not quite done with us, for he warns us to remember the rules of the course in these words, “Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” You are not to run anyhow, or anywhere—you must keep the appointed course, or you might as well stand still. The way of God’s command, the way of obedience, the way of humble trustfulness,

the *spiritual* way, the way of the life given from above—this and no other way will do, for this is the race set before you! Do you shrink? Does the way seem too mysterious, too contrary to the flesh, too trying? All this adds to the force of the precept—“Looking unto Jesus.” Because the way itself and the rules of the running are such as your nature will fight against—therefore look the more earnestly to the great Captain of your salvation.

In a race, a great point is the way in which a man keeps his eyes. He cannot run straight who has an eye to this or to that. Straightforward is the best running. But he who has his eyes on this and on that will run crookedly and waste his strength. Look to the end and then run in a direct line. I have read of a competition between certain young plowmen who were set to plow for a prize. The most of them made very crooked work of it. After they had ended, one of the judges said, “Young man, where did you look while you were plowing?” “I kept my eyes well on the plow handles, Sir and saw what I had to hold.”

“Yes,” the judge said, “and your plow went in and out and the furrow is all crooked.” He asked the next plowman, “and where did you look?” “Well, Sir,” he answered, “I looked at my furrow, I kept my eye always on the furrow that I was making. I thought I should make it straight that way.” “But you did not,” answered the judge, “you were all over the place.” To the next he said, “What did you look at?” “Well, Sir,” he said, “I looked between the two horses to a tree that stood in the hedge at the other end of the field, right in front of me.”

Now that man went straight because he had a fixed mark to guide him. This helps us to appreciate the wisdom of the text, “Looking unto Jesus.” Run—run straight—you cannot run straight except you keep your eyes on One who is always the same. “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith,” you will have a sure preservative from wandering. Spiritual plowmen, take heed that you look not back but plow a straight furrow towards Jesus on the Throne! Spiritual runners—make a covenant with your eyes that you will look only to Him who is the great end of all your running! Looking unto Jesus means life, light, guidance, encouragement, joy—never cease to look on Him who ever looks on you.

To help us, the Apostle describes the mark to which we are to look in four ways. “Look unto Jesus,” the Savior, is the sum and substance of it all. But He is set forth before us in four lights. First, the Author of faith. Secondly, the Finisher of faith. Thirdly, the Pattern of faith. And lastly, the Prize, or the end of faith. We must look to Jesus Christ in each of these four respects. Oh, for the Holy Spirit’s help while I speak thereon!

I. First, then, we are to look to Jesus as THE AUTHOR OF FAITH. The Apostle would have us view the Lord Jesus as the Starter of the race. When a footrace began, the men were drawn up in a line and they had to wait for a signal. Those who were in the race had to look to the Starter. For the runner who should get first by a false start would not win, because he did not run according to the rules of the race. No man is crowned unless he strives lawfully. The Starter was in his place and the men stood all waiting and looking.

At last he dropped his glove, or a handkerchief, and away they went. Our word at starting in the Christian life is, "Look unto Jesus." We must fix our eyes on "the Beginner of our faith." For if we do not begin by looking to Him, however quickly we may hurry along, we shall run in vain and labor in vain. To what purpose will your running be if the umpire determines that you started improperly?

The beginning of faith is "looking unto Jesus." Let us consider this. We have to look to Jesus, first, by trusting in that which He has worked for us. It is described in these words—"Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame." Jesus has endured the suffering and shame which were due to us. O Soul, you can never start on the road to Heaven unless you look to Him who "endured the Cross" on your behalf! Your sin will make you to endure the wrath of God forever unless you look to Him who bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

You must get a faith's view of the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world, or else you have not even begun the heavenward race. Do you look upon your own righteousness with pleasure? This is a false start for you—"As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse." Do you look to your frames and feelings? You will make a bad start with these for they will guide you into a fog in which you will lose the track. Look to Jesus, the suffering Savior. He by His bearing the Cross has removed your heaviest weights and by His death has destroyed your entangling sin. He can renew your nature by His resurrection power and save you from the dominion of sin by His glorious reign. If you look alone to Him you start well.

The Greek word for "looking" is a much fuller word than we can find in the English language. It has a preposition in it which turns the look away from everything else. You are to look away from all except to Jesus. Fix not your gaze upon the cloud of witnesses. They will hinder you if they take away your eyes from Jesus. Look not on the weights and the besetting sin—these you have laid aside—look away from them. Do not even look upon the racetrack, or the competitors—but look to Jesus and so start in the race.

What have you to trust to but His blood and righteousness? Beware that you set up nothing as a rival confidence. Look off from everything you have ever relied upon in days gone by and say to your soul, "None but Jesus." You must have a single eye and a single hope. "Christ is all," and He must be all to you, or you are out of the race altogether.

The instructive original has in it the word "eis," which is translated "unto," but in addition has the force of "into." We shall do well if we look *unto* Jesus but better still if we are found "looking *into* Jesus." I want you, when you begin your Divine life, to take care that you look to Jesus with so penetrating a gaze that your "unto" grows to an "into." Read not only the outside of the volume of His life but loosen the seals thereof and read His heart. Dive into the meaning of what He has done for you. Look at His enduring the Cross—know what it means—and enter into the fellowship of His sufferings.

Study well the sin-bearing, the curse-bearing, the forsaking and the sorrow unto death. Think how the Lord Jesus came under shame for your sakes and see how He rose above it all. Look to Him till you are familiar with the different views of the one great Sacrifice. Under the Law, a poor man brought his two young pigeons and the birds were divided in the middle and so offered. A richer man brought a lamb or a bullock. This was divided carefully and all its anatomy laid bare—this was to be done with the leg, and that with the shoulder—and there was an ordinance concerning the fat and the innards.

Thus some Believers know the details of the sacrifice and we want you, dear Friends, to be among this better instructed class. May you discern the Lord's body and penetrate into the secrets of His soul and so begin your Christian life with an intelligent and instructed faith. This will secure better running throughout the rest of the road. Still you must look to Jesus only, whether you know little or much. It is not your knowledge, but Himself, that must be your one ground of trust. You must take Jesus to be Alpha as well as Omega. To you His name stands at the head of the book and it is also the Amen which closes it. To your experience the Scripture is true—"In the beginning was the Word." You begin to run when you look to Jesus.

But then, dear Friends, we also begin looking unto Jesus because of what He has worked in us. I would remind you who are a good way on in the course of those first eager paces with which you started heavenward. Did you not begin with looking unto Jesus? As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so continue in Him. The Lord Jesus first called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. He sweetly inclined us to think upon Himself as the way and made us wishful to become heavenly footmen. It was He that quickened us even as of old He raised the dead. The Father quickens whomsoever He will and even so does Jesus.

Even now I seem to hear His voice crying, "Lazarus, come forth!" Well do we recollect when serious thought, anxious desire, deep repentance, lingering hope and trembling faith entered our souls through "looking unto Jesus." Did He not give us pardon at our setting out? It was by looking to Him that the great load of sin fell from off our conscience. With pardon of sin came a great loathing of sin—washed in the precious blood we could not wantonly repeat the stains. Our earliest repentance and its fruits came from "looking unto Jesus." Our heart of stone had been hardened by looking elsewhere, but the vision of the sacred head crowned with thorns did the softening work. We looked and were enlightened, enlivened, enraged against sin and enamored of Jesus.

Our first acceptance with God came from looking to Jesus by faith. We found ourselves accepted in the Beloved. O my Friend, do you remember that rapturous moment when you perceived that the robe of righteousness had covered you from head to foot and that your filthy raiment had been taken away? You cannot forget that time of love. At that moment you felt the love of God within your spirit like a consuming fire burning up your sin. You also were filled with love to the Lord your God. You wondered

how it came there till you perceived that you loved Him because *He* first loved *you*.

Then was every evil abhorred of your soul. Then were you ready for any holy service. Then self-denial became a pleasure to you. Then you forsook the company of the wicked and sought the society of the saints. The love of Jesus had started you upon a race which otherwise you would not have chosen—you were converted, turned, turned quite round. You owned that henceforth you were not your own and could not run towards self—you were bought with a price and therefore must run towards your Redeemer. A sight of the Crucified did it all.

Thus, dear Friends, Jesus is the beginner of our race of faith by what He has worked *for* us and by what He has worked *in* us. Have I any here this morning who are about to start for Heaven? Mind that you start aright. I pray you, do not fall into any delusion. Do not imagine that your life will avail you anything—however good and moral it may have been—unless you begin by looking unto Jesus.

Mr. Bunyan, in his “Pilgrim’s Progress,” frequently speaks of those who tumbled over the wall, or came in by other irregular ways. But they all missed the end. As they came in without Christ, so they went out without hope. One who came near to the Celestial City, who had not come in at the gate, was made to know that there is a back way to Hell, even from the gate of Heaven. You must begin with looking unto Jesus, or you will end with a fearful looking for of judgment. Does not Jesus say, “I am the Beginning”? Would you set up another beginning? He must be the first letter of your hope, or else you do not even know the alphabet of salvation.

II. But now, secondly, we must look to Jesus as THE FINISHER OF FAITH. As Jesus is at the commencement of the course, starting the runners, so He is at the end of the course—the Rewarder of those who endure to the end. Those who would win in the great race must keep their eyes upon Him all along the course, even till they reach the finish line.

You will be helped to look to Him when you remember that He is the Finisher of your faith by what He has worked for you. For the text says, “He endured the Cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.” You also shall have Heaven—for He has it. You shall sit upon the Throne—for He sits there. Look to His passion on the Cross to begin with. Look to His session on the Throne, that you may hold on to the end. Look to Jesus as dying for the pardon of your sins but as living for the justification of your souls. Incarnation and death have led on to intercession and endless life.

Jesus has sat down—He takes His rest because He has completed His work. Here on earth He was filled with shame but yonder in Glory He is full of honor—for He is set down “at the right hand of God.” Here He was bound and led captive. There He is King of kings and Lord of lords, for He sits at the right hand of the Throne of God. Here on earth we see His manhood—born in a manger, living in poverty, dying the ignominious death of the Cross. There we adore His Divine Glory—for He is “at the right hand of the Throne of God.” Think of your Savior as your God,

clothed with all power and authority. Surely this should urge you to quicken your pace and never to become weary or faint.

You began by looking to Him as a sufferer, persevere by looking to Him as a victor. “Be of good cheer,” said He, “I have overcome the world.” In that fact He gives you an assurance of your own victory. The Seed of the woman has bruised the serpent’s head and therefore the Lord will tread Satan under your feet shortly. The death of Christ is our death for sin. But the life of Christ is our life unto holiness. The shame of Christ was our shame and the triumph of Christ is our triumph. Therefore, looking unto Jesus let us run.

We are helped to run to the end, not only by what Jesus has *done for* us, but by what Jesus is *doing in* us. Beloved, you that are in the middle of the race, remember that Jesus sustains you. Every atom of your strength for running comes from your Lord. Look to Him for it. Do not take a step in creature strength. Nor seek after any virtue, or growth, or progress apart from His life and grace. He says, “From Me is your fruit found.” He works all our works in us and because He works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure, therefore we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

We are not only sustained by looking unto Jesus but we are inspired thereby. If we win a glance from His eye, our feeble knees are confirmed. We catch our second and third breath as we behold Him on the Throne and dash forward again. Those dear eyes of His are to us as stars are to the mariner. Jesus says to us, “Come on, I am victorious and so shall you be.” A sight of the exalted Leader fires the zeal of each Believer and makes him run like a young hart.

Looking unto Jesus you will get correct directions. For, as He sits at the finish line, His very presence indicates the way. If our eyes are up to Him—as the eyes of a servant to her mistress—we shall run well. “Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle.” But say with David, “You shall guide me with Your eye.” A look from the eye of Jesus is enough for a saint. And if you, my Hearer, are indeed “looking unto Jesus,” you will avoid crooks and turns and will take the shortest road to holiness and eternal glory. Consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself and you will not grow weary—neither will you miss your way.

Look to Jesus, for by that look He draws you. The great magnet up yonder is drawing us towards itself. Christ’s cords of love give us speed. The more in the power of the Holy Spirit you meditate upon our Lord’s passion on the Cross and His session on the Throne, the more will you be drawn towards Him and the faster will you move. “Draw me, we will run after You” is the cry of the Old Testament Church and it is ours also. Lord, we would look that You may draw.

While we are running we look to our Lord as the Finisher of faith and we see Him leaning forward and holding out the crown—

***“It is His all animating voice
That calls us from on high;***

***It is His own hand presents the prize
To our aspiring eye.***

The sight of the crown removes all weight from our crosses. The race ceases to be severe when we see Jesus enthroned. I see Him today at the end of the course holding out the wreath to me and saying, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Oh that you may each one see Him and feel that "the crown of glory that fades not away" is worthy of a life's running. Thus will Jesus, by holding out the reward, become the Finisher of faith.

When the race is over, Jesus will appear as the Finisher of faith by coming forward to crown you with His own right hand. Yes, His hand shall award the prize and His lips shall say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Jesus Himself will admit the faithful to the place which He has gone to prepare for them. Therefore be of good courage and run! Jesus at the end of the race will enthrone us with Himself—"Let us run."

I invite you, taking the sense of the word "looking" which I have already hinted at, to turn over in your mind these things. Look away from all self-denials, difficulties, labors, sufferings, temptations and persecutions. And equally look away from all pleasures, profits and preferments and look to Jesus, who has won the race Himself and now helps you in the race and holds out the crown at the end of it. Look till you begin to look *into* Him and see somewhat of His inward glory and of its out flowing to His redeemed.

Say to yourself, "All things are in Him for me. All spiritual blessings God does bestow upon me according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Does the Father bless me in my enthroned Lord? Then my feet shall not weary in the heavenward way. Does Jesus lean forward as if He would crown me even now? Then I will quicken my pace to come to Him. Does the Holy Spirit help my infirmities? Then will I run swiftly in His strength."

Thus I have tried in my own feeble way to set before you Jesus as the Author and the Finisher of faith—look to Him and run.

III. Let us next consider our Lord Jesus as THE PATTERN OF OUR FAITH. Run, as Jesus ran, and look to Him as you run, that you may run like He ran. How did our Lord pursue His course?

You will see this if you first note His motive—"Who for the joy that was set before Him." Jesus had a motive in all that He did. Men do not do much if they act from mere feeling and have no underlying design. Indeed, a life without an object must be a frivolous, useless life. Jesus had before Him the great joy of glorifying the Father in the salvation of His chosen. For this He lived, for this He died—it was a joy to Him to think of accomplishing this object.

Beloved, if you want to run your race aright, it must be for the glory of God and in the hope of the salvation of your fellow men. These two things, blended into one, must be your joy. Oh that this motive took possession of our entire being! The chief end of man is to glorify God—let it be my chief end, even as it was my Lord's. Oh that I might glorify You, my Creator, my Preserver, my Redeemer! To this end was I born and for this end would I

live in every action of my life. Brethren, we cannot run the race set before us unless we feel this. We must, like the Savior, seek the glory of God by saving our fellow men. Live for this. Live to seek out the wandering sons of men and thus to be a shepherd under the Great Shepherd.

Learn from Him to carry the lambs in your bosom. There is no running heavenward unless the service of God is a joy to us. We run in an approved fashion when we spend and are spent in glorifying God. May you throughout eternity have to rejoice that you were not fruitless! Oh, may none of you be written down as “creation’s blot, creation’s blank.” But may you all have the joy of glorifying God on earth and finishing the work He has given you to do!

Wherein are we to imitate Jesus? First, we are to copy His endurance. He “endured the Cross.” Ours is a trifling cross compared with that which pressed Him down. But He endured it. He took it up willingly and carried it patiently. He never rebelled against it and never relinquished it. He bore the Cross till the Cross bore Him and then He bore death upon it. He could say, “It is finished.” Brethren, let us do the same. Are you persecuted, are you poor, are you sick?—take up the appointed cross. Christ ran with the Cross on His shoulder and so must we run. Do not try to escape trouble—the followers of the Crucified must be familiar with the Cross. Endure it patiently, joyfully, in the strength of God.

“Looking unto Jesus,” behold His Cross whenever you begin to faint under your own. Think of the bloody sweat, the scourging, the wounds, the blasphemies of men, the forsaking by God! Behold and see if there was ever sorrow like unto His sorrow, or endurance like His endurance. Shoulder your little cross and run towards the Crucified.

Imitate your Lord in His magnanimity. He endured the Cross, “despising the shame.” Shame is a cruel thing to many hearts. Our Lord shows us how to treat it. See, He puts His shoulder under the Cross but He sets His foot upon the shame. He endures the one but He despises the other. What? Shall His disciples make much of that which He despised? Are you such gentlemen, that none may come between the wind and your nobility? I wonder when I hear some people say, “I cannot stand being laughed at.” Does laughter break bones? “But ridicule is very sharp!” Is it? Do the wounds bleed? “Well,” cries one, “a keen sarcasm from a wit stings you!” Does it? Have you no cure for such bites?

Some of us have in our minds been like Marcus Arethusa who was stung to death by wasps. And yet we are none the worse but rather are we all the better—for there remains no place whereon a new sting can operate. Oh, that some of you, who are so tender, could have thicker skins in this respect! I heard of a prayer the other day which I did not quite like at first but there is something in it after all. The good man said, “Lord, if our hearts are hard, make them soft. But if our hearts are too soft, make them hard.”

I know what he meant and I think I can pray that last prayer for some of my friends who are so delicate that a sneer would kill them. May the Lord harden them till they can despise the shame! Answer shame by making it see that you are ashamed of the scorner. Laugh at the laughter of

fools—despise their despising. With glorious greatness of spirit Jesus remained unprovoked amid the cruel taunts of godless men. Run through the ribald throng. Shut your ears and run, despising the shame.

Our Savior is to be imitated in His perseverance. For the joy that was set before Him He endured the Cross, despising the shame and “is set down.” He never stopped running till He could sit down at the right hand of the Throne of God. And that is the only place where you may sit down. My Brother, Satan puts before you a comfortable armchair and he says, “Take your ease.” No, no! Run till you can sit down at the right hand of the Throne of God. There are many dainty little arbors all along the Hill Difficulty, with settles and tables. And men, if they get into them, are very apt to fall asleep and lose their roll of comfortable assurance—therefore, pass these arbors by.

Runners must not sit down—that were to throw the race away. The only running that will save is persevering running. From starting block to finish line there must be no pausing. We must practice daily obedience, daily holiness, daily service. An off-and-on religion is a false religion. We must keep to the running till God gives us rest. Our Lord has won the victory. His enthronement “at the right hand of God” has well rewarded the Man Christ Jesus for the depth of His shame and misery. We must not cease our following of Him till we triumph, too. When we have finished our course, then we shall receive our crowns. But as yet we must copy the Captain of salvation by running steadily on.

Our Lord’s body bore five wounds and these shall help your memory to think of the five virtues in which you are to imitate your Lord. The piercing of the right hand is the memorial of His faith. He believed in God in the depth of His agony and trusted that He would deliver Him. Oh, for more faith! The left hand wound is His patience. He “endured, as seeing Him who is invisible,” He reviled not again. He said “Your will be done.” One wounded foot reminds me of His humility and how He was obedient to death, even the death of the Cross.

And that other wounded foot suggests to me His perseverance. His feet were nailed to the wood—His soul was joined to His work. Best of all, in the great wound in His side I see His love. The spear opened a passage to His heart. Love as Jesus loved—loving God and loving men. Then shall you triumph as He triumphed and He will crown you as He Himself is crowned. God help you so to run.

IV. Lastly, our text sets before us Jesus as THE PRIZE or END OF FAITH. We are to run “looking unto Jesus” as the end that we should aim at. We go towards our Lord every step that we take. True faith neither goes away from Christ Jesus, nor takes a roundabout road to Jesus. Nor does it so much as dream of going beyond Jesus. We have wise men about us nowadays who are going a long way beyond the Gospel. The old faith—which inspired Apostles, enabled the glorious army of martyrs to lay down their lives and produced the noblest of human characters in past ages—is not good enough for the superfine sophists of these days.

This boastful nineteenth century demands a new God, a new Christ, a new Heaven, a new Hell, a new Gospel and everything else new—except a

new heart. But we, Brethren, are not going to run in that direction. We run towards Christ and that is the good old way, "the way the holy Prophets went." We never expect to get beyond the teaching of our Lord Jesus either in this life or in the life to come. The end of our conversation is, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever."

Now we are to run towards Him, looking unto Him. Looking to Jesus and running to Jesus will look well and run well together. The eyes outstrip the feet but this also is well. For the feet will thus be made to move faster. Look that you may see more of Jesus. I have already told you what differences there are in men's perceptions of Christ—now I want you to keep on looking and running—that you may be among the best instructed, seeing most of Him and in Him. Those who have seen most of Jesus have only taken a cupful out of the great ocean of His fullness. We who live in this land of murk and cloud may imagine that we have seen the sun—for now and then it peeps out through a veil of mist.

But ask an Italian who lives beneath the clear blue sky, where the sun is at home and walks the heavens without a veil and he will tell you that an Englishman does not see the sun. For myself, the sun seems in those regions to brighten my nature and lighten my mind—the lord of day talks to my heart and makes it dance for joy. Many a Believer lives in a foggy atmosphere of doubts and fears. He sees his Lord now and then but it is not half a sight. Oh that we could all dwell under the unclouded skies of full assurance and see Jesus more nearly! I urge you in your running to come nearer and nearer to Jesus—that you may see Him more and more clearly.

Let us run towards Jesus that we may grow more like He. It is one of the virtues of Jesus that He transforms into His own image those who look at Him. He photographs Himself upon all sensitive hearts. There are no mirrors that I know of which improve the looker's eyes. But this mirror of God, as you look into it, enlightens your eyes and beautifies your character. As you see Christ you become Christians. O Beloved, our lives would not be so faulty, so wrinkled, so uncomely if our eyes were more completely taken up with beholding the transcendent charms of the altogether Lovely One! It would make us glorious if we saw more of the glory of Jesus.

Run that you may come nearer to Jesus. Seek after more near and dear fellowship with Him. He is not far away from us. He is absent as to His corporeal frame but He is with us in spirit. He comes very close to us at times when He finds us fit for the joy. We remember Him from the Hermons and the hill Mizar. We can never forget the golden moments and the hallowed places wherein He has manifested Himself unto us as He does not unto the world. There are hours when our head is on the bosom of Christ. There are times when we sit at His feet and hear His Words and looking up behold His beauty and are ravished therewith.

Run towards Him till you are nearer to Him in communion than up till now you have been. This is worth running for. But you will not have it without running. Remember how the Spouse in the Song could not find her Lord till she had gone through the streets of the city mourning till she

embraced Him. Keep on looking and running till you are with Him. Oh, I talk to you now about being with Him and how soon this may be realized in the most literal sense!

During my ministry in this place it has occurred two or three times that when the service has ended dear Friends have attempted to go to their homes but they have died in this House of Prayer. What must it be to go from this congregation to the assembly above? What a change from the poor talk of the preacher to the voice of the Well-Beloved! We do not know how near to Jesus on the Throne we may now be. The sea fog is around our vessel. Could we see before us, the white cliffs of our native shores are almost within reach. Think not that we are far out at sea. Within the next week, perhaps, some of us will see the King in His beauty.

We may spend next Sunday in Heaven! Does anybody shrink from such a prospect? No—each heir of Heaven says “Amen. So let it be.” Then the sweat of the race will be wiped away and the sweet of the triumph will begin. Then the fatigue and distress will have ended and the rest and the glory will have commenced. I would cheer you with the thought that you are much nearer the finish line than you think. How soon you may sit among the blood-washed throng! You older Brothers and Sisters in the course of nature must be there soon—be glad of it. Do not talk about being on the wrong side of seventy—you are on the right side—for you are so much nearer Heaven.

Formerly when great ships went to the Indies, the passengers would for a while toast the friends they left behind. But when they were in the Indian Ocean, they began to drink the health of friends ahead. Though comparatively young, I have many, many friends who are in the land beyond, to which I am making my way. I salute the glorified. Some of the dearest and best people that ever lived were members of this Church but they are now safely landed on the celestial shore. They are waiting and watching for us. We are coming, Brethren! We will be with you soon.

Best of all, our Lord is there! Once crowned with thorns, His head is now radiant with the diadem of universal dominion. He will come to welcome us on that blessed shore. Hasten, O time! Be like a seraph with six wings and bear us swiftly to that golden strand where we shall see the face of Him we love and shall be—

***“Far from this world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in.”***

Amen. Amen. Amen!

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

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

THE SHAMEFUL SUFFERER

NO. 236

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 30, 1859,
 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
 AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

*“Who for the joy that was set before Him
 endured the Cross, despising the shame,
 and is now set down at the right
 hand of the Throne of God.”*
Hebrews 12:2.

“OH what shall I do, my Savior to praise?” Where shall language be found which shall describe His matchless, His unparalleled love towards the children of men? Upon any ordinary subject one may find liberty of speech and fullness of utterance, but this subject lies out of the line of all oratory and eloquence cannot attain unto it. This is one of the unutterable things—unutterable because it surpasses thought and defies the power of words. How, then, can we deal with that which is unutterable? I am conscious that all I can say concerning the sufferings of Jesus this morning will be but as a drop in the bucket. None of us know the half of the agony which He endured. none of us have ever fully comprehended the love of Christ which passes knowledge. Philosophers have probed the earth to its very center, threaded the spheres, measured the skies, weighed the hills—no, weighed the world itself. But *this* is one of those vast, boundless things, which to measure does surpass all but the Infinite itself. As the swallow but skims the water and dives not into its depths, so all the descriptions of the preacher but skim the surface, while depths immeasurable must lie far beneath our observation. Well might a poet say—

“O love, you fathomless abyss!”

for this love of Christ is indeed measureless and fathomless. None of us can attain unto it.

In speaking of it we feel our own weakness, we cast ourselves upon the strength of the Spirit, but, even then, we feel that we can never attain unto the majesty of this subject. Before we can ever get a right idea of the love of Jesus, we must understand His previous glory in its height of majesty and His incarnation upon the earth in all its depths of shame. Now, who can tell us the majesty of Christ? When He was enthroned in the highest heavens He was very God of very God. By Him were the heavens made and all the hosts thereof. By His power He hung the earth upon nothing. His own almighty arm upheld the spheres—the pillars of the heavens rested upon Him. The praises of angels, archangels, cherubim and seraphim, perpetually surrounded Him. The full chorus of the Hallelujahs of the universe unceasingly flowed to the foot of His Throne—He reigned supreme above all His creatures, God over all, blessed forever.

Who can tell His height, then? And yet this must be attained before we can measure the length of that mighty stoop which He took when He came to earth to redeem our souls. And who, on the other hand, can tell how low He descended? To be a Man was something, but to be a Man of Sorrows was far more. To bleed and die and suffer, these were much for Him who was the Son of God. But to suffer as He did—such unparalleled agony. To endure, as He did, a death of shame and a death by desertion of His God—this is a lower depth of condescending love which the most inspired mind must utterly fail to fathom. And yet must we first understand infinite height and then, infinite depth. We must measure, in fact, the whole infinite that is between Heaven and Hell, before we can understand the love of Jesus Christ.

But because we cannot understand, shall we therefore neglect? And because we cannot measure shall we therefore despise? Ah, no. Let us go to Calvary this morning and see this great sight. Jesus Christ, for the joy that was set before Him, enduring the Cross, despising the shame.

I shall endeavor to show you, first, the shameful Sufferer. Secondly, we shall endeavor to dwell upon His glorious motive. And then in the third place, we shall offer Him to you as an admirable example.

I. Beloved, I wish to show you the SHAMEFUL SUFFERER. The text speaks of shame and therefore before entering upon suffering, I shall endeavor to say a word or two upon the shame.

Perhaps there is nothing which men so much abhor as shame. We find that death itself has often been preferable in the minds of men to shame. And even the most wicked and callous-hearted have dreaded the shame and contempt of their fellow creatures far more than any tortures to which they could have been exposed. We find Abimelech, a man who murdered his own brethren without compunction. We find even him overcome by shame, when “a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech head and all to break his skull. Then he called hastily unto the young man his armor bearer and said unto him, Draw your sword and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through and he died.” Shame was too much for him. He would far rather meet the

suicide’s death—for such it was—than he should be convicted of the shame of being slain by a woman.

So was it with Saul also—a man who was not ashamed of breaking his oath and of hunting his own son-in-law like a partridge upon the mountains—even he fell upon his own sword rather than it should be said of him that he fell by the Philistines. And we read of an ancient king, Zedekiah, that albeit he seemed reckless enough, he was afraid to fall into the hands of the Chaldeans, lest the Jews who had fallen away to Nebuchadnezzar should make a mock of him. These instances are but a few of many. It is well known that criminals and malefactors have often had a greater fear of public contempt than of anything else. Nothing can so break down the human spirit as to be subject continually to contempt, the visible and manifest contempt of one’s fellows.

In fact, to go further, shame is so frightful to man that it is one of the ingredients of Hell itself. It is one of the bitterest drops in that awful cup of misery. The shame of everlasting contempt to which wicked men awake in the day of their resurrection. To be despised of men, despised of angels, despised of God, is one of the depths of Hell. Shame, then, is a terrible thing to endure. And many of the proudest natures have been subdued when once they have been subjected to it. In the Savior's case, shame would be peculiarly shameful. The nobler a man's nature, the more readily does he perceive the slightest contempt and the more acutely does he feel it. That contempt which an ordinary man might bear without a suffering, he who has been bred to be obeyed and who has all his life been honored, would feel most bitterly. Beggared princes and despised monarchs are among the most miserable of men.

But here was our glorious Redeemer, in whose face was the nobility of Godhead itself, despised and spit upon and mocked. You may, therefore, think what such a noble nature as His had to endure. The mere kite can bear to be caged, but the eagle cannot bear to be hooded and blindfolded. He has a nobler spirit than that. The eye that has faced the sun, cannot endure darkness without a tear. But Christ who was more than noble, matchlessly noble, something more than of a royal race—for Him to be shamed and mocked must have been dreadful, indeed.

Some minds are of such a delicate and sensitive disposition that they feel things far more than others. There are some of us who do not so readily perceive an affront, or when we do perceive it, are totally indifferent to it. But there are others of a loving and tender heart. They have so long wept for others' woes that their hearts have become tender and they therefore feel the slightest brush of ingratitude from those they love. If those for whom they are willing to suffer should utter words of blasphemy and rebuke against them, their souls would be pierced to the very quick. A man in armor would walk through thorns and briars without feeling, but a man who is naked feels the smallest of the thorns.

Now Christ was, so to speak, a naked spirit. He had stripped Himself of all for manhood. He said, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head." He stripped Himself of everything that could make Him callous, for He loved with all His soul. His strong passionate heart was fixed upon the welfare of the human race. He loved them even unto death and to be mocked by those for whom He died, to be spit upon by the creatures whom He came to save, to come unto His own and to find that His own received Him not, but actually cast Him out—this was pain, indeed. You tender hearts can weep for others' woes and you that love with a love as strong as death and with a jealousy as cruel as the grave—you can guess, but only you—what the Savior must have endured, when all did mock Him, all did scorn Him and He found none to pity none to take His part.

To go back to the point with which we started—shame is peculiarly abhorrent to manhood and far more to such a manhood as that which

Christ carried about with Him—a noble, sensitive, loving nature, such as no other manhood had ever possessed.

And now come and let us behold the pitiful spectacle of Jesus put to shame. He was put to shame in three ways—by shameful accusation, shameful mockery and shameful crucifixion.

I. And, first, behold the Savior's shame in His shameful accusation. He in whom was no sin and who had done no ill, was charged with sin of the blackest kind. He was first arraigned before the Sanhedrim on no less a charge than that of blasphemy. And could He blaspheme? He who said, "It is My meat and My drink to do the will of Him that sent Me." Could he blaspheme? He who in the depths of His agony, when He sweat as it were great drops of blood at last cried, "My Father, not My will, but Yours be done"—could He blaspheme? No. And it is just because it was so contrary to His character that He felt the accusation. To charge some of you here present with having blasphemed God would not startle you, for you have done it and have done it so often as almost to forget that God abhors blasphemers and that He "will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain." But for one who loved as Jesus loved and obeyed as He obeyed—for Him to be charged with *blasphemy*—the accusation must have caused Him peculiar suffering. We wonder that He did not fall to the ground, even as His betrayers did when they came to lay hold upon Him. Such an accusation as that might blight an angel's spirit. Such a calumny might wither the courage of a cherub. Marvel not, then, that Jesus felt the shame of being accused of such a crime as this.

Nor did this content them. Having charged Him with breaking the first table, they then charged Him with violating the second—they said He was guilty of sedition. They declared that He was a traitor to the government of Caesar, that He stirred up the people, declaring that He Himself was a king. And could He commit treason? He who said, "My kingdom is not of this world, else would My servants fight." He who when they would have taken Him by force to make Him a king, withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed—could He commit treason? It were impossible! Did He not pay tribute and sent to the fish, when His poverty had not the wherewithal to pay the tax? Could He commit treason? He could not sin against Caesar, for He was Caesar's lord. He was King of kings and Lord of lords. If He had chosen He could have taken the purple from the shoulders of Caesar and at a word have given Caesar to be a prey to the worms.

Jesus Christ commit treason? 'Twas far enough from Jesus, the gentle and the mild to stir up sedition or set man against man. Ah no, He was a lover of His country and a lover of His race. He would never provoke a civil war and yet this charge was brought against Him. What would you think, good citizens and good Christians, if you were charged with such a crime as this, with the clamors of your own people behind you crying out against you as so execrable an offender that you must die? Would not that abash you? Ah, but your Master had to endure this as well as the other. He despised the shameful indictments and was numbered with the transgressors.

2. But next, Christ not only endured shameful accusation but He endured shameful mocking. When Christ was taken away to Herod, Herod set Him at nothing. The original word signifies made nothing of Him. It is an amazing thing to find that man should make nothing of the Son of God, who is All in All. Jesus had made Himself nothing. He had declared that He was a worm and no man. But what a sin was that and what a shame was that when Herod made Him nothing! He had but to look Herod in the face and He could have withered Him with one glance of His fire-darting eyes. But yet Herod may mock Him and Jesus will not speak and men of arms may come about Him and break their cruel jests upon His tender heart, but not a word has He to say, but “is led as a lamb to the slaughter and like a sheep before her shearers is dumb.”

You will observe that in Christ’s mocking, from Herod’s own hall, on to the time when He was taken from Pilate’s hall of judgment to His crucifixion and then onward to His death, the mockings were of many kinds. In the first place they mocked the Savior’s Person. One of those things about which we may say but little, but of which we ought often to think, is the fact that our Savior was stripped, in the midst of a ribald soldiery, of all the garments that He had. It is a shame even for us to speak of this which was done by our own flesh and blood toward Him who was our Redeemer. Those holy limbs which were the casket of the precious jewel of His soul were exposed to the shame and open contempt of men—coarse-minded men who were utterly destitute of every particle of delicacy.

The Person of Christ was stripped twice. And although our painters, for obvious reasons, cover Christ upon the Cross, there He hung—the naked Savior of a naked race. He who clothed the lilies had not wherewith to clothe Himself. He who had clothed the earth with jewels and made for it robes of emeralds, had not so much as a rag to conceal His nakedness from a staring, gazing, mocking, hard-hearted crowd. He had made coats of skins for Adam and Eve when they were naked in the garden. He had taken from them those poor fig leaves with which they sought to hide their nakedness, given them something wherewith they might wrap themselves from the cold. But now they part His garments among them and for His vesture do they cast lots, while He Himself, exposed to the pitiless storm of contempt, has no cloak with which to cover His shame.

They mocked His Person—Jesus Christ declared Himself to be the Son of God—they mocked His Divine Person as well as His human—when He hung upon the Cross, they said. “If You are the Son of God, come down from the Cross and we will believe on You.” Frequently they challenged Him to prove His Divinity by turning aside from the work which He had undertaken. They asked Him to do the very things which would have disproved His Divinity, in order that they might then, as they declared, acknowledge and confess that He was the Son of God. And now can you think of it? Christ was mocked as man—we can conceive Him as yielding to this—but to be mocked as God! A challenge thrown to manhood, manhood would easily take up and fight the duel. Christian manhood would

allow the gauntlet to lie there, or tread it beneath its foot in contempt, bearing all things and enduring all things for Christ's sake.

But can you think of God being challenged by His creature—the eternal Jehovah provoked by the creature which His own hand has made? The Infinite despised by the finite? He who fills all things, by whom all things exist—laughed at, mocked, despised by the creature of an hour, who is crushed before the moth! This was contempt, indeed, a contempt of His complex Person, of His Manhood and of His Divinity.

But note next, they mocked all His offices, as well as His Person. Christ was a King and never such a king as He. He is Israel's David. All the hearts of His people are knit unto Him. He is Israel's Solomon. He shall reign from sea to sea and from the river even to the ends of the earth. He was one of royal race. We have some called kings on earth, children of Nimrod, these are called kings, but kings they are not. They borrow their dignity of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords. But here was one of the true blood, one of the right royal race, who had lost His way and was mingled with the common herd of men.

What did they do? Did they bring crowns with which to honor Him and did the nobility of earth cast their robes beneath His feet to carpet his footsteps? No. He is delivered up to rough and brutal soldiery. They find for Him a mimic throne and having put Him on it, they strip Him of His own robes and find some old soldier's cloak of scarlet or of purple and put it about His loins. They plait a crown of thorns and put it about His brow—a brow that was of old benighted with stars! And then they fix in His hand—a hand that will not resent an insult—a reed scepter. Then bowing the knee, they pay their mimic homage before Him, making Him a May-day king. Now, perhaps there is nothing so heartrending as royalty despised. You have read the story of an English king who was taken out by his cruel enemies to a ditch. They seated him on an ant-hill, telling him that was his throne and then they washed his face in the filthiest puddle they could find. And the tears running down his cheeks, he said, "I shall yet be washed in clean water." Though he was bitterly mistaken.

But think of the King of kings and Lord of lords, having for His adoration the spittle of guilty mouths, for homage the smiting of filthy hands, for tribute the jests of brutal tongues! Was ever shame like Yours, You King of kings, You emperor of all worlds, flouted by the soldiery and smitten by their menial hands? O earth! How could you endure this iniquity. O you heavens! Why did you not fall in very indignation to crush the men who thus blasphemed your Maker? Here was a shame indeed—the King mocked by His own subjects.

He was a Prophet, too, as we all know and what did they that they might mock Him as a Prophet? Why they blindfolded Him—shut out the light of Heaven from His eyes and then they smote Him and did buffet Him with their hands and they said, "Prophecy unto us who it is that smote you." The Prophet must make a prophecy to those who taunted Him to tell them who it was that smote Him. We love Prophets. It is but the nature of mankind that if we believe in a Prophet we should love him.

We believe that Jesus was the first and the last of Prophets. By Him all others are sent—we bow before Him with reverential adoration. We count it to be our highest honor to sit at His feet like Mary. We only wish that we might have the comfort to wash His feet with our tears and wipe them with the hairs of our head. We feel that like John the Baptist, His shoe latchet we are not worthy to unloose and can we therefore bear the spectacle of Jesus the Prophet, blindfolded and buffeted with insult and blows?

But they also mocked His priesthood, Jesus Christ had come into the world to be a Priest to offer sacrifice and His Priesthood must be mocked, too. All salvation lay in the hands of this Priest and now they say unto Him, “If you are the Christ save Yourself and us.” Ah, He saved others, Himself He could not save, they laughed. But oh, what mystery of scorn is here, what unutterable depths of shame that the great High Priest of our profession, He who is Himself the Paschal Lamb, the Altar, the Priest, the Sacrifice—that He, the Son of God incarnate, the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, should thus be despised and thus be mocked.

He was mocked, still further, in His sufferings. I cannot venture to describe the sufferings of our Savior under the lash of the scourge. St. Bernard and many of the early fathers of the Church gave such a picture of Christ’s scourging that I could not endure to tell it over again. Whether they had sufficient data for what they said, I do not know. But this much I know—“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed.” I know it must have been a terrible scourging, to be called wounding, bruising, chastisement and stripes. And, remember, that every time the lash fell on His shoulders, the laugh of Him who used the lash was mingled with the stripe and every time the blood poured out afresh and the flesh was torn off His bones, there was a jest and a jeer to make His pain yet more poignant and terrible.

And when He came at last to His Cross and they nailed Him upon it, how they continued the mockery of His sufferings! We are told that the high priests and the scribes stood and at length sat and watched Him there. When they saw His head fall upon His breast, they would, no doubt, make some bitter remark about it and say, “Ah, He will never lift His head again among the multitude.” And when they saw His hands bleeding they would say, “Ha, ha, these were the hands that touched the lepers and that raised the dead—they will never do this again.” And when they saw His feet, they would say, “Ah, those feet will never tread this land again and journey on His pilgrimages of mercy.” And then some coarse, some villainous, some brutal, perhaps some beastly jest would be made concerning every part of His thrice-adorable Person. They mocked Him and, at last, He called for drink and they gave Him vinegar—mocking His thirst, while they pretended to allay it.

But worst of all, I have one more thing to notice, they mocked His prayers. Did you ever read in all the annals of executions, or of murders, that ever men mocked their fellow creatures *prayers*? I have read stories

of some dastardly villains who have sought to slay their enemies and seeing their death approaching the victims have said, “give me a moment or two for prayer”—and rare has been the cases when this has been disallowed. But I never read of a case in which when the prayer was uttered it has been laughed at and made the object of a jest. But here hangs the Savior and every word He speaks becomes the subject of a pun, the motto of a jest. And when at the last He utters the most thrilling death-shriek that ever startled earth and Hell, “Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani,” even then they must pun upon it and say, “He calls for Elijah, let us see whether Elijah will come and take Him down.” He was mocked even in His prayer. O Jesus! Never was love like Yours—never patience that could be compared with Your endurance when You did endure the Cross, despising the shame.

I feel that in thus describing the Savior’s mockeries, I have not been able to set before you the fullness of the shame through which He passed and shall have to attempt it yet, again, in another moment, when I come to describe His shameful death, taking the words which preceded the ones I have already enlarged upon. He endured the Cross just as He did despise the shame.

The Cross! The Cross! When you hear that word it wakens in your hearts no thoughts of shame. There are other forms of capital punishment in the present day far more disgraceful than the Cross. Connected with the guillotine there is much with the block as much with the gallows, most of all. But, remember, that although to speak of the gallows is to utter a word of ignominy, yet there is nothing of shame in the term “gallows,” compared with the shame of the Cross, as it was understood in the days of Christ. We are told that crucifixion was a punishment to which none could be put but a slave and, even then, the crime must have been of the most frightful character—such as the betrayal of a master, the plotting his death, or murdering him—only such offenses would have brought crucifixion, even, upon a slave.

It was looked upon as the most terrible and frightful of all punishments. All the deaths in the world are preferable to this. They have all some slight alleviating circumstance, either their rapidity or their glory. But this is the death of a villain, of a murderer, of an assassin—a death painfully protracted, one which cannot be equaled in all inventions of human cruelty for suffering and ignominy. Christ Himself endured this. The Cross, I say, is in this day no theme of shame. It has been the crest of many a monarch, the banner of many a conqueror. To some it is an object of adoration. The finest engravings, the most wonderful paintings have been dedicated to this subject. And now, the Cross engraved on many a gem has become a right, royal and noble thing. And we are unable at this day, I believe, fully to understand the shame of the Cross. But the Jew knew it, the Roman knew it—and Christ knew what a frightful thing, what a shameful thing—it was to be put to the death of crucifixion.

Remember, too, that in the Savior’s case, there were special aggravations of this shame. He had to carry His own Cross. He was crucified, too,

at the common place of execution, Calvary, analogous to our ancient Tyburn, or our present Old Bailey. He was put to death, too, at a time when Jerusalem was full of people. It was at the feast of the Passover, when the crowd had greatly increased and when the representatives of all nations would be present to behold the spectacle. Parthians and Medes and Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Greece, yes, and perhaps far-off Tarshish and the islands of the sea. All were there to unite in this scoffing and to increase the shame. And He was crucified between two thieves, as if to teach that He was more vile than they. Was ever shame like this?

Let me conduct you to the Cross. The Cross, the Cross! Tears begin to flow at the very thoughts of it. The rough wood is laid upon the ground, Christ is flung upon His back, four soldiers seize His hands and feet, His blessed flesh his rent with the accursed iron. He begins to bleed, He is lifted into mid-air, the Cross is dashed into the place prepared for it. Every limb is dislocated, every bone put out of joint by that terrific jerk. He hangs there naked to His shame, gazed upon by all beholders, the sun shines hot upon Him, fever begins to burn, His tongue is dried up like a potsherd, it cleaves to the roof of His mouth, He has not wherewith to nourish nature with moisture.

His body has been long emaciated by fasting, He has been brought near the brink of death by flagellation in the hall of Pilate. There He hangs, the most tender part of His body, His hands and feet are pierced and where the nerves are most numerous and tender, there is the iron rending and tearing its fearful way. The weight of His body drags the iron up His feet and when His knees are so weary that they cannot hold Him, then the iron begins to drag through His hands. Terrible spectacle indeed! But you have seen only the outward—there was an inward. You cannot see that—if you could see it, though your eyes were like the angels, you would be smitten with eternal blindness. Then there was the soul. The soul dying. Can you guess what must be the pangs of a soul dying? A soul never died on earth yet. Hell is the place of dying souls, where they die everlastingly the second death. And there was within the ribs of Christ's body, Hell itself poured out. Christ's soul was enduring the conflict with all the powers of Hell, whose malice was aggravated by the fact that it was the last battle they should ever be able to fight with Him. No, worse than that. He had lost that which is the martyr's strength and shield, He had lost the presence of His God, God Himself was putting His hand upon Him!

It pleased the Father to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief, He has made His soul a sacrifice for sin. God, in whose countenance Christ had everlastingly seemed himself, basking in delight, concealed His face. And there was Jesus forsaken of God and man, left alone to tread the winepress—no, to be trod in the winepress—and dip His clothes in His own blood. Oh, was there ever grief like this? No love can picture it. If I had a thought in my heart concerning the suffering of Christ, it should chafe my lips before I uttered it. The agonies of Jesus were like the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar, heated seven times hotter than ever human suffering was heated before. Every vein was a road for the hot feet of pain to travel in—

every nerve a string in a harp of agony that thrilled with the discordant wail of Hell. All the agonies that the damned themselves can endure were thrust into the soul of Christ.

He was a target for the arrows of the Almighty, arrows dipped in the poison of our sin. All the billows of the Eternal dashed upon this Rock of our salvation. He must be bruised, trod, crushed, destroyed—His soul must be exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.

But I must pause, I cannot describe it. I can creep over it and you can, too. The rocks rent when Jesus died, our hearts must be made of harder marble than the rocks themselves if they do not feel. The temple rent its gorgeous veil of tapestry and will not you be mourners, too? The sun itself had one big tear in its own burning eye, which quenched its light. And shall not we weep? We for whom the Savior died? Shall not we feel an agony of heart that He should thus have endured for us?

Mark, my Friends, that all the shame that came on Christ He despised. He counted it so light compared with the joy which was set before Him, that He is said to have despised it. As for His sufferings, He could not despise them—that word could not be used in connection with the Cross for the Cross was too awful for even Christ Himself to despise. That, He *endured*. The shame He could cast off, but the Cross He must carry and to it He must be nailed. “He endured the Cross, despising the shame.”

II. And now HIS GLORIOUS MOTIVE. What was that which made Jesus speak like this?—“For the joy that was set before Him.” Beloved, what was the joy? Oh, ‘tis a thought that must melt a rock and make a heart of iron move! The joy which was set before Jesus, was principally joy of saving you and me. I know it was the joy of fulfilling His Father’s will—of sitting down on His Father’s Throne—of being made perfect through suffering—but still I know that this is the grand, great motive of the Savior’s suffering—the joy of saving *us*. Do you know what the joy is of doing good to others? If you do not I pity you, for of all joys which God has left in this poor wilderness, this is one of the sweetest.

Have you seen the hungry when they have wanted bread for many an hour—have you seen them come to your house almost naked, their clothes having been thrust away that they might get money upon them to find them bread? Have you heard the woman’s story of the griefs of her husband? Have you listened when you have heard the tale of imprisonment, of sickness, of cold, or hunger, of thirst and have you never said, “I will clothe you, I will feed you”? Have you never felt that joy Divine, when your gold has been given to the poor and your silver has been dedicated to the Lord, when you bestowed it upon the hungry and you have gone aside and said, “God forbid that I should be self-righteous—but I do feel it is worth living for, to feed the hungry and clothe the naked and to do good to my poor suffering fellow creatures”?

Now, this is the joy which Christ felt. It was the joy of feeding us with the bread of Heaven—the joy of clothing poor, naked sinners in His own righteousness—the joy of finding mansions in Heaven for homeless souls—of delivering us from the prison of Hell and giving us the eternal

enjoyments of Heaven. But why should Christ look on us? Why should He choose to do this for us? Oh, my Friends, we never deserved anything at His hands! As a good old writer says, “When I look at the crucifixion of Christ, I remember that *my* sins put Him to death. I see not Pilate, but I see myself in Pilate’s place, bartering Christ for honor. I hear not the cry of the Jews, but I hear my sins yelling out, ‘Crucify Him, crucify Him.’ I see not iron nails, but I see my own iniquities fastening him to the Cross. I see no spear, but I behold my unbelief piercing His poor wounded side—

‘For you, my sins, my cruel sins, His chief tormentors were. Each of my sins became a nail and unbelief the spear.’

It is the opinion of the Romanist, that the very man who pierced Christ’s side was afterwards converted and became a follower of Jesus. I do not know whether that is *the* fact, but I know it is the case spiritually. I know that we have pierced the Savior, I know that we have crucified Him. And yet, strange to say, the blood which we fetched from those holy veins has washed us from our sins and has made us accepted in the Beloved. Can you understand this? Here is manhood mocking the Savior, parading Him through the streets, nailing Him to a Cross and then sitting down to mock at His agonies. And yet what is there in the heart of Jesus but love to them?

He is weeping all this while that they should crucify Him, not so much because He felt the suffering, though that was much, but because He could bear the thought that men whom He loved could nail Him to the tree. “That was the unkindest stab of all.” You remember that remarkable story of Julius Caesar, when he was struck by his friend Brutus. “When the noble Caesar saw him stab, ingratitude, more strong than traitor’s arms, quite vanquished him! Then burst his mighty heart.” Now Jesus had to endure the stab in His inmost heart and to know that His *elect* did it—that His *redeemed* did it, that His own *Church* was His murderer—that His own people nailed Him to the tree! Can you think, Beloved, how strong must have been the love that made Him submit even to this?

Picture yourself today going home from this hall. You have an enemy who all his life long has been your enemy. His father was your enemy and he is your enemy, too. There is never a day passes but you try to win his friendship. But he spits upon your kindness and curses your name. He does injury to your friends and there is not a stone he leaves unturned to do you plumage. As you are going home today, you see a house on fire. The flames are raging and the smoke is ascending up in one black column to Heaven. Crowds gather in the street and you are told there is a man in the upper chamber who must be burnt to death. No one can save him. You say, “Why that is my enemy’s house.” And you see him at the window. It is your own enemy—the very man. He is about to be burnt. Full of loving kindness, you say, “I will save that man if I can.” He sees you approach the house. He puts his head from the window and curses you. “An everlasting blast upon you!” he says, “I would rather perish than that you should save me.”

Do you imagine yourself then, dashing through the smoke and climbing the blazing staircase to save him? And can you conceive that when you get near him he struggles with you and tries to roll you in the flames? Can you conceive your love to be so potent, that you can perish in the flames rather than leave him to be burned? You say, "I could not do it. It is above flesh and blood to do it." But Jesus did it. We hated Him, we despised Him and, when He came to save us, we rejected Him. When His Holy Spirit comes into our hearts to strive with us, we resist Him. But He will save us. No, He Himself braved the fire that He might snatch us as brands from eternal burning. The joy of Jesus was the joy of saving sinners. The great motive, then, with Christ, in enduring all this, was that He might save us.

III. And now, give me just a moment and I will try and hold the Savior up for OUR IMITATION. I speak now to Christians—to those who have tasted and handled of the good word of life. Christian Men and Women! If Christ endured all this, merely for the joy of saving you, will you be ashamed of bearing anything for Christ? The words are on my lips again this morning—

***"If on my face for Your dear name,
Shame and reproach shall be,
I'll hail reproach and welcome
Shame, my Lord, I'll die for Thee."***

Oh, I do not wonder that the martyrs died for such a Christ as this! When the love of Christ is shed abroad in our hearts, then we feel that if the stake were present we would stand firmly in the fire to suffer for Him who died for us. I know our poor unbelieving hearts would soon begin to quail at the crackling fire wood and the furious heat. But surely this love would prevail over all our unbelief—are there any of you who feel that if you follow Christ you must lose by it, lose your station, or lose your reputation? Will you be laughed at if you leave the world and follow Jesus? Oh, and will you turn aside because of these little things when He would not turn aside, though all the world mocked Him, till He could say "It is finished"? No, by the Grace of God, let every Christian lift his hands to the Most High God, to the Maker of Heaven and earth and let him say within himself—

***"Now for the love I bear his name,
What was my gain I count my loss,
I pour contempt on all my shame,
And nail my glory to His Cross."***

"For me to live is Christ. To die is gain," Living I will be His, dying I will be His. I will live to His honor, serve Him wholly, if He will help me, and if He needs, I will die for His name's sake.

[Mr. Spurgeon was so led out under the first head, that he was unable from lack of time to touch upon the other points. May what was blessed to the hearer be sweet to the reader.]

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A HONEYCOMB

NO. 1073

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 29, 1872,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you are wearied and faint in your minds.”
Hebrews 12:3.***

WHEN the Hebrew Christians were suffering dire persecution the Apostle could suggest no better support for their faith than this, “Consider Him.” He bade them look to Jesus and compare their case with that of their Lord. Such contemplations would prove a sovereign balm for their distressed minds. A consideration of our Lord and Master is the best conceivable stay and support during persecution. Let us look into that fact for a few minutes. The Believer under persecution should remember that he is suffering no strange thing, but is only enduring that which fell upon his Master before him.

Should the disciple expect to be above his Lord? “If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household?” If they had received Christ they would have received us, but since they reject both Christ and His sayings, the followers of Christ must expect that both their persons and their doctrines will be lightly esteemed. Remember that in addition to His being our Master, Jesus is also God. Shamefully unrighteous was the opposition of mankind to God, whom by all reasons of right and justice they were bound to reverence—yet He endured with almighty patience the contradiction of sinners against Himself. A word from His lips would have withered them, but, like a sheep before her shearers, He was dumb.

One glance of His eyes of fire would have consumed their spirits, but those eyes distilled tears instead. You are but men—is it much that men should mock you? If God Himself, in the Person of His dear Son has endured the opposition of sinners, who are you, O sons of men, that you should wonder, much less should murmur when you are reviled for Jesus' sake? Remember, too, that our dear Lord and Master was perfectly innocent. It was a cruel thing that He should be opposed who had done no harm to anyone. “For which of these works do you stone Me?” He asked a plaintive question, as much as if He had said—“I have healed your sick, I have fed your hungry, I have raised your dead. And do you thus requite me! Are stones the only testimonies of your appreciation?” They called Him a drunk, yet well we know He was Temperance itself. They said He had a devil, though He was the Lord of angels. They charged Him with treason, and yet He was, Himself, the King of kings and Lord of all.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, in us there is much that is evil and when men speak evil of us falsely we may say within ourselves, “Ah, had they known me better they might have truthfully found fault with me in some other direction.” You are not innocent, Beloved. Oftentimes you bring the

rebuke upon yourselves and the contradiction of sinners against your religion is due to your own fault quite as well as to the world's opposition to the Truth of God which you love. Therefore if He, the Spotless One, endured, should not you endure who are so far from innocent? Should not you be willing for His sake to suffer persecution?

Remember, too, the loving mission upon which our Master came. He came into this world on purpose to save men. He had no sinister motive, nor even a secondary aim. The glory of God in the salvation of lost souls was all He lived for, and yet for all that, sinners were infuriated against Him and opposed Him with might and main. Now, the good you can confer upon them is slender enough compared with the rich gifts with which the Master's hands were laden. You come, it is true, to tell them of a Savior, but you cannot *save* them. You bring glad tidings of good things, but you are only tiding-bearers of the good things your Master actually brought. If they persecuted Him who gave His blood for their redemption, it is not amazing if you, who can only tell what He has done, should bear some of the reproaches that fell upon Him.

We remember, dear Friends, how bitter were the reproaches that assailed Him—how the enmity of man put forth all its cruel force. They were not content with slandering Him in life—they must hurry Him away to death. Reproach broke His heart and He was full of heaviness. Thus they tortured His soul and you have not forgotten their cruelties to Him in Pilate's Hall where the mental and physical agonies were blended. You cannot forget the nailing to the Cross and the scorn which saluted Him in the midst of His dying grief. You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. What have you endured compared with His?

As the poet standing upon the desolate mounds of ruined Rome considering the death-throes of an empire, said, "What are our petty griefs? Let me not number mine." So may you say, "What are the sufferings of any of the saints compared with the infinite griefs of the eternal Son of God?" His was suffering, indeed. "Consider Him, lest you are weary and faint in your minds." Yet reflect, Beloved, amid all these sufferings our Lord's temper remained unruffled. He spoke strong words against hypocrisy and falsehood wherever He beheld them. He spared neither Scribe nor Pharisee, but in those stern denunciations not a single atom of personal anger was blended. He did not denounce them in resentment for their attacks upon Himself, but because they deserved to be denounced and were in themselves too vile to be tolerated. No personal animosity ever ruffled the serenity of our great Master's spirit.

Moreover, He was never moved to take the slightest revenge upon His foes—even for those who nailed Him to the Cross He had no return but the prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And, as He had no vengeance against them, so they exerted no evil influence upon Him. He persevered in His lifework just as much as if He had never been opposed. Like the sun that goes on in its strength whether there are clouds to hide it or whether it shines out of the blue serene, Christ continued in His heavenward way. Coming out of His chamber full of love to His spouse like a bridegroom girded for the race He pursued His mighty journey, tarrying not till He had fulfilled His course.

Oh, how strengthening is this contemplation! Let us consider Him and reflect that by reason of His sufferings and His patience, and His forgiveness, and His perseverance He achieved a triumph over evil which was, in effect, a complete victory of righteousness over sin! If He could have been ruffled He had been defeated. If He could have been angered He had been overthrown. If He could have been stayed in His progress, then He had not been victorious. But He bore and bore and bore again—He suffered and He suffered and He suffered, still, like the anvil that replies not to the hammer—He yet wore out those hammers by His patience!

Brethren, consider this and suffer yourselves with a patience like your Master's. Consider Jesus, and push on in the allotted path of holy service just as He did. Consider Him, and look forward with expectancy to the joy of triumphing over evil, for Christ will, in you, get the victory over sin again—in you He will again be crowned with many crowns and in you, again, His cross shall become the symbol and weapon of victory!

But now I must confess I did not take this text with the view of preaching from it as it stands, but from a light which breaks out of it. We have given you an outline of what could have been said upon the text, but the thought occurred to me if the consideration of Christ is a most effectual medicine to the persecuted so as to prevent their being weary or faint in their mind, doubtless the same sacred balm would be beneficial to all other cases of spiritual distress. And as I thought of all the diseases of God's people, and like a physician tried this prescription upon them, I discovered that it was equally suitable and effectual in every case!

So I thought I would speak this Sunday morning to those souls which most need our care, namely, to those who are seeking Jesus and longing after salvation but are filled with doubts and despondencies. And I will say to them, "consider Him." I am persuaded, Beloved, if I am enabled by God's Spirit to lead any seeking soul to "consider Him," I shall also lead that soul into liberty! I believe this topic will be the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound. I feel for some of you that God has set before you, this morning, an open door which no man can shut! And my prayer shall be offered over every syllable that I utter, that God may lead you through that open door at this very moment—so that not 20 or 100, but thousands of you may find Christ and be saved with an everlasting salvation!

I know the medicine has power in it if God the Holy Spirit will but apply it. I shall now speak to the seeking sinner, taking him by the hand and appealing to him in simple but earnest language. You that seek salvation I say unto you, in the name of the living God, consider Christ Jesus, the Son of God, the only Savior of man! And do this, first, to meet your own consideration of your SIN. You are awakened enough to know that you have sinned against God. Though a little while ago sin seemed a trifle, you now know that your sin is a terrible thing, a deadly thing. And the thought oppresses your spirit that your sin deserves the wrath of God—that it must be punished—that God would not be a just moral Governor if He were to pardon you absolutely! You know He must take vengeance upon your inventions and punish you for your iniquity.

Now I am glad that you have considered your sin and the heinousness of it, but, poor Soul, let me take you by the hand and say to you, consider Him—the Savior, Christ Jesus. For if you will think of Him you will remember that God has been just and has laid the sin of His people upon the Lord Jesus Christ. It was impossible that sin should be wiped out with no reaction from God. But He has been pleased to accept a Substitute in the Person of His only-begotten Son who could lawfully be a Substitute because He is the Head of His people and it was natural that in their fall He should take an interest as being to them what Adam was to the whole human race.

Now, the Lord need not punish *you*, oh Sinner, for sin, for He has punished Jesus Christ in the place of all believing sinners! He need not visit *you* with stripes, for the stripes due to your sin, if you believe in Jesus, were laid upon another's back—your iniquities were gathered all together in one mighty load and then placed upon the shoulders of Jesus Christ, the great Scapegoat for sin! Does not that remove distress from your mind? If you consider your sin, consider also the five wounds, consider the bloody sweat, consider the tortured Person of the Immaculate Christ who was God at the same time that He was Man, and say to your soul, "If Jesus died in your place, there is a sufficient recompense made to the injured honor of Almighty God so that He can be just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly."

But there rises in your mind this thought, "My sin has placed me in a miserable position, for I am a sinner and being a sinner I must be obnoxious to the anger of God. It is not possible that a pure God could permit me to dwell in His Presence, for He cannot look upon iniquity. How can I hope for acceptance before God when I am defiled?" Now hearken, Soul. You are a sinner, but "consider Him." Ask yourself what is Jesus Christ? I speak with reverence of His name, as our Redeemer, what is He apart from sinners? Is not His name, "Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins"? If there were no sinners, what could be the value of His name? It would be an empty sounding title without a meaning! How could He save if there were no lost ones to be saved? He could only be called a Savior by way of compliment and fancy.

Think about it, what did Jesus come from Heaven for if He had not a relation to sinners? "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." He came for nothing if He does not find sinners and save them! And if you, and such as you, have no right to look to Jesus, then what did He come to earth for? If there is a righteous man here who has no sin, Jesus has nothing to do with you—you will perish without a Savior! But if you are a sinner, you are the kind of person that He came to save and the fact of your knowing that you are a sinner should give you comfort!

Look at the Characters of Christ—"consider Him." Is He not a Priest? And what is a priest for, but to make propitiation for the sins of the people? Is not our Lord described as a Sacrifice for sin? But to what end is there a bloody sacrifice if there is no sin to put away? Jesus is our Advocate. What says the Apostle? "If any man sin, we have an Advocate." Who needs an Advocate with God but the man who has offended? Jesus is an

Intercessor, too, but who needs Him to intercede for him if he is innocent? He makes intercession for the sins of His people. You see, then, if you will consider Him, just as a poor man is necessary before there can be an almsgiver—just as a disconsolate soul is necessary before a comforter can exercise his office—so a sinner is necessary before a Savior can be what He is ordained to be!

Jesus *needs* your sinnership that He may exercise His sacred craft upon it! Put a surgeon down amidst men who are never sick and what is there for him to do? Tell a physician that in a certain city no one is ever ill and he will take himself off by the next train. If there were no sinners what use would a Propitiation be? Therefore as you consider Him, though your sense of sin will not vanish, your despair about it will be driven away. “Yes, but,” says another, “while I have been considering my sin I have been stunned altogether by a sense of its greatness. Oh Sir, mine has not been mere *verbal* sin—I have committed crimson transgressions of which it were a shame to speak! I have defiled myself by actual crimes which I cannot efface from my memory.”

Be it so, but I bring you my one remedy—“Consider Him.” What sort of a Savior is Jesus Christ—a little Savior or a great one? Is He not the Son of God and, Himself, God? What need is there of a Divine Person to be a Propitiation for *limited* sin? It was the infinity of sin that required the Godhead itself to become Incarnate in order that human guilt might be put away. If you say, “I have but little sin,” I tell you Christ will have nothing to do with you. He came not from Heaven to be a physician to a pin’s prick of a man’s finger which will heal of itself—He is a Physician who delights to heal putrefying sores and gaping wounds and incurable diseases! And you, you great, big, devilish Sinner, you are just the sort of man that Christ delights to operate upon, for in you will He show His power, His mercy, His Grace, His Sovereignty!

There is room to display the infinity of His mercy in such a one as you are. Therefore, be not cast down, be not faint and weary in your seeking after Him, but come at once and close in with Him who is mighty to save. “Yes,” says another, “but in turning over my sin I see the peculiarity of it. I believe my case is one by itself. I do not think another man could have committed the sin I have done under the circumstances and with the peculiar aggravations.” Be it so. You are a unique sinner, but “consider Him,” for He is a unique Savior! Was there ever such a one as Jesus? You are a terrible sinner, but His name is called Wonderful. If you are a sinner of such a class that if you are saved all the angels will throng the streets to see you come to Heaven and point at you, and say, “Behold a monstrous sinner, saved.” I say, if it is so you will bring all the more glory to Christ—you will only make His name the more famous through every heavenly street!

But I tell you, however much by yourself you may be, Christ will meet you. If you have out-roared all others in the daring flights of your sin, Jesus has gone beyond you in the flights of His mercy! Though you should have gone as near the gates of Hell as possible and have imitated the devil in his worst qualities, yet the Redeemer is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him! He is a Savior, and a great one! If you

can ever find such a Savior as Christ, then I will ask you to find such a sinner as yourself. But since you think you are such a unique sinner, since you must say of yourself, “Ne plus ultra,” I will say the same of Jesus—there is none beyond Him. He stands alone and by Himself, and so the sinner and the Savior are well matched. Let your fears be hushed to sleep and put your trust in Him.

Now, the same precious sentence will be useful to the seeking soul if its contemplation should have taken another shape. I can well believe that some of you are grievously oppressed with the sense of the greatness of GOD. You have lived for years negligent of the God who created you and supplied your needs. But now you have been awakened and aroused to the fact that there is a God, a God whom you have despitely entreated, whom you have shamefully disregarded—and you are shocked to find that it is so, for now you have a sense of the greatness of God—and you are afraid that He will crush you! You know the justice of God and you are sure that He must avenge the injuries you have done to His holy Law and, therefore, you go about every day with a dreadful sound in your ears, crying, “Where shall I go from His Presence, and how shall I escape from His vengeance?”

You are surrounded with God and in Him you live and move and have your being—and this everywhere present God is your *enemy*, for you have made Him so by your rebellions against Him! Now as a cure for all this, I have to say to you, “consider Him”—Christ Jesus. You are afraid of God because He hates sin. Your fears are based on truth! God hates sin infinitely! If there were only one grain of sin in the whole universe, He would burn it to ashes to get rid of that grain of sin for it is such a detestable thing in His sight. But now consider Christ Jesus—sin was laid on Him. If you will come now and put your trust in Jesus, you may be sure that your sin was laid on Christ and the wrath of God concerning sin was spent upon Him. The vials of Jehovah’s indignation were poured upon the devoted head of the Great Shepherd of the sheep. God hates sin, but He will not hate *you*, for you have no sin if you believe in Jesus, seeing your sin is transferred to your Surety and laid upon Christ—you are clean.

“Ah, but,” you say, “He is such a holy God, how can I approach Him?” Well, I will tell you the most blessed secret out of Heaven. It is this—you can, by faith, put on the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus and when you have it on you, you will be as holy in the sight of God as Christ is holy! Did not Jesus keep the Law? What need was there that He should? He needed not to have become a servant to His Father! He has a righteousness to spare and He gives it to us, for He is made unto us, “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” When a soul puts on the righteousness of Christ by faith, even the all-seeing eyes of God cannot see a flaw in that righteousness!

Adam in the Garden had a perfect righteousness, but then it was only a human one. You and I, when we believe in Jesus, have a perfect righteousness which is Divine—the righteousness of the Eternal Son of God Himself—and so we can come to God as if we had been perfectly innocent, and stand on terms of full familiarity with the Thrice Holy One. “Ah,” says one, “there is good cheer in all this, but still, I have some dread remain-

ing, for God is infinitely great.” It is true, it is true, but I would have you, “consider Him,” for remember, the God you have to do with is not God as seen on Sinai, or rather as obscurely heard amidst the dense darkness of the trembling mountain! You have to do with God in *Christ Jesus* and therefore, “consider Him.”

Now think for a minute. Jesus is a strong God, it is true. Do you not see Him walking the waters of the sea? But why does He pause in the midst of His wondrous march over the waves? It is to stretch out His hand and save Peter from sinking, who had said, “Lord save me, or I perish!” The strength of God shall do the same for you—as you are sinking and ready to perish—the Omnipotent God will put out His hand and snatch you from the waves of fire and deliver your soul from destruction! Consider Christ Jesus a moment as a strong God, and how He uses His strength. He walks down the streets where the sick folk lie in their beds and does He trample on them and crush out the last spark of life from those poor wretches? No, but He torches this one and an eye is opened, and He puts his finger on another and an ear is unstopped. He lays His hand on the dead and they arise!

Oh, yes, and He will do this for you. Be thankful for a mighty God, for in Christ Jesus the Omnipotence of God will only come to heal your woes. See this Omnipotent One take the loaves and the fishes in His hands and break them, and as He breaks them they multiply till all those thousands are fed out of one basket of barley loaves and small fishes—He will feed your soul with heavenly bread to the fullest! His greatness will reveal itself in supplying your great necessities and blessing you greatly. You will see it so, if you will consider Jesus—

***“Till God in human flesh I see
My thoughts no comfort find.
The holy, just, and sacred Three,
Are terrors to my mind.
But if Immanuel’s face appears,
My hope, my joy begins,
His name forbids my slavish fears,
His Grace forgives my sins.”***

So I have used the remedy thus far. I dare say I shall be a little tedious—the doctor is always tedious when he has many wounds to bind up. It may be that some soul here is saying, “You have not touched my difficulty yet. I am troubled about sin, and I am troubled about God, but still my greatest anxiety is this—I know that if I could *believe*, my sins would be pardoned, but I am perplexed with UNBELIEF and I am sorely distressed because of the HARDNESS OF MY HEART which will not let me repent.”

Come, then, Soul, and “consider Him.” First, you say, “I have little or no faith.” Then “consider Him.” Did Jesus ever stipulate for *great* faith before He healed a soul? What trembling faith He accepted in the days of His flesh! The poor leper says, “Lord *if* You will, You can make me clean.” You can get as far as that, can’t you? And Jesus Christ said, “I will, be you clean.” A poor woman came into the crowd and was afraid to face the Master, so she crept behind Him and touched the hem of His garment and stole a cure, for she said, “If I may but touch the hem of His garment I shall be made whole.” And Jesus did not rebuke her but said, “Your faith has made you whole, go in peace.”

So Jesus Christ loves little faith! Therefore you, poor Much-Afraid, and you, Despondency, “consider Him,” and His gentleness towards the timid and trembling, and let your fears be gone. But you say, “Ah, I am afraid I have no faith at all.” Then, Beloved, “consider Him,” and among other matters consider well how He *deserves* your faith. Tell me, what did Jesus ever do that you should doubt Him? He says He will save you if you will trust Him. Point to one promise He has broken. I challenge you, yes, I challenge all the *world* to point to *one* Word that ever fell from His lips and was not fulfilled! That dear and precious Savior is Truth itself! I feel I can trust Him and whenever I do not trust Him it is because I have not considered Him.

The sight of Him makes me feel that I would rush into His arms. What? Not trust Him who “bears the earth’s huge pillars up?” I *must* trust Him! Son of God and Son of Man, I see both Your strength and Your tenderness, and I must rely upon You. I pray the man who feels that he cannot believe to consider Christ Jesus, think of Him in the Garden! Think of Him on the Cross. Will not His death suffice? Think of Him as rising from the dead and pleading before the eternal Throne—

**“Venture on Him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude,
Surely this Savior
Can do helpless sinners good.”**

Well, then, suppose that after all you should still say, “But I still find unbelief my trouble”? Then I ask you to remember that He was exalted on high on purpose that He might bestow the gift of faith and repentance. Even while He was here on earth, His disciples prayed, “Lord, increase our faith,” and you may without doubt pray to Him to give you faith. And you, who mourn a rocky heart, you may say, “Lord, You are exalted on high to give repentance to Israel—give repentance to me!”

Jesus can touch your heart and make it tender in a moment! Only let that nail-pierced hand be laid upon your cold, petrified heart and it will become warm and instinct with heavenly life. If you look to *yourself* to find repentance, you will look long, but if you will look to Him, is it not written, “They shall look on Him whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for Him as one mourns for his first-born”? A sight of Christ breeds repentance in the heart! Jesus looked on Peter—Peter’s eyes were dry till then, but Peter saw that look and it melted Peter’s heart—right through his nature it pierced like some mighty gleam of a ten-fold sun! In a moment it pierced the iceberg of his nature and dissolved his soul! One look at Jesus will melt a heart of stone. “Consider Him,” then.

Come to the point. *You* cannot believe nor repent, but He can give you both! If you urge yourself to these, you will often make a mistake and make yourself more unbelieving and more impenitent than before. But if you go to Him for every Grace that brings you near and ask that without money—He will give you everything! He will freely bestow them upon you. If you let Him be Savior from top to bottom, from beginning to end—if you will just go to Him as helpless, lost and ruined and confide yourself entirely to Him—you shall find He will not and cannot fail you in this, the time of your need. Thus you see, considering Him gets rid of those troubles. May the Spirit of God prove it to be so!

Perhaps YOUR OWN INSIGNIFICANCE causes you to doubt. You complain and say, "I cannot think Christ would save *me*. I am nobody. I am mean, poor, obscure." Dear Friend, consider Jesus! Did He ever fawn at the great ones' feet? Did He preach in the royal chapel and utter there soft nothings, fit for the ears of kings and queens? You know He did not! He wore the smock-frock of the peasantry and called fishermen to be His Apostles—thus pouring contempt on princes—for, "not many great men after the flesh, not many mighty are called." He has chosen the base things of this world and the things that are not has God chosen to bring to nothing the things that are.

"Ah," says one, "but I mean I have no gift or knowledge." Then "consider Him," and let me bring Him before your eyes. I see Him standing with uplifted hands, exclaiming, "Father I thank You that You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seems good in Your sight." Does not that settle that question once and for all? I am sure it ought to do so! "Ah," says one, "but I am so unworthy." Yes, and will you tell me where Christ was accustomed to seek out the worthy ones? Did He not go and touch blind beggars' eyes who were nothing but beggars and had no recommendation but poverty?

Did He not bless those who had no claim by way of righteousness? Does mercy ever ask for merit? Does it not, on the contrary, seek for misery? If an angel of mercy hovered over this congregation, poising himself in mid air, I should know that he did not come with mercy to those of you who are good and have no sin—why should he come to insult you? But if there is a broken-hearted sinner here, I know that the angel has a gracious word for *him*, from the heart of Him who delights in mercy! Do not say I am a nobody, and am therefore forgotten! Christ Jesus loves nobodies! He delights to pick up those whom society throws away—the very off-scouring and sweepings are His choice! Solomon built his temple of cedar, but our Lord builds His temple with the meanest woods in the forest. Any jeweler can make a precious thing of gold, but Jesus makes diamonds out of dross and crowns out of clay!

Yes, but perhaps I have not met the peculiar distress of some and so let me try again. "Ah," says one, "but I feel my POWERLESSNESS for everything that is good. I am sure if I am saved I cannot help in it." Ah, poor Fool, it is strange that ever we should think we could help the Lord to save us! Could you have helped in Creation? If you had been there, when God was making the world, would you have offered to help Him? When He said, "Let there be light," would you have rushed forward with a match and said, "Permit me to add my little spark"? It is insulting to *think* of such a thing! But Salvation is a greater work than Creation! Stand back, you impertinent flesh and blood! You can only hinder the great work. God does not need your help. Abase yourself and He will glorify Himself in your salvation.

"Still," says one, "I feel so feeble in everything I try to do. I tried to pray, but I could not." What did you do? "I fretted because I could not pray." Well, you prayed much better than if you had *thought* you had prayed, for he who groans because he cannot pray has prayed the best prayer in the

world! The poor publican did not say much, but when he smote upon his breast, even if he had not added the recorded words, he prayed! That smiting on his bosom meant the true prayer of his soul, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." "Ah," says another, "I have been trying to overcome sin lately, and I have been beaten." You shall overcome by the blood of the Lamb, but all your own warring against sin will certainly end in defeat. Let the sword of the Lord and of Gideon be laid bare and the Midianites will soon be put to the rout. But unless it is the sword of the Lord there will be no routing your foes. "Consider Him," and have hope.

"Oh, but if I have any love to Christ it is so little. If I have any faith it is almost unbelief. If I have any life it is but a flicker. How can I be saved?" Now, Soul, once and for all have done with all this talk! Your salvation is in *Christ*, and not in you! Do not say, "I have little strength"—confess you have *none* at all and then you are nearer the truth! Do not say, "I have *little* life"—confess that you are *dead* by nature and you have hit the mark.

Do not say, "I have little virtue"—say, "All unholy and unclean, I am nothing else but sin." When you reach the bottom you cannot fall lower and *that* is the place where you ought to be—and Jesus will never meet you till you come to the lowest point. Your extremity is His opportunity! When you are a beggarly bankrupt and cannot pay half a farthing in the pound, then all Christ's richest treasures shall be yours! But if you have a little to add to help the Savior, just so that you may have a side glance at the Glory, He will have nothing to do with you! He wants you, but He needs nothing of yours. He wants your emptiness to fill it and He needs nothing of your own to increase His fullness.

Now I must hasten on for time fails me. Perhaps, I have some here who say, "My case lies out of your track this morning, for I am the subject of very fierce Satanic TEMPTATIONS. I have lately been met with such blasphemous thoughts and horrible suggestions that I can scarcely conceive any other human being has ever been subjected to them." Now, at once "consider Him." He was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." "We have a High Priest who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities." I need you to remember this and so to "consider Him." I know that if a preacher of the Gospel has had no temptations nobody ever goes to him with questions of conscience. But if a man of God has been led through great adversity and soul trouble, all the distressed and afflicted people in the neighborhood are sure to fly to him because he can sympathize with them.

Now, our dear Redeemer can sympathize with you who are tempted of the devil, for He was 40 days in the wilderness tempted of Satan, too. Go to Him. "But I am afraid of the temptations I shall have in years to come." Are you? Then "consider Him," for "He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them." What a choice word that was of His to Peter, "Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith fail not." Oh, poor Soul, consider Jesus and remember that if all the devils in Hell were to tempt you and you had but Jesus Christ present with you, you need no more be afraid than if the dogs in the streets barked at your heels when all their teeth were drawn!

Jesus has broken the devil's teeth by the power of His intercession. Satan has power to howl at us but he cannot bite us! He worries whom he can't devour with a malicious joy, but the Lord has smitten our enemy upon the cheek bone and by one tremendous blow of His pierced hand He has broken the teeth of the Oppressor. I hear yet another cry. "Come here," says one, "I have something to whisper in your ear I can hardly tell. My trouble is about my INWARD CORRUPTION. Oh, if ever there was an unclean heart in all the world I have it! It is like some foul pond which bubbles up with putrid gas. My inmost nature is filled with all manner of filthiness and iniquity like a mud volcano which pours forth a horrid stream. Oh, Sir, my heart is abominable! A cage of unclean birds is nothing compared to it—it is a den of devils."

Well, well, "consider Him." You remember how He came into the Temple and there were the buyers and sellers with their bullocks and sheep and doves? I have often marveled at the ease with which He drove them out. He had not even a rope with Him, but only a few small cords—and He began, straightway, to lay about Him, and oh, how they ran! Those money-grubbers, who would not have lost a shekel for their lives unless their gold and silver spilt on the ground, quickly fled while the bullocks and the sheep ran from the holy place and the doves fluttered out into the air! Let Christ come into your heart and He will soon drive out the buyers and sellers, yes, and the old dragon himself!

Remember, too, that Jesus is Creator. He made the heavens and the earth—cannot He create *you* anew? Is it not said, "He that sat upon the Throne said, behold I make all things new"? Consider His Omnipotent power—having given you a new heart, can He not make you completely holy? Oh, think not so continually of your sin and sinfulness and proneness to transgression, but think of Christ, almighty to save—and whether you sink or swim cast yourself upon Him! Lost or saved, come and cling to His Cross this morning and I guarantee you not one of you shall perish, but eternal life shall be the portion of every man that rests in Him!

Still, somebody says, "I am troubled about THE THREE LAST THINGS. I am afraid of death, and I am afraid of judgment, and I am afraid of Hell." Afraid of *death*? Well, but if you will but trust the Son of God who died for sinners, you need never be afraid to die! Your little child, when she has run about and wearied herself and wants to sleep, is she afraid to fall asleep in Mother's arms, with her head on Mother's breast? And you, dear child of God, when you are wearied with your work, you shall go and lay your head on Jesus' bosom and fall asleep. And it shall be just as easy and just as sweet as for your little ones to sleep on your bosom.

"But I am afraid of judgment," says one. Judgment? But your judgment is past already! Your sins were judged in Christ and punished in Christ, if you believe in Him. The sins of all Believers were brought before the bar of judgment and condemned and broken on the wheel in Christ. Let us go back to that famous passage by Paul for a minute. He pictures God's chosen people standing before the Throne, and he cries, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Who is afraid of judgment when nobody can lay anything to his charge? And then he goes on to say, "Who is it that condemns?" None can condemn but the Judge, and who is He? It is

Christ that died, and can He that died for us condemn us? Impossible! He cannot belie Himself! So you need not be afraid of judgment.

“But I am afraid of Hell,” says one. Ah, and there is good cause to fear *it*. “Fear Him who can cast both body and soul into Hell, yes, I say unto you, fear Him.” But you need not fear Hell if you trust in Jesus, for Christ has suffered the punishment of your sin and as far as you are concerned Hell is not! There are no flames of wrath for you—they spent themselves upon the Savior! When the Jew laid his sin-offering on the altar and the fire consumed it, the sinful Jew stood there and said, “That bullock stands for *me*.” When it had all burned, he said, “My sins are burned.” And when they took the ashes into an unclean place and utterly consumed them, he said, “my sin is put away. They have put it outside the camp, it is consumed.”

So when we “consider Him,” even our dear Lord Jesus on the Cross, we see Him there a complete Sacrifice. We see the fire of God roasting and burning Him up, consuming Him till He is utterly consumed as a Sacrifice, and there our sin was annihilated. Every Believer may know that there his sin ceased to be, for it is written, “He has finished transgression. He has made an end of sin and has brought in an everlasting righteousness.”

I do not want to stop when I have such a subject as this, but I must. As I finish it shall be with this earnest prayer that every seeking sinner here may believe in Jesus at once. Oh, weary one, why do you not repose upon Him? Wanderer, you will never find rest till you come to Jesus! Seeker, vain is your seeking if you will not have my Lord! Trembler, your trembling itself is to be trembled at if it keeps you from the Cross! There is the Savior to be had without money and without price—He is preached to you. Believe Him—that is trust Him—and live forever! The Lord bless you, now, and constrain you of His mercy to do so for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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OUR LORD'S HEROIC ENDURANCE

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*“For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners
against Himself, lest you be weary and faint in your minds.”
Hebrews 12:3.*

IF we regard the Christian as a racer contending for the great race, we see that he is subject to several dangers. He may give up the race and turn back unless everlasting mercy shall prevent so dreadful a calamity. He may leap out of the track and leave for a time the only path that leads to victory and reward. Or he may be so clogged and hampered with weights that though he may run, he may run altogether in vain. Or he may be tripped up and fall—and so others may pass him and take the prize of his high calling. But even if he shall fully have avoided all those dangers, if he shall keep to the course, if he shall be kept upon his feet, and if his racing should be of the best kind, yet there is still the possibility—for the best Christian is still flesh and blood—that he may faint.

A man when running for a prize exerts every nerve and sinew and muscle. He throws his whole being into the effort. If he may not pass his rival by several lengths, he will at least seek to pass him by a neck and to this end he strains and strives even to the point of agony, if by any means he may attain unto the first place and so win the reward. Now, while the body is in such a state of tension as that, it is possible that it may suddenly give way—that the overworked frame may not be able to endure the toil and stress, and the man, with the best of intentions, may yet lack the power to carry them out. He may grow weary and though just now he almost grasped the prize in the fond anticipation of hope, he may fall dead upon the ground like a stone through faintness. The Apostle knew this, for I do not doubt that even he, in his great fight with afflictions, when he had fought with beasts at Ephesus and when he had passed through trials of every shape and form, even he sometimes felt as if he might faint and might, after all, be unsuccessful. Hence it is that instead of merely exhorting us not to faint and bidding us not be weary, he does what is far better and more helpful—he supplies us with a double restorative whereby our strength may be recruited. Just as Antaeus is said to have revered his strength when he touched mother earth and, therefore, he could not be killed until Hercules held him in the air and strangled him there, so is the Christian strengthened by the act which the Apostle Paul here speaks of—by touching Christ, by looking again to

Jesus, by considering Him—and the only possibility for the destruction of the Christian would be so to separate him from Christ that he would not be able to derive any strength from considering the great Apostle and High Priest of his profession! The Apostle does as good as say to us, “You are very likely to faint in your minds, and to grow weary in your spirit, so if you would prevent this, I recommend you to consider the Lord Jesus Christ, to think much of Him, to have Him constantly before your mind’s eye.” And he is very precise about this, for he not only bids us consider Christ, but he exhorts us to consider Him under a very special aspect, that is, as a Sufferer, and from one particular form of trial, namely, “suffering the contradiction of sinners against Himself.”

It seem to me as if the Apostle felt that one of the most likely things to make Christians faint would be the contradiction which they meet with from sinners. The persecution, the slander, ill-usage, bad return and recompense which they get from an ungodly world—all this would be likely to make them weary at heart in well-doing.

So he bids them look away to the Savior, bravely enduring the same trials. “Consider Him,” he says, “who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest *you* be weary and faint in your minds.”

I am not able to speak to you this evening as I would gladly speak. I scarcely feel in the condition either of body or of mind suitable to the study and proclamation of so gracious a topic as the one before us, but in my weakness I desire also to consider Him who was wearied and sat upon the well. And in speaking to you, I would ask His help that my weakness may not rob you of the blessing.

I shall introduce the theme to your attention in this way—first, let us consider *the contradiction of sinners which Christ endured*. Secondly, let us for a minute or two consider *His endurance of it*. And then, thirdly, coming to the fullness of the text, let us *consider Him who endured such contradiction*.

The particular form of trial of which we are invited to think is—

I. THE CONTRADICTION OF UNGODLY MEN WHICH THE SAVIOR ENDURED.

Even early in His ministry He had to endure this. At the very first sermon which He preached in the synagogue of His own town, was he received with joy? No acclamations awaited Him who spoke as never man spoke, but the whole congregation gnashed upon Him with their teeth! And had it not been for His supernatural escape, they would have taken Him to the brow of the hill whereon the city was built and have cast Him down headlong! And yet it was not that He had said anything bitter against the town. It was not that He had inveighed against their favorite vices. It was only that He had committed that most unpardonable of all sins, namely, that He had preached the Doctrine of Divine Predestination! They listened to Him well enough until He said, “Yes, and many widows there were in Israel, but unto none of them was the Prophet sent except to the widow of Zarepta,” and when He thus declared the Doctrine of Divine Sovereignty—when He spoke of the giving of the blessing to the

Gentiles who were the most unlikely individuals—then it was that they gnashed their teeth and would have cast Him down headlong from the brow of the hill! Nothing, it seems, excites some men's envy like the Doctrines of Grace. Throughout the whole of our Savior's life, this which was at the commencement followed Him! His speech teems with wisdom. He preeminently carried out His own teaching, "Be you wise as serpents and harmless as doves." It is true His teaching was very bold, but at the same time it need not have irritated anyone. Those who thus took His teaching to themselves and perceived that He spoke of them, might be irritated apart from that. I suppose that never did man put the Truth of God in a better form, or after a fashion less likely to provoke prejudice, but the Pharisees were always contradicting Him. They endeavored to catch Him in His speech. Sometimes it is puzzling questions about the Law with some woman in the midst. At another time it is something about the government of the country. The Herodians joined with the Pharisees in the endeavor to embarrass, to perplex Him, to catch Him in His talk, to make Him an offender for a word. They plotted to draw Him out in speech, somehow or other, that they might get some sentence they could use against Him. Never did they listen with candor, never regarded Him with any honesty, but dogging His footsteps like bloodhounds, waiting for the first opportunity when they might tear Him in pieces! So, during His lifetime, He endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself.

And you know, besides this, how men of the baser sort offered contradiction against Christ's life. They said He was a drunk and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. They that sat in the gates spoke against Him and He became the song of the drunk! Reproaches fell upon Him—the reproaches of them who reproached without a cause. Our Lord Jesus Christ was thus perpetually, constantly and wholly the butt of slander and of scorn! He was permanently standing in the pillory to be ill-treated by the hands of them whom His power had *created*, and whom His own love had spared! What a "contradiction of sinners against Himself!"

But I think what was especially in the Apostle's mind was that which came at the time when He was betrayed by Judas. Then, Brothers and Sisters, the old serpent vented his worst venom. They could not find witnesses that agreed together, though they found many false witnesses, yet even none of them agreed together till they had at last induced two, their evidence being words which the Savior had used in a certain sense, twisted to another sense in order to try to get it to be strong enough to stain the charge which they brought against Him—which was neither more nor less than this—in Pilate's court, the *civil* court, treason! In the court of Annas and Caiaphas, the *ecclesiastical* court, blasphemy! What a contradiction of sinners against Himself was this! Being Almighty God to be accused of blasphemy! And being truly the King of the Jews to be accused of treason! I wonder not that the Apostle should have said, "*Such* contradiction of sinners!"

Just let us look, then, at this contradiction of sinners which came upon Him at the last, and I think you will see the grievousness of it when you observe, first, the *grossness of the charges alleged against Him*. Before Pilate's court it was no minor offense with which He was charged. It was treason—the highest offense in the category of the Roman Law. He had made Himself to be another king in opposition to Caesar, who was the world's monarch! This was a very gross charge to bring against the Savior and more especially because He, of all men, must be acquitted of anything like sedition! How often did He hide Himself when multitudes who had been fed by His bounty would have made Him a king? And how often when His own disciples were anticipating the coming of a great earthly kingdom, did He set Himself directly in opposition to all their ideas and taught them that He came to suffer rather than to reign—and that His Kingdom was not of this world—not a Kingdom that would touch Caesar's kingdom, nor an empire that would interfere with the kings on the earth! He was not only free from treason, but was throughout His life such an opponent of it, such an abstainer from interfering with the politics of men at all, that to charge Him with this was a gross and wantonly wicked charge!

As for blasphemy, His reverence of God was supreme! He had laid aside His own Glory as Deity in order to honor His Father in man's redemption and was even now, when so vilely slandered, ready to be obedient even unto death! "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," is God's witness to Him, and yet His enemies say that He blasphemed the Infinite Jehovah!

Now, dear Friends, I can conceive that some of you have been pure and unblemished in your lives and yet suddenly you might find yourselves accused, not of a minor and trivial offense, and you say, "Oh, what a trial to be accused of this!" Well, consider Him who endured just such contradiction, who was accused of a capital crime and of blasphemy in the same breath! Who are we that we should not be called Beelzebub when the Master of the house has been so named? Consider the contradiction of Christ in this respect and it may give you comfort.

Let me say further, while speaking of this contradiction of sinners, that it was not only a very gross charge, but we are sometimes apt to think that a charge which is unfounded is very cruel to us. I have heard people say, sometimes, and I have laughed when I have heard them say it, "Sir, Mr. So-and-So has charged me with such-and-such a thing, but I am quite innocent. I should not have minded if I had been guilty." Then I have thought, Ah, then you ought to have minded it, but being innocent you have no cause to mind it at all! But is it not so that the more unfounded a charge is, the more deeply does it seem to cut us from the very wantonness of its cruelty? Well, then, you know how innocent the Savior was—the next time you feel innocent when you are thus accused—"consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself," and who had to suffer both gross charges and unfounded ones!

Moreover, *these charges were sustained by words which had been deliberately twisted.* And sometimes a man has to say to himself, "Now, I never said anything of the kind, and my enemies know I did not! They have let a word out here, and put another word in there, and have cruelly misrepresent me—they have made me say what I did not even *think*—and what I *did* think, and what I *did* say, they have so utterly altered that it is no longer mine." Now you are apt to grow very faint in your mind after such a thing as this occurs, but you will recollect that just such contradiction of sinners the Savior endured. The only grounds or pretence upon which they brought these charges against Him was that He had uttered certain words concerning His body which were construed to relate to the Temple. So, dear Friends, do not be greatly troubled, as though it were a strange thing what has happened to you. If your good words are taken out of your mouth and mischief is made of them, bear it without bitterness or retaliation, for so He also suffered the "contradiction of sinners against Himself."

There certainly was, too, a sting about these contradictions arising from *the place where they were brought.* They were brought before the court of judicature. It is not likely that any of us have had to smart in this direction, but we may have had to feel this—"I should not have minded if this contradiction had come against me at home in the family, but it has come in my business where it will injure me." Or it may have been the reverse. Perhaps you have had to say, "I would not care if this man had said such-and-such in the outward world, but he has poisoned the very home of my joy and my peace." Well, dear Friends, the Savior had His contradiction brought against Him in a worse place, it seems to me, than home, or any of the resorts of commerce, for He was actually brought before the courts of His own native land as well as before the courts of the foreign invader who was then dominating the country!

It is not likely that this will come to you in these times as God's people, but in the olden times the saints had often to stand before kings and princes for Christ's sake. But if ever this should be your lot, you will then fall back upon this as your invigoration and consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself!

Above and beyond all this, however, in the contradiction which Christ endured was *the malice which suggested it.* They did not falsely accuse Him out of mere error, but it was out of malice that had determined on the destruction of this innocent Man. "Whether we can accuse Him rightly or not," they said, "it is not fit that such a Fellow should live." It was malice against One who had never done them a wrong! Against One who had healed their sick and raised their dead! Against One who had scattered bounties with both His hands along their streets and who had made their wilderness like Eden and their desert like the garden of the Lord! Against One who had gathered together the sheep without a shepherd that were scattered on every hill! Against One who had fed the hungry, had comforted the mourner, had proclaimed liberty to the cap-

tive! Against One who had shone upon the Holy Land and made it truly whole—had shone upon Palestine like a newly-risen sun, the Sun of Righteousness with healing beneath His wings! He might well say, “For which of these works do you stone Me? You have hated Me without a cause.” Well, now, suppose that to be your case? Suppose you have to say, “I should not mind this charge, but I can see deliberate malice in it. My enemies seek to destroy me and to pervert my way out of a diabolical hatred to my soul. They come upon me to eat up my flesh. They compass me like dogs to devour me. Oh, how hard is my lot!” Come, Christian, come, consider Him! Consider Him! You are in the same plight as your Master! It always gives comfort to a common soldier to see the officers in the same position and enduring the same hardships as himself—with the shots flying everywhere round about them. And when I see the darts of wicked contradiction flying around our blessed Lord and King, I feel it would be a shame for me to have an easier or safer position than He knew!

I might thus dwell, for it is a very tempting subject, upon the contradiction of sinners which the Savior endured. And I think a consideration of this would save us from being weary and faint in our minds. But we must pass on to the second point. We have now to consider—

II. THE SAVIOR'S ENDURANCE of the contradiction of sin against Himself. How did He endure this sore trouble? Brothers and Sisters, He endured it with singular courage and holy equanimity. It is wonderful to see Him in the first contradictions with which He met during His ministry—how calm He is. If we are made warm in temper, we are off our guard and are but half men. The Savior was never so taken. You observe Him. They spin their webs like spiders and they think to entangle Him. So they would such poor flies as we are—but He looks on and sees it all—and then sweeps every cobweb away before Him! And yet no angry word He answers.

Sometimes He makes them answer themselves, but then He turns it against themselves. Sometimes He makes them confess themselves defeated and then, with a solemn emphasis, as on the occasion when He said, “He that is without fault among you, let him cast the first stone.” And they, being condemned by their own consciences, went out, beginning at the eldest even to the youngest. All left and went their way! At the last, however, you perceive that the contradiction of sinners is borne by the Savior after this fashion—*with entire silence!* Never was there such silence as that—the grandest silence ever known! It is an amazing silence! It seems to have in it something of contempt, but yet more of Omnipotent patience. He will not answer. Why should He answer such as they are? He will not answer! If He answered, it might be their doom! And therefore He spares them! “He is led as lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth!” Brothers and Sisters, we are generally too fast with our tongues when anybody accuses us! I am afraid we are not always so quick to defend our Master as we are to defend ourselves. If there is a false accusation in the news-

papers, one's finger wants to be at the pen to answer it, which of all things is the most foolish. Let them write! Let them write who will, till they have used up their ink, but the wise man answers them not a word! But we are always so ready if anybody brings a false accusation against us to say, "It is not so! You lie!" Or to make some sharp reply like that. Oh, that we could consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, and endured it with the holy patience of silence! There was a crest and motto which some of the old Reformers used to use, and which I commend to any of you who are under this trial of slander. It was an anvil with a number of hammers, all broken, lying around. And this was the motto when translated, "*The anvil breaks many hammers.*" And how does it do this? Not by striking again! Oh, no! The anvil simply endures the blows—just keeps its place and lets the hammers fall, fall, fall until they are broken upon their handles! And this is exactly what the Savior did. They, the accusers, were the hammers, He was the anvil. And who shall say that the anvil did not break the hammers in pieces, that the silence of the Savior was not far more eloquent than all the clamor of the evil multitude? "He held His peace," it is said of Him. May it also be said of you and of me, and when we have to suffer similar trials, may we bear them, like the Savior, in silence.

Yet the silence of the Savior is not all. We ought to admire the patient serenity with which He so beautifully held His peace, but ought we not also to admire the way in which He *unswervingly kept His course*? Many a man would have turned either to the right hand or to the left, but the heroic Savior keeps right on. Ah, Beloved, how many of us would have given up the work altogether! We might have said, "I came to bless these men, but they reject me. They despise me. They ill-treat me. Let them go, then, unblessed! These graceless people shall receive no blessing at my hands." But not so, our brave Lord! He came into the world to save sinners and He kept on just at that one thing—and let no rebuffs turn Him aside. The zeal of God's House had eaten Him up and He kept straight on in the saving of sinners! He never turned back, let sinners do what they would in the way of contradicting Him! He never wavered for one moment from His one life-objective—the saving of their souls!

Now, let it be so with you so that you may be kept from growing weary. If in the Sunday school a class seems unmanageable. If the boys cannot be taught. If the girls seem so giddy. If in the little village station the hearers seem so dull, so inattentive, so careless and so forgetful—if in any other sphere of labor you do not seem to be appreciated, but to meet with very serious rebuffs, never mind! These are nothing compared with the contradictions which the Savior endured and yet He never swerved! And therefore swerve you not. Let the Divine Life that is in you urge you constantly onwards. Make no provision for the flesh nor for the ease thereof. If, indeed, it is your life-work—go and complete it! If you feel that God has called you to be the stern advocate of the right, go onward and vow to go onward by the love of Christ—and let nothing stop you! If hun-

ger can break through stone walls, much more shall a hunger to do the Master's will! To a man who can dare and do because he feels that he is consecrated and destined to work, nothing is impossible! You, too, shall break through a wall. You, too, shall dash through a host. A man who believes that God has called him to work would tunnel through the globe, itself, before he would be turned from his purpose! He would thread the stars on strings before he would be disappointed of his great life-work! Do you but feel this, and never turn aside, but remember how Christ endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself!

And, once more, I think it is worthwhile to notice that while the Savior did not swerve, *He did not even seem to pause*. He did not stop to take a breath. All these persons came rushing round Him and tried to push Him out of His course, but He did not even stop, I say, to take a breath! All that they did, did but rather quicken His pace, if possible, and made Him still more set upon His great purpose. So let it be with us. We take far too much notice, I think, of some of our troubles and oppositions. I sometimes quote in your hearing those brave lines of Anne Askew. Poor soul! After having been racked to torture many times, you still hear her singing—

***"I am not she to lie,
My anchor to let fall:
For every drizzling mist
My ship's substantial."***

Such a substantial vessel did she seem to ride in that she was not going to let her anchor out! The being racked, as she cruelly was, was no "drizzling mist," I think, but a very horrible tempest which might well make some of us afraid, even unto death, but then, we make so much of little things! Our fathers plucked up sycamore trees by the roots, but we are afraid if only one or two sere leaves blow wildly across our path! They spoke unto mountains and said, "Be you moved hence, and cast into the midst of the sea." But we sit down and murmur over molehills as though they were Alps, the summits of which we should never to able to reach! We are a puny race, I fear, but may the Lord feed us and we shall then grow stronger—and though it adds not a cubit to our stature, yet we shall grow *spiritually*! And we shall grow in this way if we consider how Christ bore the mighty trials which came upon Him. He was bowed down. He did stagger and did sweat great drops of blood when He was under the deep depression of His own spirit—caused by our sins being laid upon Him. Even a strong man may quail there, but before Herod or Pilate, or His Jewish accusers, or ribald and mocking men, He never showed a sign of faltering! No, not He! But He "*endured* such contradiction of sinners against Himself."

Consider Christ thus, then, and you need not be and never will be, weary! But now, lastly, the great thing is—

III. TO CONSIDER HIM.

There is the point of the text. We are not only to consider the contradiction and His endurance of it, but to consider Him. To consider His en-

durance is well, but the striking point should be to consider the dignity of Him who did thus endure. We are told by the historians of Alexander the Great that it very much cheered and assisted the troops in their long and weary marches from Persia, sometimes without water and without food for many hours under a burning sun, that they always saw Alexander walking on foot, too. The Persian monarch would have been riding in some dainty chariot, or in the royal palanquin, reclining upon beds of down, fanned by unknown hands and attended by his many fair damsels. But there was Alexander, covered with dust and splashed with mire, going through the ditches, climbing the hills with his face all bronzed and browned. He would suffer hunger and thirst like the rest of them—and when the bowl of water is brought to the mighty monarch, he passes it on to some common soldier who is even yet more thirsty than himself. It was said that one Macedonian was worth ten thousand Persians because the king was with them and they would dash to battle and to death for such a monarch as that! Now consider Christ—your King—the King of the earth, before whom all other kings should renounce their diadems! Consider Him, the King of Heaven, whom to serve is the seraph's highest glory! The King of Hell, before whom the fiends and dragons of the pit gnash their teeth in fear! He, even He, “endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself!”—

**“Christ leads us through no darker rooms
Than He went through before.”**

The dignity of the Savior has invested suffering and especially brave endurance with great honor and glory. There is a halo round about our griefs since Jesus Christ endured them first!

It is not only in His greatness that I think He should impress us, but also in *the perfection of His Nature*. He endured, and yet He was perfect. How, then, ought I to endure, who am so imperfect? He without a fault, smarts! A Son without sin, but not without the scourge! Consider *Him*, then, you imperfect one. When the coals are hot, you mass of ore with so much of alloy about you, consider that the pure gold felt the fire and how much more should you? Consider, you vessel defiled and filthy, the alabaster vase was washed in a sea of trouble, and how much more shall such one as you are be washed? If He who was all gold must go through the flame, how much more shall you?

Now, there is yet a further point out of which the Apostle, I think, would have us dig some delight, namely, that we are to consider Him not only in His character, but now, *in His present position*. It is true He endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself. It is true He was delivered to be Crucified. It is true, sorrowfully true, that He was despised and rejected of men. But what of it now? What of it now? Oh, see Him yonder! But your poor eyes cannot bear this dazzling sight! Brighter than the sun is His Glory! Grander than Heaven, itself, is His splendor! There He sits, King of kings and Lord of lords! Where is the mockery now? The shame and the spittle—where are they now? The crown of thorns, the vinegar, the sponge, the nails—where are they now? Our Lord is all over

glorious! Now crowns become the Victor's brow and on His head are many crowns. Christian, as He was, so are you also in this world! And as He is, so shall you also be. Christ's triumph is the triumph of every true and right principle. It is the triumph of every true and right heart. You will have to suffer for it. There is no victory to be achieved nowadays except in the same way as the Savior achieved it, namely, by suffering. Is not Christ's greatest triumph which He achieved on Golgotha? The triumphal chariot in which He subdued sin and death, and Hell, was none other than His own Cross! So, Beloved, we must expect to conquer, but it must be by shame. You must expect to triumph, but it must be by being made to suffer and by being despised. But you shall triumph after all. In the day when the trumpet sounds, when—

***“From beds of dust and silent clay,
To realms of everlasting day,”***

every obscure and despised child of God shall awaken—then shall it be seen whom God delights to honor! You are in the minority now. You stand alone. You are mocked by cruel enemies, and the ribald world asks you, “Where is your God?”

You are by yourself, now, a solitary protester in the midst of a multitude who are going astray. But the tables shall be turned soon. You shall not then be in a minority, but in a great majority—in the day when shouts of triumph shall be heard for the truth and for the right, and when shame and confusion of face shall be the portion of those who are now the despisers! They shall then wonder and perish and ask the rocks to hide them and the hills to cover their confusion. He endured, and yet He mounted to His Throne amidst the shouts of angels and acclamations of Heaven! So also shall you! Therefore consider Him in this light lest you be weary and faint in your minds.

And then, last of all, you must consider that He who went through this to get to His crown *is very Man akin to us all*. He loves us tenderly. He considers us now. He knows all the sorrows that tempt men, for He has felt the same. You are not alone—He is with you. Three of you in the furnace? No, there is a fourth, and that fourth is the Son of God! Into your griefs He enters, for His own griefs have put into His hand a master-key to fit the locks of every human grief that ever can be known. He can comfort us with all consolation seeing that He, Himself, has passed through all tribulation. He is never forgetful of you. He is with you now. If you smart, He smarts. If you are despised, He suffers. “Paul, Paul, why do you persecute Me?” He cried. Why, it was but a few poor men and women being hauled away to prison or to be scourged in the synagogue, but Christ takes it as being done to Himself! “Why do you persecute Me?” Oh Christian, with such nearness to Christ, and such sympathy flowing from Him, be of good courage! Then hear Him say, “In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His Presence saved them.” So may you lift up the hands that hang down and confirm the feeble knees and go on your way rejoicing in Him!

I would to God you could all take home this text, but some of you cannot, and here is the sorrow of it, that you should live and die with such rare comforts at your door, but you cannot take them! Oh, Sinners, flee to Christ! Put your trust in Him and you shall soon be able to find consolation in every part of His life and in every trait of His death-pangs. God bless you very graciously, for His name's sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
HEBREWS 12:1-17.**

Verses 1, 2. *Therefore seeing we are also compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and has set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* We can have no doubt about the great Truths of God which we believe, for we are compassed about with a cloud of witnesses. The former Chapter gives us the names of many of these glorious bearers of testimony, who all by faith achieved great wonders and so bore witness to the Truth of God. Having, therefore, no room for doubt, let us throw our whole strength into our high calling and run with patience having our eyes always fixed upon Him, the Beginner and Finisher of our faith, who has run the race, Himself, and won the prize—and now sits down at the right hand on the Throne of God.

3, 4. *For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds. You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.* It has never come to a bloody sweat with you as with Him, nor to death upon a Cross as in His case. Shall the disciple be above his Master or the servant above his Lord?

5, 6. *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks unto you as unto children, My son, despise not you the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loves, He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.* With doting parents it is not so—often he whom his mother loves is allowed to do as he pleases and to escape chastening, but this is folly! The love of God is higher and wiser than the partialities of parents. “Whom the Lord loves, He chastens.” It is a token of His favor to us that He takes the trouble to remove our love of sin by sharp and bitter pain.

7-10. *If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the father chastens not? But if you are without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are you illegitimate, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partak-*

ers of His holiness. What a bright light this sheds upon all affliction—that it is for our profit—that it is, thereby, we are made partakers of the holiness of God! Oh, blessed result from a little smart and bitter.

11-13. *Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Therefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.* Look at chastisement, then, in the Divine Light of God and be comforted, be strengthened, be healed of the infirmity of your weakness! Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might!

14. *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.* “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.” A man's god is like himself and until he become like God we cannot see God! We misunderstand God until we have been trained to imitate Him.

15-17. *Looking diligently lest any man fall short of the Grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up troubles you and, thereby, many are defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For you know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.* It was done and could not be undone. Does it not seem strange that after speaking to us about being God's sons and favored with His love, yet even then, in that clear blaze of light, there comes in this caution against fornication and profanity? Ah me, how near a foul spot may be to lily-like whiteness! How Judas may sit side by side with favored and true-hearted Apostles, yes, and may be near the Master, too! “Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” And, oh, Friends, if at any time the pottage should seem very sweet and we should be very hungry—if the world's gain should be almost necessary to our livelihood and we are tempted to do an unrighteous thing to get it—let us take care, for Esau could not undo the terrible act of selling his birthright and neither could we if we were permitted to do so! God grant we may be spared from such a dreadful crime!

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

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

CHASTISEMENT

NO. 48

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, OCTOBER 28, 1855,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks unto you as unto children, My son, despise not you the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked of Him.”
Hebrews 12:5***

GOD’S people can never, by any possibility, be punished for their sins! God has punished them already in the Person of Christ. Christ, their Substitute, has endured the full penalty for all their guilt and neither the justice nor the love of God can ever exact, again, that which Christ has paid. Punishment can never happen to a child of God in the judicial sense—he can never be brought before God as his Judge, as charged with guilt—because that guilt was long ago transferred to the shoulders of Christ. The punishment was exacted at the hands of his Surety! But yet, while the sin cannot be punished, while the Christian cannot be condemned, he can be chastised. He shall never be arraigned before God’s bar as a criminal and punished for his guilt, because he now stands in a new relationship—that of a child to his parent—as a son he may be chastised on account of sin. Folly is bound up in the heart of all God’s children and the rod of the Father must bring that folly out of them. It is essential to observe the distinction between punishment and chastisement. Punishment and chastisement may agree as to the nature of the suffering—the one suffering may be as great as the other. The sinner who, while here is punished for his guilt, may suffer no more in this life than the Christian who is only chastised by his parent. They do not differ as to the nature of the punishment, but they differ in the mind of the punisher and in the relationship of the person who is punished. God punishes the sinner on his own account because He is angry with the sinner and His justice must be avenged. His Law must be honored and His commands must have their dignity maintained. But He does not *punish* the Believer! He afflicts him for his profit, He lays on the rod for His child’s advantage. He has a good design towards the person who receives the chastisement. While in *punishment*, the design is simply with God for God’s Glory, in *chastisement* it is with the person chastised for his good, for his spiritual profit and benefit! Besides, punishment is laid on a man in anger. God strikes him in anger—but when He afflicts His *child*, chastisement is applied in love. His strokes are, all of them, put there by the hand of love! The rod has been baptized in deep affection before it is laid

on the Believer's back. God does not afflict willingly, nor grieve us for nothing. Out of love and affection He perceives that if He leaves us unchastened, we shall bring upon ourselves misery ten thousand-fold greater than we shall suffer by His slight rebukes and the gentle blows of His hand! Believer, understand this in the very beginning—that whatever your trouble, or your affliction—there cannot be anything punitive in it. You must never say—“Now God is punishing me for my sin.” You have fallen from your steadfastness when you talk so. God cannot do that. He has once and for all done it. “The chastisement of our peace was upon HIM and by HIS stripes we are healed.” He is *chastising* you, not *punishing* you! He is correcting you in measure, He is not smiting you in wrath. There is no hot displeasure in His heart. Even though His brow may be ruffled, there is no anger in His breast. Even though His eyes may have closed upon you, He hates you not—He still loves you! He is not angry with His heritage, for He sees no sin in Jacob, neither iniquity in Israel, considered in the Person of Christ. It is simply because He loves you—because you are sons—that He, therefore, chastises you.

Perhaps this morning I may have some within these walls who are passing under the chastising hand of God. It is to them that I shall have to speak. You are not, all of you, in trial, I know no father chastises his whole family at once. It is so seldom that God afflicts people, after all, compared with their faults, that we must not expect to find in this congregation, perhaps, one-half of the children of God passing under the rod of the Covenant. But if you are not under it, now, you will have to pass under it some time or other in your life! So that what we may say, if it is not profitable to you in present circumstances, yet if treasured up and remembered, it shall be fetched out in some future time. Then the wine will not have lost its flavor by keeping, but have improved—and you will find it a bottle of cordial to your spirit—useful to your heart!

There are two dangers against which a person under the chastising hand of God should always be very careful to keep a strict lookout. They are these—“*My son, despise not you the chastening of the Lord.*” That is one. On the other hand—“*Neither faint when you are rebuked of Him.*” Two evils—the one is *despising the rod* and the other is *fainting under it*. Evils always hunt in couples—sins always go in a leash. It is a marvelous thing that there are always to be found two evils, side by side. We have said, sometimes, extremes are dangerous and for this reason—that one evil has its opposite—which is equally a hurtful thing! Take this—there is a haughty pride which laughs at the rod. On the other hand, there is a foolish faintness which faints under it. I have found through life that there is always a Scylla and a Charybdis. A rock on the one side and a whirlpool on the other, between which it is dangerous to steer! On the one hand we are tempted to feel that we can do something and to trust in our works. If we try to shun that, we run into sloth and leave off doing

anything. At times we get proud of what we have accomplished. And in seeking to avoid that, we become despairing and desponding. There are always two evils on the opposite side of one another. The way of righteousness is a difficult pass between two great mountains of error! And the great secret of the Christian life is to wind his way along the narrow valley. God help us to do so! We will point out the two this morning.

The first evil to which the chastened Christian is liable is this—*he may despise the hand of God*. The second is that *he may faint when he is rebuked*. We will begin with the first—“My son despise not you the chastening of the Lord.”

I. This may be done in five ways—and in discussing the subject I shall propose the remedy for each of these as we pass along.

First, a man may despise the chastening of the Lord *when he murmurs at it*. Ephraim is like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. When a son of God first feels the rod, he is like a bullock—he kicks at it, he cannot bear it. He is an unbroken colt and when he first feels the collar put upon his shoulders, he rears in the air and by all manner of ways expresses his aversion to it. The first time a child of God receives a blow from his Father’s hand, he may possibly turn round upon his own tender Father and murmur at Him—“Why ought I to have this? Why am I thus punished and afflicted? Why should I be chastised? What have I done to be afflicted and chastened?” You will wonder, perhaps, that a man who has Grace in his heart should talk like this. But in reality we do say so—not with the words of our lips, but with the thoughts of our hearts—for we sit down and say, “I am the man who has seen affliction—I am the man more tried and troubled than others. No one is ever chastened as I am!” And we look around with the eye of jealousy, exclaiming, “That man is happier than I—that man has less sorrow and suffering.” We are too apt to put our own condition in the worst place and describe ourselves as being the most afflicted of all God’s people. Though we blush to say it, it is true. There are murmurers in the midst of Israel right now, as well as in the camp of Israel of old. There are people of God who, when the rod falls, cry out against it. Who, instead of kissing the Son lest He be angry, turn round upon Him and speak against the afflictive dispensations of God! We know, ourselves, what it is when we have a little sickness, to be so cross that hardly anybody dares to speak to us. And if we have a little pain, perhaps in our head, we know what it is to think all the world is going wrong and to be grieved and vexed and melancholy on that account. any of you have been foolish enough when bereaved of your property, to cry out, “Ah, God takes everything away! He smites me with one stroke upon another. Surely He is an unkind God!” And you have felt, when you have lost your friends, that you could *not* say, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.” You have thought, “Oh, why this? Simon is not and Joseph is not, and now You

would take Benjamin away? All these things are against me.” We have murmured. Now listen to the exhortation—“My son, despise not you the chastening of the Lord.” That is despising God’s chastening, when we murmur against it! Patience is the only way to receive it. A lack of resignation shows we despise God’s chastening hand.

A word for you, O Murmurer! Why should you murmur against the dispensations of your heavenly Father? Can He treat you more harshly than you deserve? Consider what a rebel you were, once, but He has pardoned you. Surely if He now chooses to lay the rod upon you, you need not cry out! Have you not read that among the Roman emperors of old, it was the custom when they would set a slave at liberty, to give him a blow to the head and then say, “Go free”? This blow which your Father gives you is a token of your liberty—and do you grumble because He smites you rather harshly? After all, are not His strokes fewer than your crimes and lighter than your guilt? Are you smitten as harshly as your sins deserve? Consider the corruption that is in your breast and then will you wonder that there needs so much of the rod to fetch it out? Weigh yourself and discern how much dross is mingled with your gold—and do you think the fire too hot to burn away so much dross as you have? Why, I think you have not the furnace hot enough! There is too much dross, too little fire. The rod is not laid on harshly enough, for that proud spirit of yours proves that your heart is not thoroughly sanctified. And though it may be right with God, your words do not sound like it and your actions do not portray the holiness of your nature. It is the old Adam within you that is groaning. Take heed if you murmur, for it will go hard with murmurers! God always chastises His children twice if they do not bear the first blow patiently. I have often heard a father say, “Boy, if you cry for that, you shall have something to cry for, by-and-by.” So, if we murmur a little, God gives us something that will make us cry. If we groan for nothing, He will give us something that will make us groan! Sit down in patience. Despise not the chastening of the Lord, be not angry with Him, for He is not angry with you—say not that He deals to harshly with you. Let Humility rise up and speak—“It is well, O Lord! Just are You in Your chastising, for I have sinned. Righteous are You in Your blows, for I need them to fetch me near to You. If You leave me uncorrected and unchastened, I, a poor wanderer, must pass away to the gulf of death and sink into the pit of eternal perdition.” There is the first sense in which we may despise the chastening of the Lord—we may murmur under it.

Secondly, we despise the chastening of the Lord *when we say there is no use in it*. There are certain things that happen to us in life which we immediately set down for Providence. If a grandfather of ours should die and leave us five hundred pounds, what a merciful Providence that would be! If by something strange in business we were suddenly to accumulate a fortune, that would be a blessed Providence! If an accident

happens and we are preserved and our limbs are not hurt—that is always Providence. But suppose we were to *lose* five hundred pounds—would not *that* be Providence? Suppose our establishment should break up and business fail—would not *that* be Providence? Suppose we should, during the accident, break our leg—would not *that* be Providence? There is the difficulty. It is always Providence when it is a good thing. But why is it not Providence when it does not happen to be just as *we* please? Surely it is so. For if the one thing is ordered by God, so is the other! It is written, in Isaiah 45:7, “I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things.” But I question whether it is not despising the chastening of the Lord when we set a prosperous Providence before an adverse one. I think that an adverse Providence ought to be the cause of as much thankfulness as a prosperous one. And if it is not, we are violating the command, “In everything give thanks.” But you say, “Of what use will such a trial be to me? I cannot see that it can by any possibility be useful to my soul. Here I was growing in Grace just now, but there is something that has dampened all my ardor and overthrown my zeal. Just now I was on the Mount of Assurance, but God has brought me to the Valley of Humiliation. Can that be any good to me? A few weeks ago I had wealth and I distributed it in the cause of God. Now I have none. What can be the use of that? All these things are against me.” Now, you are despising the chastening of the Lord—when you say that is of no use. No child thinks the rod of much value. Anything in the house is of more use than that rod, in his opinion. And if you were to ask the child which part of the household furniture could be dispensed with, he would like chairs, tables and everything else to remain but that! The rod he does not think of any good whatever! He despises the rod. Ah, and so do we. We think it cannot benefit us. We want to get rid of the rod and turn it away. “My son, despise not you the chastening of the Lord.”

Let me show you how wrong you are. What? Does your ignorance affect to say that God is unwise? I thought it was written that He is too wise to err! And I did think that if you were a Believer that He was too good to be unkind. And does your little wisdom arrogate to itself the chair of honor? Does your finite knowledge stand up before your Maker and tell Him He is unwise in what He does? Will you dare to say that one of His purposes shall be unfulfilled, that He does an unwise act? O then, you are impudently arrogant! You are also impudently ignorant if you will thus speak! Say not so, but bend meekly down before His superior wisdom and say, “O God I believe that in the darkness You are brewing light, that in the storm clouds You are gathering sunshine, that in the deep mines, You are fashioning diamonds and in the beds of the sea, You are making pearls. I believe that however unfathomable may be Your designs, yet they have a bottom. Though it is in the whirlwind and in the

storm, You have a way and that way is good and altogether righteous! I would not have You alter one atom of Your dispensations. It shall be just as You will. I bow before You and I give my ignorance the word to hold its tongue and to be silenced while Your wisdom speaks words of right.” “My son despise not you the chastening of the Lord” by thinking that it can be of no possible service to you!

There is a third way in which men despise the chastening of the Lord—*we may think it dishonorable to be chastened by God*. How many men have thought it to be dishonorable to be persecuted for righteousness sake! A young man, for instance, is in a situation in business where he has a large number of fellow workmen with him. They are accustomed to jeer him, to call him pretty titles—Methodist, Dissenter, Presbyterian—or some other kind of name most common among the worldly. This young man, for a time, bears it, but still thinks it a kind of disgrace to him. He does not know how to endure it. So, after a while, feeling beaten by these jeers and overcome by these insults, he denies his Lord because he discovers that the reproach of Christ is dishonorable to him. My son, if you do thus, you despise the chastening of the Lord! If you think that reproach for Christ’s sake is a dishonor, you judge wrongly of it, for it is the greatest honor that can possibly happen to you! There are many of you who count that religion is very honorable while you can be respectable in it, while you can walk in respectable society. But if the cause of God brings you into tribulation, if it engenders the laugh and jeer of the worldling, the hiss and scorn of the world—then you think it a dishonor. But my son, you do not weigh the blessing rightly! I tell you once again, it is the glory of a man to be chastened for God’s sake! When they say all manner of evil against us falsely, we put that down not in the book of dishonor, but in the scroll of Glory. When they call us by scornful titles, we write not that down for loss, but for gain! We accept their jeers as honors. We count the vile things they cast at us in the pillory of scorn to be a donation of pearls and diamonds—we take their evil speaking, we read it by the light of the Word of God—and we discover that in it lies music, notes of honor and chords of Glory to us forever. Now you who faint under a little trouble and despise the chastening of the Lord, let me encourage you in this way. My son, despise not the persecution! Remember how many men have borne it. What an honor it is to suffer for Christ’s sake! Remember the crown of martyrdom has been worn by many heads better than yours. Oh, I think it would be the greatest dignity I could ever attain to, if the enemy would place the blood-red crown of martyrdom around this brow! We, in these gentle times, cannot suffer for Christ’s sake. God has not put us in evil times because we cannot encounter so much as we wish for Him. These times are not good for us. We almost wish for different ones—when we might be more partakers with Christ in His sufferings. We would almost envy those blessed men of

yore who had the opportunity of showing their courage and faith to all men by enduring more for Christ.

And if any of you *are* in a peculiar place of trouble where you have more persecution than others, you ought to glory in it and be glad of it! He that stands in the thickest part of the battle shall have the highest glory, at last. The old warriors would not stand and skirmish a little on the outside of the army. But what would they say? "To the center, men! To the center!" And they cut through thick and thin till they reached the place where the standard was—the hotter the battle, the more glory the warrior felt! He could glory that he had been where shafts flew the thickest and where lances were hurled like hail. "I have been near the standard," he could say, "I have smitten the standard-bearer down." Count it glory to go into the hottest part of the field. Fear not, Man, your head is covered in the day of battle. The shield of God can easily repel all the darts of the enemy. Be bold for His name's sake. Go on, still rejoicing! But mark you, if you turn back, you are guilty of the sin of despising the Cross and despising the chastening of the Lord! Do not do so, but rather write it down for an honor and glory to be persecuted for righteousness' sake.

Again—in the fourth place, we despise the chastening of the Lord *when we do not earnestly seek to amend by it*. Many a man has been corrected by God and that correction has been in vain. I have known Christians who have committed some sin. God, by the rod, would have shown them the evil of that sin. They have been smitten and seen the sin and never afterwards corrected it. *That* is despising the chastening of the Lord! When a father chastises a son for anything he has done and the boy does it again, directly, it shows that he despises his father's chastening. And so have we seen Christians who have had an error in their lives and God has chastened them on account of it, but they have done it again. Ah, you will remember there was a man named Eli. God chastened him once when he sent Samuel to tell him dreadful news—that because he had not reproved his children, those children would be destroyed. But Eli kept on the same as ever—he despised the chastening of the Lord although his ears were made to tingle! And in a little while God did something else for him. His sons were taken away and then it was too late to mend, for the children were gone. The time he might have reformed, his character had passed away. How many of you get chastened of God and do not bear the rod? There are many deaf souls that do not hear God's rod—many Christians are blind and cannot see God's purposes and when God would take some folly out of them, the folly is still retained. It is not every affliction that benefits the Christian. It is only a *sanctified* affliction. It is not every trial that purifies an heir of light—it is only a trial that God, Himself, sanctifies by His Grace. Take heed if God is trying you, that you search and find out the reason. Are the consolations of God

small with you? Then there is some reason for it. Have you lost that joy you once felt? There is some cause for it. Many a man would not have half so much suffered if he would but look to the cause of it. I have sometimes walked a mile or two, almost limping along because there was a stone in my shoe and I did not stop to look for it—and many a Christian goes limping for years because of the stones in his shoe! If he would only stop to look for them, he would be relieved. What is the sin that is causing you pain? Get it out and take away the sin, for if you do not, you have not regarded this admonition which speaks unto you as unto sons—“My son, despise not you the chastening of the Lord.”

Once more and then we will pass away from that part of the subject. We despise the chastening of the Lord *when we despise those that God chastens*. You say, “Poor old Mrs. So-and-So, the last seven years she has been bed-ridden—what is the good of her in the Church? Would it not be a mercy if she were dead? We always have to be keeping her—one and another giving her charities. Really, what is the good of her?” Many will go to see her and they will say, “Well, she is a very good sort of woman, but it would be a happy release if she were taken.” They mean it would be a happy release for *them*, as they would not have to give her anything! But mark you, if you think little of those whom God is chastising, you are despising the God who chastens them! There is another man and he frequents the House of God, but he comes there in much affliction, much pain. Ah, you think that weakness of body incapacitates him from being of service to the Church? If he is called upon to pray, there is a sweet brokenness of spirit about his prayer, but there is not that pointedness and warmth we would desire. And some will say when they are walking home, “Brother So-and-So, he is always melancholy and always dealing with the gloomy side of the Word of God. I don’t hardly like to talk to him. I would rather mix with the cheerful and light-hearted and those Christians who are happy on the Mount of Assurance. I don’t think I shall walk home with him, for he is so miserable it makes one feel so dull to be in his company.” My son, my son! You are despising the chastened ones of the Lord! That man is being chastened. Be sure and keep his company, for though you do not know it, beneath the clothes of mourning he wears a garment of the Light of God! There is more in those chastened ones, very often, than there is in any one of us! I can speak from experience. The most tried children of God have been those that I have picked up the most from. Sometimes I go and see a poor much-tried countryman that I have told you about. You remember one saying of his—“Depend upon it, if you or I get an inch above the ground we get that inch too high.” Well, I heard another the other day and I will give it to you. “I have been troubled lately,” he said, “with that old devil and I could not get rid of him for a long while. At last, after he had been conjuring up all my sins and bringing them all before my remembrance, I

said to him, ‘you rascal you! Did not I transfer all my business to Jesus Christ long ago, bad debts and all? What business have you to bring them here? I laid them all on Christ. I made a transfer of the whole concern to Him. Go, tell my Master about them. Don’t come troubling me.’” Well, I thought that was not so bad. It was pretty rough, but it was gloriously true, and I have thought of it many times! We transferred the whole—bad debts and all—to Christ! He took the whole concern, the whole stock and everything. All our sins were given up into the hands of Jesus, so why need we be troubled? When Satan and Conscience come, we will tell them to go to our Master! He will settle all the accounts with them. Do not be ashamed to talk with the chastised ones—shun them not because of their poverty. I would walk with a true saint if he had a ragged coat and a hat without a crown.

II. The second evil, upon which we shall have to be rather more brief, is this—“*Nor faint when you are rebuked of Him.*” We, on the one hand, must not despise it and say, “I care not for the rod,” and act like the stoic. And on the other hand we should not faint and give up everything because the Lord pleases to correct us in a measure and to chastise us in love. There are two or three different ways whereby we may faint under the afflicting hand of God.

The first way of fainting is *when we give up all exertion under the rod.* You understand what I mean better than I can describe it to you, for you have seen some such. I must give you a picture. I cannot tell you what I mean unless I do. There is a good woman there. She always regularly attended the House of God. She strove for her Master, was busy in the Sunday school, in the distribution of tracts and every other way. Suddenly she lost that excellent gift, the fullness of Assurance. Her faith began to totter and she now trembles and fears that she is not accepted in the Beloved. And do you know what she has done? She has given up going to the House of God! She has given up attendance at the Sunday school! She does nothing for her Master at all! And if you ask her why it is, she says that God’s hand is heavy on her and she cannot do anything, she has given it up. She is like a person in a fainting fit that cannot move. She is motionless, she does nothing. Many I have known in this state. Because they cannot enjoy all the comfort they wished, they will not do anything. I have seen some with eyes starting from their sockets who have said to me, “Oh, I am under such horror of darkness, so terribly am I afflicted, I have lost all evidence of Christianity—I never was a child of God. I must give it all up—I cannot keep on. I faint under it. I can do no more. Though I go to God’s House, I feel as if I could not pray. As for singing, I dare not. I dare not read my Bible. I think I must give it up.” Brothers and Sisters, faint not when you are corrected of Him! God does not like sulky children, and there are many of His children fainting out of pure sulkiness and nothing else! Because God does not please to

do as *they* like, they will do nothing at all! “I must be top sawyer,” one says, “and I will not be at the bottom to shove the saw up. If I cannot be where I like, I will be nowhere at all.” We have many of these. Because they have to be shaft horses, now and then, they will not pull. If they could always be in front and wear the ribbons, it would be well, but when they have to go behind all, they “jib,” as you say, and will not go at all! Instead of fainting, we should go forward when we have the lash. We should say, “Am I smitten? I will turn to the hand that smote me. Did my Father strike me? Then I will take care, by more ardent duty, that He does not strike me again. I will go my way the more swiftly and get away from the rod. Does He send a cross every day out of love to me? I will seek to work all the more and so, if it is possible, I shall have my prayer fulfilled. ‘Forgive my debts and pardon my transgressions.’”

Again, the man faints *when he doubts whether he is a child of God under chastisement*. Too many of the children of God have the blow of the Father’s rod and they at once conclude that they are not the Father’s children at all! Like one of old, they say, “If it is so, why am I thus?” They forget that it is “through much tribulation” they must “enter the Kingdom of Heaven.” They forget that there is not a son whom the Father does not chasten. You are saying, this morning, “I cannot be a child, or I should not be in poverty and distress.” Talk not so foolishly! That trial is more a proof of adoption than it is that you are not His! Remember the passage—“If we are not partakers of chastisement, then are we bastards and not sons.” Say not He has forgotten you, but look upon your trial as a proof of His love! Cecil once called to see his friend, Williams, and the servant said he could not see him because he was in great trouble. “Then I would rather see him,” said Cecil. And Williams, hearing it was his old pastor, said, “Show him up.” Up he went and there stood poor Williams, his eyes suffused with tears, his heart almost broken—his dear child was dying. “Thank God,” said Cecil, “I have been anxious about you for some time. You have been so prosperous and successful in everything that I was afraid my Father had forgotten you! But I know He remembers you now. I do not wish to see your child full of pain and dying, but I am glad to think my Father has not forgotten you.” Three weeks after that Williams could see the truth of it, though it seemed a harsh saying at first.

Again—many persons faint *by fancying that they shall never get out of their trouble*. “Three long months,” says one, “have I striven against this sad trouble which overwhelms me and I have been unable to escape it.” “For this year,” says another, “I have wrestled with God in prayer that He would deliver me out of this whirlpool, but deliverance has never come. I am almost inclined to give the matter up. I thought He kept His promises and would deliver those who called upon Him, but He has not delivered me, now, and He never will.” What? Child of God, talk thus of your Father? Say He will never leave off smiting because He has afflicted you so

long? Rather say, "He must have chastened me long enough, now, and I shall soon have deliverance." If a man is in the woods and cannot see his way out, he goes straight on, for he thinks he shall come out some day or other. And if he is wise, he will climb the highest tree he can find in order to discover the right way. That is what you should do—climb one of the promises and you will see the other side of the woods with all the sweet fields where you shall feed in green pastures and lie down under your Savior's guidance! Say not you cannot escape! The fetters on your hands may not be broken by *your* feeble fingers but the hammer of the Almighty can break them in a moment! Let them be laid on the anvil of Providence and be broken by the hand of Omnipotence and then they shall be scattered to the winds. Up, man! Up! Like Samson, grasp the pillars of your troubles and pull down the house of your affliction about the heads of your sins and you, yourself, shall come out more than conqueror!

I had intended to finish up by referring you to the succeeding verses, but instead of doing so, let me ask, What son is there whom the Father chastens not? You ministers of God who preach the Gospel—is there among your ranks one son whom his Father chastens not? Unanimously they reply, "We all have been chastened!" You holy Prophets who testified God's Word with the Holy Spirit from Heaven—is there one among your number whom God chastened not? Abraham, Daniel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Malachi—answer! And unanimously you cry, "There is not one among us whom the Father chastens not." You kings, you chosen ones, you Davids and you Solomons—is there one in your high and lofty ranks who has escaped chastisement? Answer David! Were you not obliged to cross the Brook Kidron in the darkness? Answer Hezekiah! Did not you spread the letter before the Lord? Answer Jehoshaphat! Had not you your cross when your ships were broken that were sent to Tarshish for gold? Oh you starry hosts above—translated out of the reach of the trials of this world—is there one among you whom the Father chastened not? Not one! There is not one in Heaven whose back was unscarred by the chastening rod if he attained to the age when he needed it. The infant, alone, escapes, flying at once from his mother's breast to Heaven. There is one more whom I will ask—the Son of God—the *Son par excellence*, the Chief of all the family! You, Son of God Incarnate, did You escape the rod? Son without sin, were You a Son without punishment? Were you chastised? Listen! The hosts of earth and Heaven reply—the Church militant and triumphant answers—"The chastisement of our peace was even upon Him—He suffered. He bore the Cross. He endured the curse as well as any of us. Yes, more—He endured ten thousand-fold more chastisement than any of us can by any possibility endure." "My son, despise not you the chastening of the Lord, neither faint when you are rebuked of Him."

In closing, let me ask those who are afflicted and have no religion, where they get *their comfort*. The Christian derives it from the fact that he

is a son of God and he knows that the affliction is for his good. Where do you get comfort from? It has often puzzled me how poor tried worldlings get on. I can somewhat guess how they can be happy—when the glass is full, when hearts are glad and joyous, when hilarity and mirth sparkle in their eyes—when the board is covered and the family is well. But what does the worldling do when he loses his wife, when his children are taken away, when his health departs and he, himself, is near unto death? I leave him to answer. All I can say is I wonder every day that there are not more suicides, considering the troubles of this life and how few there are that have the comforts of religion. Poor Sinner, even if there were no Heaven and Hell, I would recommend to you *this* religion! For even if only in this life we had hope, we would be, of all men, most *happy*, really, in our spirits, although we might seem to be “of all men most miserable.” I tell you, if we were to die like dogs—if there were no second world—so happy does the Christian religion make the heart, that it were worthwhile having it for this life alone! The secularist who thinks of this world, only, is a fool for not thinking of Christianity—for it confers a benefit in *this* world as well as in that which is to come! It makes us bear our troubles. What would break your backs are only feathers to us. What would destroy your spirits are to us “light afflictions which are but for a moment.” We find in our hearts, light—even in the depth of darkness! Where you find darkness, we have light. And, where you have light we have the brilliance of the sun!

May God put you in the number of His saved family and then if He chastens you, I ask whether you will not think His rod, light, when compared with that sword which you deserve to have smitten you dead! God give you, if you are chastened, now, that you may be chastened and not killed—that you may be chastened with the righteous and not condemned with the wicked! Amen.

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

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

CHASTISEMENT—NOW AND AFTERWARD

NO. 528

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 6, 1863,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”
Hebrews 12:11.

LAST Sunday morning we tried to show you how the uncleanness of sin is removed. By the application of the blood of Christ *the guilt* of sin is cleansed—by the water which flowed with the blood from the side of Jesus *defilement* is taken away forever. Our work this morning is to consider the destruction of *the power* of sin. This is a work which rests in the hands of God the Holy Spirit and is not comprehended under the head of justification, but of sanctification. Beware, my Brothers and Sisters, lest you mix these two different things. It is in the sense of *sanctification* that the trials and afflictions of this life have the blessed influence of purging us from sin.

It were a very great error to imagine that *affliction* ever cleans us from the guilt of sin. For if we could be afflicted with all the pangs of the lost spirits in Hell, and that forever, not a single spot of sin would be washed away by all our miseries and tears. Nor are we saved from the pollution of sin by our *trials*. Our conscience must be purged from dead works by the blood of Jesus alone. If the wedge of gold which Achan stole were accursed, you might have thrust it into the fire as many times as you would, but it would have been accursed still. There were fiery serpents which bit the children of Israel. Their way was long and their journey tedious, but yet I find that they needed the ashes of the red heifer, because that purification did for them what affliction could not do.

No amount of affliction can avail, either to take away the guilt or the defilement of sin. It is in this sense that Kent sings—

*“With afflictions He may scourge us,
Send a Cross for every day,
Blast our gourds but not to purge us
From our sins as some would say—
They were numbered
On the Scapegoat’s head of old.”*

Yet, as we have said, if you separate between sanctification and justification and make a clear distinction between the indwelling power of sin and the guilt of it, then you may clearly perceive the place which affliction holds. When the Holy Spirit acts as Christ’s representative and sits as a refiner, His furnace is affliction, the trials and troubles through which we have to pass are the glowing coals which separate the precious from the vile. They are, through Divine Grace, the means of restraining and destroying in us the tremendous power of indwelling sin until the day shall

come when the blessed Spirit shall take away from us all corruption. And consequently, we shall need no more affliction.

Coming at once to the text, we shall notice, first, the *outward appearance of our trials*, or SORE CHASTISEMENTS. Secondly, *the result of our chastening*, or BLESSED FRUITFULNESS. And, thirdly, *the characters benefited by these exercises*, or FAVORED SONS.

I. First, we have very clearly in the text, SORE CHASTISEMENTS.

1. Keeping literally to the words of the text, we observe that *all which carnal reason can see of our present chastisement is but seeming*. “No chastisement for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous.” All that flesh and blood can discover of the quality of affliction is but its outward superficial appearance. We are not able by the eye of reason to discover what is the real virtue of sanctified tribulation. This discernment is the privilege of faith. Brethren, how very apt we are to be deceived by seemings! Why, to our senses, even natural things are too high for us. The world seems to stand still and yet we know, without any faith, that it is always moving.

The sun seems to climb the heights of Heaven and then to descend and hide himself in the west, and yet we are sure that the sun is fixed in his sphere. When the sun is setting, he seems larger than when he shone in his zenith, but we are well aware, in this case, that the seeming is not the truth and that the sun is no broader at his setting than when he was shining in the highest Heaven. Now, if even in natural things *the seeming* is not the truth, and the appearance is very often false, we may rest quite sure that though affliction seems to be one thing, it really is not what it seems to be. Understand that all that you can know about trial, by mere carnal reason, is no more reliable than what you can discover by your feelings concerning the motion of the earth.

Nor, dear Friends, are our seemings at all likely to be worth much when you recollect that *our fear*, when we are under trouble, always darkens what little reason we have! I remember one so nervous that when going up the Monument, he assured me that he felt it shake. It was his own shaking, not the shaking of the Monument. But he was fearful and timid at climbing to an unusual height. When you and I under trial get so afraid of this, and afraid of that, that we cannot trust the eyesight of the flesh, we may rest assured of this, that “things are not what they seem.”

Besides, we are very *unbelieving* and you know how unbelief is apt always to exaggerate the black and to diminish the bright. When Giant Despair had put his victims into the castle, he was accustomed to beat them with a crab tree club. Some of us have felt the weight of that club—sore are its blows. Lying in that dungeon, Christian began to think whether it were not better to destroy himself, though, poor silly man, all the while the key of promise was in his bosom and he needed not to have lain rotting in that dungeon for a single hour. We cannot, therefore, expect with such a mischief-making propensity within us as our inclination to unbelief, that we can fairly judge what affliction means.

Added to this, over and above our unbelief, there is a vast amount of *ignorance*, and ignorance is always the mother of dismay and consternation. In the ignorant times in this country men were always trembling at

their own superstitions. If some old hag—perhaps some good old woman—sat by the fireside, they dreamed she had an evil eye. They thought that she might scatter plague among the sheep, or mildew over the corn. Afraid they were of the timid hare which crossed their path, or of the raven croaking in the old oak tree. The air was full of omens and presages of ill. Even the insect that cried “tick” as it scratched the old decaying post, was a warning of death. And candles and coals and all sorts of things alarmed them.

It is just the same spiritually with us. We are ignorant of what God means and so we say with Jacob, “All these things are against me,” with about as much reason for saying so as our benighted ancestors had for being afraid of these omens and signs. We are profoundly ignorant, dear Brothers and Sisters, when we dream that we are most wise. And the best taught man among us, if he could compare the little that he does know with the tremendous mass which he does not know, would be surprised to find himself so great a fool. This mass of ignorance always becomes the fruitful parent of fears and doubts—and consequently our chastisements seem to be very sore to us.

Besides, dear Friends, we are such *selfish* beings and so fond of ease. And we are so unwilling to be cut and wounded with even God’s lances. We feel so afraid, even of our heavenly Father’s hand, if it should give us a blow, that our chastisements always seem to be more horrible than they are. You know, when a man resolves that he will endure an amputation, because he foresees that future good will come of it, even though it is a painful operation, he lies like a hero with scarce a groan or a tear. But another, careful of his flesh and timid of himself, is frightened even at the sight of the knife and cries out when but the very slightest incision has been made, and scarcely any pain has been felt.

So it is with many of us. We are so jealous of our own ease and pleasure, that the moment we even see the rod we are frightened and alarmed. And at the very first stroke of it, before it has made the flesh to tingle, we think it is utterly unbearable, and that God intends to destroy us. What, then, with the clouds of fear, the dust of unbelief, the smoke of ignorance and the mist of selfishness, it is little wonder that we do not perceive the truth and thus, “no chastisement *seems* to be joyous.”

2. The text shows us that *carnal reason judges afflictions only “for the present.”* “No chastisement *for the present* seems to be joyous.” It judges in the present light, which happens to be the very worst light in which to form a correct estimate. Suppose that I am under a great tribulation today—let it be a bodily affliction—the head is aching, the heart is palpitating, the *mind is agitated* and distracted. Am I in a fit state, then, to judge the quality of affliction, with a distracted and addled brain? With the scales of the judgment lifted from their proper place, how can I sit and form a just idea of the wisdom of God in His dispensations? At such times *old sins* come up and present passions become rebellious. How can I, when I have to contend with a thousand ancient sins and present temptations—how can I sit down properly and calmly judge what my affliction really is?

I am compelled to judge of it only by a mere surface glimpse. Besides, *Satan* very seldom forgets to roar on such occasions. That old cowardly villain seldom meddles with God's people when they can skillfully handle the shield of faith. He knows that we are more than a match for him when we are resting simply upon our God. But if he can only see a distracted brain, and sin pressing heavily upon us, and a mind beclouded, then it is that he comes in a tremendous fury and hopes to make a full end of us. And if added to all this, what if *God should hide His face* from us, and we should be in the dark? It is hard judging Providences when it is dark—dark without and dark within—Hell howling and earth shaking.

It is difficult to judge *anything* rightly while, perhaps, the wife is dying, the children weeping, property is flying, creditors are dunning, the mind vexed and enemies slandering. When we—

**“See every day new straits attend,
And wonder where the scene shall end,”**

is it a fit time to judge of God? Ought we not at such seasons, like Aaron, to hold our peace because the word we shall speak is sure to be unwise? Had we not better bid carnal reason hold its decision and wait for better times to come? “No chastisement *for the present* can seem joyous but grievous.”

3. This brings me to observe that since carnal reason only sees the seeming of the thing—and sees even that in the pale light of the present—therefore, Brothers and Sisters, affliction never seems to be *joyous*. If affliction seemed to be joyous, would it be a chastisement at all? I ask you, would it not be a most *ridiculous* thing if a father should so chasten a child that the child came down stairs laughing and smiling and rejoicing at the flogging? Joyous? Instead of being at all serviceable, would it not be utterly *useless*? What good could a chastisement have done if it were not felt? No smart? Then surely no benefit! It is the blueness of the wound, says Solomon, which makes the heart better.

And so if the chastisement does not come home to the bone and flesh—if it does not distil the tear and extort the cry—what good end can it have served? It might even work the other way and be *hurtful*, for the child would surely think that the parent only played with it and that disobedience was a trifle—if those very gentle blows were enough, with one or two soft, chiding words, to express parental hatred of sin. If but the mockery of chastisement were given, the child would be hardened in sin, and even despise the authority which it ought to respect.

My Brothers and Sisters, if God sent us trials such as we would wish for, they would be no trials! If they were chastisements that on the very surface seemed to be joyous, then they were not chastisements. They would still be the sweets, the harmful sweets which children like to eat until they turn their stomachs, and are overtaken with sickness.

Let us here note that no affliction for the present seems to be joyous, in two or three respects. It never seems to be joyous in *the object of it*. You know the Lord always takes care when He does strike His people, to hit them in a tender place. When He comes forth to the work of image-breaking, He always dashes in pieces the most favorite image first. Look at David—how could the Lord have touched that man more to the quick than by touching him in his children? There is his daughter, Tamar, dishon-

ored before his eyes. There is his son Ammon, who first commits incest, and afterward falls by another brother's hand.

There is a darling left—he has grown now to be a fine and comely person, there is not such another in all Israel—his hair is his glory. He is a man of great wit. He is his father's jewel. As you hear David cry, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for you! O Absalom, my son, my son!" you see most manifestly that our chastening Father never sends afflictions which are joyous. He always strikes that object which is nearest to the heart, in order that the heart *may* smart.

Nor is it, my Brothers and Sisters, joyous in *the force of it*. "Oh," we are apt to think, "if the trial had not been quite so severe, the temptation so strong—if the difficulty had not been so great—I could have sustained it. But the north wind has come down against me. The Lord has broken me in pieces with a terrible hurricane." My dear Friends, you must never expect to have the trial joyous in the force of it. God will put just so much bitters into the draught that they shall not tickle your appetite as some bitters do, but shall really fill you with loathing and real misery. He will do it efficiently and effectively in the force of it.

Again, no chastisement ever seems to be joyous as to *the time of it*. We always think it comes at the wrong season. "I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet. Yet trouble came," says Job. And David has a complaint somewhat of the same kind. "In my prosperity I said I shall never be moved. Lord, by Your favor You have made my mountain to stand strong: You did hide Your face and I was troubled." The time of our afflictions, if it were left to our choosing—well, I suppose we should never have any at all—but if we *must* have them and had to choose the time, then they would be joyous and so would lose their very meaning.

Certainly, Brothers and Sisters, they are very seldom joyous as to the *instrument*. Hear David. "It was not an enemy. Then I could have borne it." O yes, that is what we always think. "If it were not just *that*, I could have borne it. If I had been poor I could have borne *that*, but to be slandered I cannot endure. To have even lost my wife—ah, it would have been a dreadful blow! But I might have borne it—but to have lost that dear child—how can I ever rejoice again?"

Have not you, sometimes, heard Brothers and Sisters speak so, when they did not know what they said, for God had sent them the very best affliction they could have? He turned over all the arrows in the quiver and there was not one which would suit to wound you with but just the one He used. And therefore that one He fitted to the string and sent it with just as much force as was required—but certainly no more. It all goes to prove this, that in no respect—neither in the object, nor the instrument, nor the time, nor the force of it—can an affliction ever seem to carnal reason to be joyous.

4. No, more—dear Brothers and Sisters, the text assures us in the next place that *every affliction seems to be* grievous. Perhaps to the true Christian, who is much grown in Divine Grace, the most grievous part of the affliction is this. "Now," he says, "I cannot see the benefit of it. If I could I would rejoice. I do not see why this trouble was sent to me. Instead of doing good, it really seems to do harm." "Such a Brother has been taken

away just in the midst of his usefulness,” cries the bereaved friend. A wife says, “My dear husband was called away just when the children needed most his care.” And we say, “Here am I, laid aside upon a bed of sickness just when the Church wants me, just when I proceeded most triumphantly in a career of usefulness.”

This is always grievous to the Christian because he cannot see, though indeed it ought not to be grievous on that account, since he should never expect to see—but should walk by faith and not by sight. You know, Brothers and Sisters, sometimes our afflictions come upon us like ferocious assailants. First of all they *impede* our running—we cannot serve God as much as we like while we are under affliction. We feel as if our usefulness has been greatly and grievously hindered by our bodily sickness or temporal cares. “I could have given my whole heart and both my hands to serve my God if it had not been for these distractions.”

No, the assailant not only hinders us, but sometimes he cries, “*Stop!*” and we are obliged to stop altogether. There is a pulling-up time—the man tosses on his bed when he would be toiling in the vineyard. A sister sometimes has to be weeping at home when she would be comforting others’ hearts. We come to a dead standstill and we are apt to say, “Is this joyous to me to have my feet fast in the stocks?” Sometimes the assailant even *knocks us down*—trials come so heavily upon us, that we cannot stand. Faith reels, hope dies, murmuring and discontent trip up our heels and we say, “What? Is this joyous? Is there any good in this? Where can be the benefit of an affliction which through the infirmity of my flesh drives me to evil and develops the devil that is in me? Can there be any good in this?”

No, sometimes it not only knocks us down, but *wounds* us. Ah, there are many Christians who in their afflictions have received serious wounds, for they have spoken against the Lord. Their impatience has prevailed, and much of their experience has turned out to be a mere figment. No, there are some Christians who are even killed by their affliction. I do not mean that the spiritual seed within them ever dies. God forbid! But I mean that the joy and apparent life of their religion seem as if they had expired, and for a moment they cannot think they are Christians at all. They are led to think that they were never bought with blood and never were in the Covenant, for the blows of affliction have utterly killed them.

Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, it is hard to see that such a trial is right. Things are grievous, indeed, when it comes to this point—when not only the temporal—but even the spiritual gets marred. When the fine gold becomes dim and the glory departs. When the crown of beauty, once upon our head, is cast down in the mire and we ourselves become like a wild bull in a net, kicking against the Lord. We become as one having our soul, not as a weaned child, but one that is weaning, petulant and full of all manner of ill humor and bad temper. And yet this is often the experience of God’s people, and therefore, to them it is that it will always seem grievous.

5. But now let me add, and then I have done with the first head, that all this is only *seeming*. Do let me keep you to this, all this is only seeming. Faith triumphs in trial. When reason is sent into the background and has her feet made fast in the stocks, then Faith comes in and cries, “I will

sing of mercy and of judgment. Unto You, O Lord, will I sing.” Faith pulls the black mask from the face of trouble and discovers the angel beneath. Faith looks up at the cloud and says—

**“It is big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on my head.”**

There is a subject for song even in the smarts of the rod. For, first, the trial is *not as heavy as it might have been*. Next, the trouble is *not so severe as it ought to have been*, and certainly the affliction is *not so terrible as the burden which others have to carry*.

Faith sees that in her worst sorrow there is nothing penal. There is not a drop of God’s wrath in it. It is all sent in love. Faith sees love in the heart of an angry God. Faith says of her grief, “Why, this is a badge of honor, for it is the child that must have the rod,” and she sings of the sweet result of her sorrows, because they work her to lasting good. No, more—Faith says, “These light afflictions which are but for a moment do work out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” So Faith sits down on the black throne, out of which she has expelled reason and carnal sense and she begins, to the praise of Divine Wisdom, to lift up her voice in a joyous song. Well, Brothers and Sisters, that is the first point. I have been rather too long upon it, perhaps, but I could not help it.

II. We have spoken of sore afflictions—well, now, next we have BLESSED FRUIT-BEARING. I want you to notice the word which goes before the fruit-bearing part of the text. “No chastisement for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: *nevertheless*.” Now what does that mean? It gives me my first point under the second head, that this *fruit-bearing is not natural*—it is not the natural effect of affliction. You will see a man take a mass of metal. It appears to you very pure and very beautiful to look upon. It is alloyed. He puts it into his refining pot, he heats the coals, he begins to stir it. You will say to him, “Why, what are you doing? You are spoiling that precious metal. See how foul is the surface! What a scum floats up.”

The natural effect of the fire is to make the scum show itself. A hand, a skillful hand is needed, for the fire cannot do the refiner’s work—he himself must skim the base metal off the top. Affliction only makes the sin rise to the surface, it makes the devil in us come up. It makes us, while we are boiling in affliction, worse than we were before. It is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit and of our blessed Lord and Master, when He sees it on the top, to skim it off. The affliction does not do us any good in *itself*. The natural fruit of affliction is rebellion.

If God chastens me, can I love Him for that? Not naturally. If He smites me, for that can I yield Him homage? No, naturally I rebel against Him and I say, “Who are You that You should smite me thus, and what have I done that I should be tormented by You?” To kiss the hand which smites is something more than natural, it is Divine Grace—and the Apostle seems to hint at this, when he says, “*Nevertheless*.” Oh, dear Friends, no more could we be purged by affliction than could the sea be made pure by being stirred up with storm!

I have looked sometimes at the waves when they seemed a delightfully pure blue and then, after a tremendous storm, the deep has been moved from the very bottom and its waves are thick and foul with sand and sea-

weed. Trials breed discontent, anger, envy, rebellion, enmity, murmuring and a thousand other ills. But God overrules and makes the very thing which would make Christians worse, to minister unto their growth in holiness and spirituality. It is not the natural fruit of affliction, but the *supernatural* use to which God turns it, in bringing good out of evil. Note that.

And, then, observe, dear Friends, that this *fruit is not instantaneous*. “Nevertheless.” What is the next word? “Afterward.” Many Believers are deeply grieved because they do not at once feel that they have been profited by their afflictions. Well, you do not expect to see apples or plums on a tree which you have planted but a week. Only little children put their seeds into their flower garden and then expect to see them grow into plants in an hour. I would have you look for *very* speedy fruit, but not *too* speedy fruit—for sometimes the good of our troubles may not come to us for years afterward, when, perhaps, getting into a somewhat similar experience, we are helped to bear it by the remembrance of having endured the like ten or twenty years ago.

It is “nevertheless *afterward*.” The good of trouble is not generally while we are in trouble, but when we get out of trouble. Yet, on the other hand, it sometimes happens that God can give us the jewels even before we leave Egypt so that we can march out of the house of bondage with golden earrings hanging at our ears and covered with all manner of ornaments. For the most part however, “it is nevertheless *afterward*.”

Well now, you will note in the text a sort of gradation with regard to what affliction does afterward. *It brings forth fruit*. That is one step. That fruit is the fruit of righteousness. That righteous fruit is peaceable, this is best of all. First, affliction really does to the Christian, when the time comes, bring forth fruit. This is the object of Christ in sending it. In His sweet prayer for the elect He prayed that His people might bring forth fruit. He said, “Herein is My Father glorified, that you bring forth much fruit.” He assured them that every branch of the true vine that brought forth fruit would be purged, that it might bring forth *more* fruit.

So far as this world is concerned, God gets His glory out of us—not by our being Christians—but by our being fruitful Christians. And the end and object of Divine husbandry is to make our branches hang down with fruit. Blessed is that chastening which, being fruitful in us, makes us also fruitful. It brings forth the fruit *of righteousness*. Not natural, and therefore impure fruit, but fruit such as God Himself may accept—holiness, purity, patience, joy, faith, love, and every other Christian Grace. It does not make the Christian more righteous in the sense of justification, for he is completely so in Christ. But it makes him more apparently so in the eyes of onlookers, while he, through his experience, exhibits more of the Character of his Lord.

Note again, that this righteous fruit is *peaceable*. None so happy as tried Christians, *afterward*. No calm more deep than that which precedes a storm. There is a lull in the atmosphere after the hurricane which is not known at other times. Who has not seen clear skies after rain? God gives sweet banquets to His children after the battle. It is after the rod that He gives the honeycomb. After climbing the Hill Difficulty we sit down in the

arbor to rest. After passing the wilderness we come to the House Beautiful. After we have gone down the Valley of Humiliation, after we have fought with Apollyon, the Shining One appears to us and gives us the branch which heals us.

It is always “afterward” with the Christian. He has his best things last, and he must be expecting, therefore, to have his worst things first. It is always “afterward.” Still, when it does come, it is peace, sweet, deep peace. Oh, what a delightful sensation it is, after a long illness, once more to walk abroad—though perhaps you are still pale to look upon, and feeble in body—you walk out of doors and breathe the air again! You can feel your blood leap in your veins and every bone seems to sing out because of the mercy of God. Such is the peace which follows long and sharp afflictions. Our enemies are drowned in the Red Sea—then is the time to go forth with timbrel and dance. Our sorrows have left a silver line of holy light behind them and our spirit is as calm as a summer’s eve.

III. And now for the third point and that is, FAVORED SONS. “Nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness in them which are exercised thereby.” I will venture to say this, that it does not yield peaceable fruit to *everybody*, no, it does not yield peaceable fruit to every “son” either. It is not every Christian who gets a blessing from affliction, at least not from every affliction that he has. I conceive that the last words are inserted by way of distinction and of real difference—“those that are exercised thereby.”

You know, Brothers and Sisters, there are some of the Lord’s children who, when they get a trouble, are not exercised by it, because they run away from it. They imagine and employ rash means of avoiding it. They use subterfuges in order to escape from it. They are not exercised thereby. Their Father holds the rod over them and they run away from His hand. Perhaps they get a tingling smart as they run, far worse than if they had stopped. They may get a sorry cuff from His hand, but they are not exercised by it. There are others who, when under trouble, are callous and do not yield. They bear it as a stone would bear it. They learn the stoics’ art.

The Lord may give or take away, they are equally senseless. They look upon it as the work of blind fate, not as the fruit of that blessed predestination which is ruled by a Father’s hand. And so they are like the bullock, which rather kicks against the pricks than yields to the driver. They get no benefit from tribulation. It never enters into them, they are not exercised by it. Now, you know what the word “exercised” means in the Greek gymnasium—the training master would challenge the youths to meet him in combat. He knew how to strike, to guard, to wrestle. Many severe blows the young combatants received from him, but this was a part of their education, preparing them at some future time to appear publicly in the games. He who shirked the trial and declined the encounter with the trainer received no good from him, even though he would probably be thoroughly well flogged for his cowardice.

The youth whose athletic frame was prepared for future struggles was he who stepped forth boldly *to be exercised* by his master. If you see afflictions come and sit down impatiently and will not be exercised by your trials, then you do not get the peaceable fruit of righteousness. But if, like a

man, you say, "Now is my time of trial, I will play the man and wake up my faith to meet the foe. By His Grace, I will take hold of God, stand with firm foot, and slip not. Let all my graces be aroused, for here is something to be exercised upon." It is then that a man's bones, sinew and muscles all grow stronger. We know that those who strive for the mastery, keep under their body, in order that they may come prepared in the day of contest. And so must the Christian use his afflictions. He must exercise himself by them to the keeping down of the flesh to the conquest of his evil desires—that he may be as strong as if his flesh were iron and his muscles hardened steel.

You ask me, what in the Christian is exercised by affliction? Everything newborn in the Christian is exercised. The newborn seed is exercised by affliction and that filial spirit which springs from it. There is sonship in every Believer in Christ that is exercised. And the *spirit* of sonship and *the graces* of sonship all are tried. In fact, affliction, when it does us most good, exercises all the man. It sets every power to work, strains his patience, tests his faith, proves his love. It develops his fears, glorifies his hopes. And whatever other power there is in his spiritual manhood, it exercises all to the uttermost point, and it makes every part grow stronger and nearer to perfection. And so the peaceable fruits of righteousness are yielded to those "that are exercised thereby."

Mark that distinction, because we are not all thus favored. We are all sons and daughters and shall all have to bear the trial, yet we may not all be exercised by it. Let us pray God to give us to be exercised by affliction when we do get it, that so we may possess the practical benefit of it.

I have done when I have added three practical reflections. First, *see the happy estate of a Christian*. His worst things are good things, his smarts are his joys, his losses are his gains. Did you ever hear of a man who got his health by being sick? That is a Christian. He gets rich by his losses, he rises by his falls, he goes on by being pushed back, he lives by dying, he grows by being diminished and becomes full by being emptied. Well, if the bad things work him so much good, what must his best things do? If his dark nights are as bright as the world's days, what shall be his days? If even his starlight is more splendid than the sun, what must his sunlight be?

If he can sing in dungeons, how sweetly will he sing in Heaven! If he can praise the Lord in the fire, how will he praise Him before the Eternal Throne! If even a thorn in the flesh only drives him to his God, Brothers and Sisters, where will the convoy of angels carry him? If evil is good to him, what will the overflowing goodness of God be to him in another world? Who would not be a Christian? Who would not know the transcendent riches of the Believer's heritage?

Secondly, *see where the Believer's hope mainly lies*. It does not lie in the *seeming*. He may seem to be rich, or seem to be poor, seem to be sick, or seem to be in health—he looks upon all that as the seeming. He notices that the thing seen is the thing that *seems*, but the thing that is believed is the thing that *is*. He knows that what his eye catches is only the surface, what his finger touches is only the exterior. But what his heart be-

believes, *that* is the depth, the substance, the reality. So, Brothers and Sisters, he finds all his joy in the “nevertheless afterward.”

Sometimes he is in great trouble, dark trouble—and the devil tempts him, but he spells that word over and repeats it—“Never-the-less, I am very poor, but I shall, never-the-less, obtain Heaven forever. I am very weak, but never-the-less, I shall be where the inhabitant is never sick. The devil has beaten me—I am on the ground and he has his foot on my neck, and says he will make an end of me—but I have, never-the-less, eternal security in Christ.” Never-the-less, not a grain—not an atom the less, in fact—he throws the never-the-less into an ever-the-more. He believes he shall have ever-the-more of bliss and so, looking to the afterward, he *rejoices* in tribulation, for tribulation works patience and patience experience and experience hope.

Why, the Christian often learns his best lessons about Heaven by contrast. If a man should give me a black book printed in the old black letters, and should say, “You want to know about happiness, that book is written about misery, learn from the opposite,” I would thank him just as much for that as if the book were on happiness. So the Believer takes his daily trials and reads them the opposite way. Trial comes to him and says, “Your hope is dry.” “My hope is not dry,” says he, “while I have a trial I have a ground of hope.” “Your God has forsaken you,” says Tribulation. “My God has not forsaken me,” says he, “for He says in the world you shall have tribulation and I have it. I have a letter from God in a black envelope, but, as long as it came from Him I do not mind what kind of envelope it comes in. He has not forgotten me—has not given me up—He is still gracious to me.”

And so the Christian begins to think about Heaven, “For,” he says, “*this* is the place of work, *that* is the place of rest. This is the place of sorrow, that is the place of joy. Here is defeat, there is triumph. Here is shame, there glory. Here it is being despised, there it is being honored. Here it is the hiding of my Father’s face, there it is the glory of His Presence. Here it is absence in the body, there it is presence with the Lord. Here weeping and groaning and sighing, there the song of triumph. Here death—death to my friends and death to myself—there the happy union of immortal spirits in immortality.” So he learns to sing not of the seeming, but of the “nevertheless afterward,” with sweet hope, as his harp of many golden strings.

Lastly, Brothers and Sisters, *afterward is just the point where the unconverted feel the pinch*. “Nevertheless afterward.” I walk round your gardens—you are rich. How beautifully they are laid out! What rare flowers! What luxuries! And as I look at them all, if I remember that you will die. I say to myself, “Nevertheless afterward. This poor man who has a paradise on earth can have no Paradise in the world to come.” Do I see you riding gaily along the street? You have abundance of wealth and honor, but you are without God and without Christ. Then I see close behind you a grim executioner, bearing this motto, “Nevertheless afterward.”

You wear a smiling face this morning, for though you have neither riches nor honor, still you are young, and have health and beauty and are looking out on the pleasures of this world. I want you to take a telescope

in your hand and look a little further—“*Nevertheless* afterward”! You are thinking about this present life, and hoping you will prosper in it. And up to now you have not wanted any religion—you say you have been happy enough without Christ, and you dare say you will get on without Him. But I want you to remember, “*Nevertheless* afterward.”

When you come to die, when you stand before an angry God, when you rise amid the terrors of the Day of Judgment, when you have to meet the open book and the burning eyes of the great Judge, when you hear the sentence, “Come, you blessed,” or “Depart, you cursed,” you will think of “*Nevertheless* afterward.” I wish you would bring these eternal things before your mind and reckon with your conscience concerning them. Soul, if your joy is in earth and your trust in self, you may spread yourself like a green bay tree—you may become as a bullock fattened for the slaughter—but nevertheless afterward, beware lest He tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.

Believe in Christ. Trust your soul with Him and then whatever is to come afterward, whatever “*Nevertheless* afterward” may come, you may always be sure of this—that there is for *you* an eternal and exceeding weight of glory. May my Master give you an interest in that “*Nevertheless* afterward,” and then I shall not fret, nor will you, either, if you have to have an interest in the rod of the Covenant which is for the present, at least in seeming, not joyous but grievous.

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LAME SHEEP

NO. 2854

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

*“Make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame
may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.”*
Hebrews 12:13.

THERE are some Believers with strong and vigorous faith. Soaring high, they can mount up with wings as eagles. Fleet of foot, they can run and not be weary, or, with steady progress, they can walk and not faint. But all are not so highly privileged. I suppose there is seldom a family which has no sickly member. However hale and hearty most of the sons and daughters may be, there is likely to be some weak one among them. So it certainly is in the spiritual household and it will be, therefore, my business, just now, to look after the weak ones. I trust that the word which I shall be enabled to speak may lead their companions to look after them and may God grant that by these means, many troubled ones may be conducted into peace and safety!

I. IN GOD'S FLOCK, THERE ARE ALWAYS SOME LAME SHEEP. Some of these people of God, who are compared to lame sheep, *seem to have been so from their birth*. Their lameness is in their constitution. Do you not know some friends of yours who naturally incline to despondency? They always look at the dark side of everything and if there is no dark side at all, they have a very fine imagination—so they very soon conjure up some difficulty or trouble. They appear to have been born with a propensity to read black-letter literature and nothing else. Illuminated writings are not for them—they cannot bear the fine colors which delight our eyes—they like the dark points. If they turn to the Bible, they seem naturally to fall upon the threats, or if they read the promises, they shake their heads and say, “Ah, these are not for us!” They make heavy troubles out of the common cares of life and it is only carrying out the same spirit which causes them to grieve and fret over the whole course of their Christian pilgrimage. For them, the road is always rugged, the pastures unsavory and the waters turbid. You will find such unhappy souls in all our Churches—people who seem from their very conformation to be lame as to their faith—timorous, trembling and full of doubts and fears.

Besides, have you never noticed *a constitutional tendency in some professors to stumble and get lame*? If there is a slough, they will fall into it. If there is a thicket, they will get entangled by it. If there is an error, they will run into it. We trust they are good people and they do believe in Je-

sus, but, somehow or other, they do not see things clearly. Men to them are like walking trees. Such persons go off at a tangent if anybody makes noise enough to attract their attention. “Lo, here!” and “lo, there!” are cries at the sound of which they go off directly. Let some Divine discover a novel doctrine and they are on the new track at once, never thinking where it will lead them. Let a would-be philosopher suggest some fresh theory which clashes with the Word of God and the things of the Spirit—and their eager appetite is whetted and they will leave the old fields of Truth to wander in the barren wastes of science falsely so-called!

When you go to market, if you are a sensible person, you do not turn aside from all the good wares and fair merchandise to waste your time and your money over the quack vendor of nostrums that he advertises with large pictures and loud talk. Your common sense directs you to seek wholesome food and useful articles, but there are credulous people ready to be caught with any bait. So, too, there are no lack of simpletons in all our congregations—good, thoughtless people, lame and limping in all their walk, troubled with skepticism and plagued with curiosity—unstable as water, they shall not excel.

Can you not detect, too, *some who are lame in point of character?* They seem to have been so from their very birth. There is a something about their gait that is unsteady. As you look at them, you are ready to say, “Yes, good people they may be but they are of a strange sort.” We hope they are sincere, but they are like Mephibosheth, who was dropped by his nurse, and was lame in both his feet. If they walk at all, it is a dreadful hobble. They do their best and we cannot condemn them, but there is an awkwardness about their whole deportment. They are lame sheep at the best. With some, it is a cross temper. With others, it is a general moroseness which it does not seem as if the Grace of God itself would ever cure in them, or it may be a natural indolence oppresses them. Or it is quite possible that habitual impatience harasses them. Now, the Grace of God should eradicate these vices—it can and will if you yield to its influence, for the Grace of God, which brings salvation, teaches us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts. With some of us, the conquest over such evil propensities has been already gained. Still, there are among us those sheep that are lame in this particular respect—they are, if I may say so, constitutionally unsound from their very first entrance into the fold!

Moreover, *they betray their lameness when there is anything you give them to do.* If they are Sunday school teachers, they cannot walk regularly or keep step with their fellows, or they fail to help the young scholar on. Ask them to visit in any district—the steps they take are marked by indiscretion. Appoint them to preach at any of your stations—their speech is not straightforward—they go over the most plain ground of Gospel statement with a lack of consistency, like the walk of a man whose legs are not equal. Whatever they attempt, they do it just as a lame man would go on an errand. They are slow in their movements and slovenly in their performances. Aptly are they compared to lame sheep. Well, you know such people. I wonder whether you are one yourself? At least there are some such about, lame from their birth.

Other sheep of Christ's flock are *halt and lame because they have been ill fed*. Bad food is the cause of a thousand disorders. Many a sickly man, instead of being dosed with drugs, needs to be nourished with wholesome meat. Had he something better to feed upon, he might conquer his diseases. Sheep cannot thrive well on bad food. It is true that many really good Christians have been badly fed. The preaching they have heard has, perhaps, been altogether false doctrine. The poor souls have sat and listened to moral essays, maudlin sentiments, or manifold subtleties that could not nourish their faith, or invigorate their spiritual constitution. If they sometimes suspected that it was not all right, they did not like to desert the place they had long been known to attend, or to forsake the minister they had long been known to hear. They are afraid of being thought too critical, so they have gone on with ill fare to the prejudice of their health and strength, their comfort and usefulness. It is more than probable that poisonous doctrine has got into their constitution and done them real mischief, hence they are lame.

In hundreds, not to say thousands, of cases that I know, Christians are lame through a kind of hazy teaching in which if there is not anything positively bad, there is nothing positively good. I have read the remark that if you were to hear 13 lectures on geology from any decent lecturer, you would probably get a pretty clear idea of his system, but that you might hear 1,300 sermons from many a minister without knowing what he believes! There is a systematic habit, nowadays, of keeping back the positive doctrines and the essential Truths of the Gospel—or of referring to them so vaguely that the sound of words gives no clue to the sense. The whole atmosphere is so full of fog that people cannot see where they are! The preacher may appear to be profoundly deep, but he is not clear. He stirs the mud and makes himself and his subject, alike, obscure. Or, perhaps, he is so superficial that he does not touch upon those Truths which lie at the foundation of the blessed hope of eternal life. Those that sit under such a ministry need not wonder how it is that they do not grow in Grace!

Yes, and how much ministry there is that has nothing but chaff in it! What else can we say of those exquisite preparations for the pulpit in which cuttings from the reviewers, tidbits from the poets and choice scraps from Scripture writers are woven together with a fine overture to begin and a flowing peroration to finish? What can we say of it but chaff, chaff, without a grain of pure wheat from first to last? I would like to chain eloquence down to a post—there let it be bound forever in the land of forgetfulness, never again let it lift its brazen face in this world! Aiming at oratory, cultivating rhetoric, the Gospel, which eschews the words of man's wisdom and demands great plainness of speech, has been disparaged and displaced. We shall not get back a strong race of Christians till we get back such a sturdy band of outspoken men as dare their reputation, if not their lives, upon the unvarnished testimony they give to the Truth they know, the Truth as it is in Jesus, the Truth as it burns in their own hearts and fires their tongues, the Truth as it commends itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God! But, undoubtedly, there

are thousands of Christians at this good hour who are lame for life through unqualified, unhallowed teaching!

God save us from its hateful witcheries and its baneful influences! If we are called to preach, let us preach, but let us know what we have to say and let us say it as though we meant it—or forever hold our tongues! There are some preachers who seem to speak as if they meant to say nothing and they succeed to their heart's content, if that is their intention! Nothing comes of it. The children of God, trained under their auspices, do not know whether God has an elect people or not, whether the saints will persevere, or whether they will fall away and perish. They do not know whether Christ redeemed everybody, or somebody. They have no clear notion whatever of the things which make for their peace. May we be preserved from all willful ignorance and woeful infatuation! May God supply us constantly with strong meat and sound health to digest it!

Full many of the Lord's sheep are lame *because they have been worried*. Sheep often get worried by a dog and so they get lamed. It may be that I am addressing some poor child of God who has been beset and frightfully tormented by Satan, the accuser of the brethren. Oh, what trouble and what terror he can inflict upon us! He can suggest the most infernal insinuations. He can inject into our minds such blasphemous thoughts as make us stagger and reel. He can make us breathe, as it were, the very atmosphere of the infernal Lake of Fire! Those who have passed through this bitter experience will know how they carry the marks of a conflict with Satan upon them, after they have once been assailed by him—wounds and scars that they will bear upon them to their grave. He is such a cruel adversary that even when we overcome him, our strength is impaired by the battle. The fatigues and perils of our pilgrimage are light in comparison with our temptations. We had better go a thousand miles over hedge and ditch than have to stand foot to foot with that dread adversary of souls for an hour! Full many a child of God has been lamed in that fray.

Others, too, have been harassed by persecutors. Many a poor woman has lost her cheerful spirits through a harsh, ungodly husband who has excited her fears, or vexed her with sneers. And not a few dear young children have been broken down for life through the hard treatment they have had, for conscience' sake, to endure at home. True, there may be instances in which sufferers of this sort, out of weakness have been made strong, but, for the most part, when from day to day, from hour to hour, one is insulted and assaulted, the trial is heavier than any ordinary fortitude can bear, insomuch that those who have encountered it have gone halting like lame sheep all their days.

Some precious saints I have known have grown lame *through a rough and weary way*, just as sheep can be lamed if they are driven too fast, or too far, or over too stony a ground. To what an excess of trouble some children of God have been exposed! The Lord has graciously helped them through all their adversities. Still, the trouble they have had to endure has told upon their hearts. They seem as if they never could quite recover from the sudden shock, or the protracted anxiety that has once impaired

their strength, wrinkled their face and dried up their moisture. If they had more Grace, no doubt they would recover their health and renew their youth, but there are some gentle spirits which, when once crushed, are unable to rally and, therefore, they remain lame.

Perhaps still more are lamed *through the rough road of controversy*. If you are a child of God and you know your bearings, always keep as much as you can out of the jingle-jangle of controversy. Little good ever comes of your subtle disputes, but they do gender much strife. Do you tell me that we are told to “prove all things”? Yes, so we are—and it is well to give heed to the admonition—but we are also told to “hold fast that which is good,” and we must not forget the latter half of the precept. Some people seem to think that in order to prove all things, they have to analyze and define every particular and every particle with scrupulous nicety. To prove the quality of the meat that is brought to your table, there is no occasion for you to eat the whole roast. A small sample will enable you to pronounce a sound opinion. Apply the same rule to books and it will save you a world of trouble. They may dish up old dogmas, or they may throw off new theories. They may contain the reveries of the thoughtful, or the ramblings of the idler. They may be conceived with a purpose, or composed for a price. In any case, you must have a voracious appetite if you would read them all through!

But it is quite unnecessary. Take the paper knife and just cut open a page in the center. One tasting will generally suffice for a fair testing. You can see, within a little, what tack their authors take. If they accord not with the Word of God, away with them! You have proved them quite enough. You will get little reward for your pains if you worry your poor mind to solve afresh the points which are settled among us. We have believed and rejoiced in the Truth of God these many years. Yes, believed on conclusive evidence where we once stood in doubt! Rejoiced with unspeakable joy where we once looked with dreary misgiving! What more can you require? But many have been lamed through choosing rough places, adventuring among thorns and briars and leaving the beaten tracks without experience enough to avoid injury to themselves, or skill enough to clear a path in which others may safely follow.

Full many of the Lord's sheep have become lame *through negligence, faintness and the gradual declension of spiritual health*. They have back-slidden. They have been remiss in prayer, omitted reading the Word and forsaken communion with God—so it is no marvel that their walk betrays their weakness. A bad cold is the parent of many ailments. Beware of catching a chill in religion! Lameness is not infrequently the result of a fall. A broken bone, or a compound fracture, or a serious dislocation of the joints is not easily healed. Those who have such injuries can tell you how helpless it makes them—how long it is before they can walk without crutches and how often a change of weather will remind them, by ache and twinge—that cures leave scars behind! Certainly it is so with any man who has fallen into gross sin after making a profession of faith in Christ. However fully he may be restored by Divine Grace, he will *feel its effects as long as he lives*.

II. There are, and I suppose we may expect there always will be, lame ones in God's flock, so I proceed to show that **THE REST OF THE FLOCK SHOULD SEEK THEIR HEALING.** "Make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed."

Some Christian people seem to be so inconsiderate, and unsympathetic that they treat all the lame of the flock with harshness. You may be strong and vigorous in your physical constitution, strangers to nervousness and depression of spirits. Be thankful, then, but do not be presumptuous! Despise not those who suffer from infirmities that have never come upon you! Your turn may come before long. You are yet in the body and exempt from no ailment to which your fellow creatures are prone. I have known hectoring spirits whose contumely it was hard to quiet, so did they jeer at the weaklings and, presently, their own complaints have been hard to pacify, so they did moan over their own grievances. The more arrogant they have been when all was well with them, the more crestfallen and desponding have they been in their gloom when things have gone ill with them. Those often who crow most, croak worst! There is a passage in the 34th Chapter of Ezekiel which I should recommend every strong, rough man to read and diligently consider—"Thus said the Lord God unto them: Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle. Because you have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns till you have scattered them abroad; therefore will I save My flock and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle."

Jehovah is our Shepherd, and He is very tender of His little lambs and His weak sheep—and if we are not tender of them, too, we shall soon be made to smart for our hard-heartedness! It sometimes happens that those persons who have seldom or never had an illness in their lives, feel little sympathy for those who have to bear much pain and sickness. Others, who have never suffered from poverty, themselves, will sometimes shut up their heart of compassion against those who are in dire circumstances. Or if they dole out a charity, they will too often spoil a good deed with a harsh word. "You that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." And if that is too much to expect of you, the least that I can ask is that you will bear with them! I do beseech you, by the gentleness of Christ, that you tread lightly in the sick chamber and speak softly to such as are crushed by adversity. There are diseases that provoke irritability. Peevishness, or despondency may be a symptom of the particular ailment that prostrates one's energies and weakens one's entire being.

Do not be censorious—that would be cruel. Let those of you who are blessed with health and walk in the sunshine, be considerate of your Brothers and Sisters who are blighted with a malady they cannot shake off, or enveloped in a cloud that darkens all their prospects. Do learn to make another's case your own. Be kind. Let every tone of your voice, every gesture of your limbs, every look of your face show the kindness of your heart. God will surely requite it. He watches His children in the furnace. If you grieve them in their trouble, He will vex you in His sore displeasure. And there are spiritual ailments which, like bodily ones, re-

quire tender care and gentle treatment. Do not aggravate the sorrows of those who are harassed with doubts, tempted with evils and distracted with anxious cares. Their tale may appear simple enough to you, but it is very serious to them. What troubles them might not give you an instant's concern. Pass it not over, therefore, as nonsense. Your Lord and Master knew how to condescend to men of low estate and His condescension was always pure, never arrogant. He is far more gentle than the most tender among us. Oh, how desirable to learn His way!

Do you ask, then, what He says we are to do for these lame ones?

Evidently, *we ought to comfort them*. "Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees." Cheer the heart when the limbs are weak. Tell the doubting that God is faithful. Tell those that feel the burden of sin that it was for sinners Christ died. Tell the backsliders that God never does cast away His people. Tell the desponding that the Lord delights in mercy. Tell the distracted that the Lord does devise means to bring back His banished. Covet the character of Barnabas. He was a son of consolation. Study the sacred art of speaking a word in season. Apprentice yourself to the Comforter. Acquaint yourself with the sacred art of comforting the sad. Let your own troubles and trials qualify you to sympathize and succor. You will be of great value in the Church of God if you acquire the art of compassion and are able to help those that are bowed down.

But will you please give heed to the special instruction? *We are to make straight paths because of lame people*. You cannot heal the man's bad foot, but you can pick up all the stones from the path that he has to pass over! You cannot give him a new leg, but you can make the road as smooth as possible. Let there be no unnecessary stumbling-blocks to cause him pain. Do you ask me how you can observe this precept? If you have to preach the Gospel, preach it plainly. Poor sinners are dull enough of understanding—they can puzzle themselves without your puzzling them. Had you to feed a child, it would be folly to put a quarter-loaf down before it and account your duty done. Nor will it profit the mass of the people to preach the Gospel to them in the abstract, giving them a great lump of Truth to digest as best they can. No, but you should divide a child's bread into small pieces—crumble it up and then pour the milk on it, that he may be able to feed on it. So must we cater for God's tried and troubled people. We must speak simply, use homely illustrations and quote precious promises. What though somebody may be offended? Well, let him take offense! We need not be particular to pacify any of those critical people and God forbid that we should offend any of His little ones, for He is jealous of them! If one feeble soul gets a hold of the Truth through its being made plain to him, he will be grateful to you and nor is "God unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love."

Would you make straight paths? Then, *take care that your teaching is always according to the Bible*. Many lame people have been injured by a mixture of heathen philosophy and Christian doctrine. What is it that leads to the spread of Popery in this country? Where does this dogma of baptismal regeneration come from? Had every minister preached that Be-

lievers, only, ought to be baptized, there would have been no pretext for infant sprinkling and certainly no baptismal regeneration! If you go a little to the right, or a little to the left and so diverge from the high road, you do not know where it will take you. Have you ever tried that in a Surrey lane? Perhaps you have been beguiled by some pleasant-looking path to leave the main road, fully expecting to come back into it again a little further on, not for a moment supposing that you had changed your course altogether till you have found yourself two or three miles off the place that you wanted to get to! It is better for you always to keep to the Scriptures, Friends, for if you go a little away from them, you do not know where you may wander and, in teaching others, you may lead them astray! Errors that seem slight and frivolous at first, become sad and serious in a little while. A little deviation from the Word of God will presently lead to a total dissent from its teaching! Heaven only knows how far you may go astray when you once begin to turn your feet aside. Make straight paths for your feet, then, because there are lame ones that otherwise may not be healed.

And in all our walk and conversation, let us make straight paths for our feet as those who aim at holiness of life. Unholy Christians are the plague of the Church. They are spots in our feasts of charity. Like hidden rocks, they are the terror of navigators. It is hard to steer clear of them and there is no telling what wrecks they may cause. The inconsistencies of professors spread dismay among weak, desponding Believers. It is not merely the mischief you will do to yourself, Church member, if you grow wanton and worldly, or the grief you will bring to the stronger Brothers and Sisters, but it is the pain and peril to which you will expose the young, the weak—the tender ones of the flock! That poor little girl in yonder cottage will have your character thrown in her teeth! That poor struggling woman, whose godless husband she has sought to reclaim, will be sure to hear his cruel taunt, “Ah, there is one of your crew! That is how they live!”

The unclean life of anyone who happens to stand in an eminent place does damage which is impossible for us to estimate. The jeer does not alight only upon the transgressor, but upon the whole company of God’s people with whom he was associated! They all have to bear the taunt and feel the smart. Many a lame one is thus staggered. Were he a strong Christian, of course he would say to himself, “Well, there was a Judas among the Apostles and there will be false professors among ourselves, so we must not pin our creed to any creature in the world.” The less confidence he could repose in the disciples, the more closely he would cleave to the Lord. But timid, trembling Christians are put out of countenance, and out of heart, too, by the delinquencies of those they were known to look up to! They say, “If a Christian acts like *this*, can there be anything in Christianity worth seeking for and living for, after all?” So that what is lame is dislocated. Oh, do walk carefully! When you try to teach others, do make your walk an example to those you wish to teach. I would say especially this to myself. Let your life be so pure that it excites no suspicion! Let your conduct be so upright that it needs no explanation or

apology! Let your character speak for itself, a light that shines, an example that you need not be ashamed of, yourself, and such as others may wish to emulate! And beware, I pray you, of any secret sin, of any evil habits such as you would only tolerate when screened from observation, for, as sure as you live, if you are a child of God, it will come out, one of these days, to your shame.

The openly profane may enjoy a measure of impunity, but the professed follower of Christ can never play the hypocrite without provoking speedy retribution. Ah, David thought he had hidden his sin with Bathsheba, did he not? When he had arranged Uriah's death, he seemed to have imagined that nobody would ever know anything about it. But how soon it was discovered and that, too, without its being divulged by anyone who connived at his guilt! The Lord saw it, and He would not hide it. Never let a child of God think that his Heavenly Father will overlook his willful misdeeds. There is no special Providence to shield you from eating the fruit of your own ways. "Be sure your sin will find you out." "Make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated."

Once more let me admonish you. Do not be negligent when your Lord is so vigilant. Do not even be careless when you see Him so cautious. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, evidently cares for the lame ones. The charge He gives is a proof of the concern He feels. He bids us to be considerate of them, because He, Himself, takes a warm interest in their welfare.

III. WHAT SHALL I NOW SAY TO YOU WHO FEEL YOUR OWN WEAKNESS AND INFIRMITY?

You lame ones who cannot walk without limping, I know how you complain. "Ah," you say, "I am no credit to Christianity. Though, in all sincerity, I do believe in Jesus, yet, alas, I can scarcely think I am one of His true disciples, called, and chosen, and faithful! I fear that, after all, He will disown me." Ah, Beloved, He never will! If you really are trusting to Him and hanging upon Him, or even touching the hem of His garment, He *cannot* and He *will not* leave or forsake you! True, it would be likely enough if His ways were like our ways, and it will cause Him no little care to get you safely home. When Mr. Great-Heart went with Miss Much-Afraid and Mr. Feeble-Mind on the road to the Celestial City, he had his hands full. He says of poor Mr. Feeble-Mind, that when he came to the lions, he said, "Oh, the lions will have me!" And he was afraid of the giants and afraid of everything on the road. It caused Great-Heart much trouble to get him on the road. It is so with you. Well, you must know that you are very troublesome and hard to manage. But then, our Lord Jesus is very patient. He does not mind taking trouble. He has laid down His life for you and He is prepared to exercise all His Divine power and wisdom to bring you home to His Father's House. If He were to desert you, there would be no eye to pity, no hand to lead you—but there is no fear of His changing the purpose of His heart. Having loved His own, He loves them to the end. I have heard say—I do not know how true it is—that when one of her family is a little weak-headed, the mother is sure to love that one best and show it the most attention. Her most ten-

der thoughts will always turn towards her helpless babe. And her keenest anxieties will hover over the child who is ill. She may forget, for a while, the strong and the hale, but those who need her succor most are quite certain to be never out of her mind. Be of good cheer, then—"As one whom his mother comforts," so will the Lord comfort you! "Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him."

You may say, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." You may gratefully sing, "He shall gather the lambs with His arms and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." In the Divine economy, the more care you require, the more care you shall have. Besides, you know somewhat of our blessed Redeemer's Covenant engagements. Did our Lord Jesus Christ fail to bring His weak ones home, it would be much to His dishonor. "Those that You gave Me I have kept," He says, "and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled." So Satan only had his own. How the wolf would howl over one sheep branded with the Savior's name were he to fall a prey to his teeth! What malignant hilarity and derision there would be among the infernal spirits if the Good Shepherd failed to bring home one lost sheep whom He had rescued! The joy among the angels of God, they would say, was premature. The Son of Man, they would say, had sought, found, but failed to save the lost. Then the weaker the victim, the keener would the satire be. Ribald lips might shout forth the taunt, "He saved the healthy—the lame He could not save."

It would thus be more discredit to Christ to lose a weak one than a strong one, or for one lame sheep to be lost than if some of the healthier of them should perish—but there is no danger of such a calamity! The oversight of the Shepherd secures the safety of all the flock. They are all numbered and each one in particular is known to Him. Our Lord is a Shepherd who loves His sheep so well that were one of them taken and held between the jaws of a lion, He would run to the rescue and kill the lion as David did of old. He would slay the lion and the bear to get His poor little one saved from the teeth of the devourer. You shall not die, but live! "Oh," you say, "but I cannot preserve myself." No, you cannot! And in your weakness lies your great strength! Jesus Christ will be sure to cover you with His power, so that when you are utterly defenseless, you shall be most efficiently defended. "Ah," says another, "I have had a weary life of it to now." Yes, but you have brighter days to come! Some of God's children, after living in the joyous sunlight all their lives, as they draw near the closing scene, have felt much darkness and depression of spirits. This in no degree imperils their security—they will wake up all right in the morning. But, then, others of God's children have passed most of their days under a cloud till the gloom seemed to settle on their visage and obscure even the radiance of their hope. And yet, when the hour of their departure was at hand, the mists and fogs have all dispersed, light has streamed into their souls and their sweet peace and sacred joy have been like an overflowing tide! The very ones that went limping and mourning, while they were on their pilgrimage, have played the man and displayed the faith of Christians most wondrously when the tri-

al that they dreaded all their life overtook them! Just as Ready-to-Halt left his crutches behind, they have begun to sing and rejoice when they were departing! Like clear shining after rain, like a brilliant sunset after a stormy day, at eventide it was light with them and, I think, it will be so with many of you.

There are some flowers that must be grown in the shade. I believe God made and adapted them to flourish most in shady spots. Some ferns never thrive so well as in some little corner of the brook where the damp continually washes them. Perhaps you are one of those flowers or ferns, planted in a soil that suits your growth. Well, if it is so, murmur not at your lot! The gloom that hovers over you may help the peace of your heart. I have known women, pure and pious, for whom the sunny scenes of life have had no charms. But their bright faces, their beaming eyes and their benevolent hearts have shone with a beautiful brilliance as they have flitted about like angels in the chambers of the sick in the wards of the hospital, or among the couches of the wounded and the dying. Consider Him who was the Man of Sorrows, but whose spirit was not crushed. In the midst of dire distress, He said to His disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." And, Beloved, do not be unmindful of the comfort you may derive under any affliction when you trace it to the will of God. If you suffer as an evil-doer—if it is your own fault—the scourge that chastens you will invite no pity and the conscience that reproaches you will aggravate your pain. If, on the other hand, you can trace the hand of the Lord in a cross or a calamity, your course is soon clear. It would be folly to repine—your wisdom is to resign yourself entirely to His will. Bear it patiently and God will reward you plenteously. When you would rather glorify the Lord than gratify yourself, your prayer shall come up before Him acceptably and the answer shall come down speedily.

It is not for me to say what particular purpose there may be in the personal afflictions that any of the sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father are called to bear, but I cannot help observing that the peaceable fruits of righteousness, which these tried ones put forth, are very sweet and luscious. Let me appeal to your own selves. Have you not often proved the Truth of those words of the Psalmist, "You have known my soul in adversities"? And is it not so that the notice which the Lord has taken of you, and the care He has exercised over you, have made you love Him more tenderly than you ever did before? You could say with David, "Your right hand has held me up and Your gentleness has made me great." Oh, what prayer you have poured out when His chastening was upon you! Such prayer is sweet to the Lord Jesus Christ. I marvel not that He lets you suffer so much when your suffering yields such rich perfume! Well, dear Friends, when we get so choice a compensation, *now*—what shall we receive hereafter? Surely, in the ages to come, the lowliest of worshippers shall sing the loudest—

***"While Heaven's resounding mansions ring
With shouts of Sovereign Grace."***

Their soprano notes shall rise above the angels' harps and the full tide of human voices with a distinctness like this, "MY soul does magnify the Lord, and MY spirit does rejoice in God my Savior!" The personal tribute of extraordinary love and gratitude shall thrill out its solo and then blend with the general chorus!

And now, to close, let us read our text again. "Therefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; *and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.*" See to it that you are not negligent of this ministry of love! Remember how high a reputation Job got in his day for the care he bestowed on those who were frail and infirm? Eliphaz the Temanite said of him, "Behold, you have instructed many, and you have strengthened the weak hands. Your words have upheld him that was falling, and you have strengthened the feeble hands." And do not forget the reproof which the Lord gave to the shepherds of Israel—"The diseased have you not strengthened, neither have you healed that which was sick, neither have you bound up that which was broken, neither have you brought again that which was driven away, neither have you sought that which was lost." Above all, consider the example of our Lord Jesus. His eyes were always quick to spy out the lame, the blind, the crippled—and His hands were always stretched out immediately for their relief. "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him." And if you and I, Beloved, walk with God, and God is with us, our godliness will show itself in the pity we feel and the kindness we show to the feeble and the faulty, the cross-grained and the crippled.

The Lord bless these counsels to the strong and these cordials to the weak—and may we all come to that blessed land where "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick. The people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity"! 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.**

HOLINESS DEMANDED

NO. 2902

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1904.

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ON A LORD'S-DAY EVENING, IN 1862.

“Holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord.”
Hebrews 12:14.

ONE feels most happy when blowing the trumpet of jubilee, proclaiming peace to broken hearts, freedom to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. But God's watchman has another trumpet which he must sometimes blow, for thus says the Lord to him, "Blow the trumpet in Zion and sound an alarm in My holy mountain." There are times when we must sound the alarm—men must be startled from their sleep, they must be awakened to enquire, "What are we? Where are we? Where are we going?" Nor is it altogether amiss for the wisest virgins to look to the oil in their vessels and for the most sound Christians to sometimes be constrained to examine the foundations of their hope, to trace back their evidences to the beginning and make an impartial survey of their state before God. Partly for this reason, but with a further view to the awakening and stirring up of those who are destitute of all holiness, I have selected for our topic, "Holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord."

There has been a desperate attempt made by certain Antinomians to get rid of the injunction which the Holy Spirit here means to enforce. They have said that this is the *imputed holiness* of Christ. Do they not know when they so speak, that by an open perversion they utter that which is false? I do not suppose that any man in his senses can apply that interpretation to the context—"Follow peace with all people, and holiness." Now the holiness meant is evidently one that can be followed like peace—and it must be transparent to any ingenuous man that it is something which is the act and duty of the person who follows it. We are to follow peace! That is practical peace, not the peace made for us, but "the fruit of righteousness which is sown in peace of them that make peace." We are to follow holiness—that must be practical holiness, the opposite of impurity, as it is written, "God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." The holiness of Christ is not a thing to follow. I mean if we look at it *imputatively*—that we have at once—it is *given* to us the moment we believe. The righteousness of Christ is not to be fol-

lowed—it is bestowed upon the soul in the instant when it lays hold of Christ Jesus!

Our text speaks of another kind of holiness. It is, in fact, as everyone can see who chooses to read the connection, practical, vital holiness which is the purport of this admonition. It is conformity to the will of God and obedience to the Lord's command. It is, in fine, the Spirit's work in the soul by which a man is made like God and becomes a partaker of the Divine Nature, being delivered from the corruption which is in the world through lust. No straining, no hacking at the text can alter it! There it stands, whether men like it or not! There are some who for special reasons best known to themselves, do not like it, just as no thieves ever like policemen or jails—yet there it stands and it means no other than what it says! “Without holiness”—practical, personal, active, vital holiness—“no one shall see the Lord.” Dealing with this solemn assertion, fearfully exclusive as it is, shutting out as it does so many professors from all communion with God on earth and all enjoyment of Christ in Heaven, I shall endeavor, first, *to give some marks and signs whereby a man may know whether he has this holiness or not.* Secondly, *to give sundry reasons by way of improvement of the solemn fact,* “Without holiness, no one shall see the Lord.” And then, thirdly, *to plead hard, in Christ's place, with those who are lovers of gain that they may consider this before time is over and opportunity past.*

I. First, then, Brothers and Sisters, you are anxious to know whether you have holiness or not. Now, if our text said that without *perfection of holiness*, no one could have any communion with Christ, it would shut every one of us out, for no one who knows his own heart ever pretends to be perfectly conformed to God's will! It does not say, “Perfection of holiness,” but, “holiness.” This holiness is a thing of *growth*. It may be in the soul as small as a grain of mustard seed and yet not developed. It may be in the heart as a wish and a desire, rather than anything that has been fully realized—a groan, a pant, a longing, a striving. As the Spirit of God waters it, it will grow till the mustard seed shall become a tree. Holiness in a regenerate heart, is but an infant. It is not matured—it is perfect in all its parts, but not perfect in its development. Hence when we find many imperfections and many failings in ourselves, we are not to conclude that, therefore, we have no interest in the Grace of God. This would be altogether contrary to the meaning of the text. As it is not so much my present purpose to show what this holiness is as, *what it is not*, I think while I am endeavoring to undeceive those who have not this holiness, those who are not condemned may reasonably draw some comfortable inferences as to their own pursuit of this inestimable Grace.

Well, now, let us note four sorts of people who try to get on without holiness. First, there is *the Pharisee*. The Pharisee goes to work with outward ceremonies. He pays tithes of all that he possesses—his anise, his mint, his cummin—everything, even to the tithe of his parsley-bed! He gives alms to the poor, he wears his phylacteries and makes broad the borders of his garment—in fact, anything and everything that is

commanded ceremonially, he most punctiliously attends to! But all the while he is devouring widows' houses, he is living in the practice of secret sin and he thinks that by ceremonies he shall be able to propitiate God and be accepted. Sinner, pharisaic Sinner, hear the death-knell of your hopes tolled out by this verse! "Without holiness"—and that is a thing you know nothing of—"no man shall see the Lord." Your ceremonies are vain and frivolous! Even if God ordained them, seeing you put your trust in *them*, they shall utterly deceive and fail you, for they do not constitute even a *part* of holiness. You cannot see God till your heart is changed, till your nature is renewed, till your actions, in the tenor of them, shall become such as God would have them to be. Mere ceremonialists think they can get on without holiness. Fell delusion! Do I speak to any Ritualist who finds himself awkwardly situated here? Do I speak to any Romanist who has entered into a place where not the works of the Law, but the righteousness of Christ is preached? Let me remind you again, very solemnly, my Hearer, that those fine hopes of yours built upon the maneuvers of the priests and upon your own performances shall utterly fail you in that day when most you shall need them! Your soul shall then stand in shivering nakedness when you most need to be well equipped before the eyes of God. These men know not true holiness!

Then there is *the moralist*. He has never done anything wrong in his life. He is not very observant of ceremonies, it is true—perhaps he even despises them—he treats his neighbor with integrity, he believes that as far as he knows, if his ledger is examined, it bears no evidence of a single dishonest deed. As touching the Law of God, he is blameless! No one ever doubted the purity of his manner—from his youth up his carriage has been amiable, his temperament what everyone could desire and the whole tenor of his life is such that we may hold him up as an example of moral propriety! Ah, but this is *not* holiness before God! Holiness excludes immorality, but morality does not amount to holiness, for morality may be but the cleaning of the outside of the cup and the platter, while the heart may be full of wickedness. Holiness deals with the thoughts and intents, the purposes, the aims, the objectives, the motives of men. Morality does but skim the surface, holiness goes into the very caverns of the great deep—holiness requires that the heart shall be set on God and that it shall beat with love to Him. The moral man may be complete in his morality without that.

I think I might draw such a parallel as this. Morality is a sweet, fair corpse—well washed, robed and even embalmed with spices—but holiness is the living man, as fair and as lovely as the other, but having life! Morality lies there, of the earth, earthy, soon to be food for corruption and worms—holiness waits and pants with heavenly aspirations, prepared to mount and dwell in immortality beyond the stars! These two are of opposite natures—the one belongs to this world, the other belongs to that world beyond the skies. It is not said in Heaven, "Moral, moral, moral are You, O God!" But, "Holy, holy, holy are You, O Lord!" You note the difference between the two words at once. The one, icy cold. The other,

oh, how animated! Such is mere morality and such is holiness! Moral-ist—I know I speak to many such—remember that your best morality will not save you! You must have more than this, for without holiness—and that not of yourself, it must be given you of the Spirit of God—without holiness, no one shall see the Lord.

Another individual who thinks to get on without holiness and who does win a fair reputation in certain circles is *the experimentalist*. You must be aware that there are some professed followers of Christ whose whole religious life is inward. To tell you the truth, there is no life at all, but their own profession is that it is all inward. I have had the misery to be acquainted with one or two such. They are voluble talkers, discoursing with much satisfaction of themselves, but bitter critics of all who differ from them in the slightest degree. Having an ordained standard as to the proper length to which Christian experience should go, they cut off everybody's head who is taller than they are and stretching every man out by the neck who happens to be a little too short! I have known some of these persons. If a minister should say "duty" in the sermon, they would look as if they would never hear him again. He must be a dead legalist—a "letter man," I think they call him. Or, if they are exhorted to holiness, why, they tell you they are perfect in Christ Jesus and therefore there is no reason why they should have any thought of perfection in the work of the Spirit within. Groaning, grunting, quarrelling, denouncing—not following peace with all people, but stirring up strife against all—this is the practice of their religion! This is the summit to which they climb and from which they look down with undisguised contempt upon all those worms beneath who are starving to serve God and to do good in their day and generation.

Now I pray you to remember that against such men as these there are many passages of Scripture most distinctly leveled. I think this is one among many others. Sirs, you may say what you will about what you dream you have felt. You may write what you please about what you fancy you have experienced. But if your own outward life is unjust, unholy, ungenerous and unloving, you shall find no credit among us as to your being in Christ! "Without holiness, no one shall see the Lord." The moment you know a man who is drunk on a Saturday night and then enjoys So-and-So's preaching on Sunday. The moment you know a man who can tell you what a child of God should be and then appears himself exactly what he should *not* be—just quit his company and let him go to his own place! And where is that? Judas can tell you! Oh, beware of such highfliers with their waxen wings mounting up to the very sun—how great shall be their fall when He that searches all hearts shall open the book and say, "I was hungry, and you gave Me no food. I was thirsty, and you gave Me no drink. . . Inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these, My brethren, you did it not to Me."

There is another class of persons, happily fewer than they once were, but there are some among us still—*opinionists* who think they can do without holiness. These, too, it has sometimes been my misfortune to

know. They have learned a sound creed, or perhaps an unsound one, for there are as many Arminians as Calvinists in this line—they think they have got hold of *the* Truth of God, that they are *the* men and that when they die, the faithful will fail from among men. They understand theology very accurately. They are wiser than their teachers. They can—

“A hair divide

Betwixt the west and north-west side.”

There is no question about their being masters in divinity. If degrees went according to merit, they would have been dubbed “D. D.” years ago, for they know everything and are not a little proud that they do! And yet these men live a life that is a stench even in the nostrils of men who make no profession of religion! We have some of this kind in all congregations. I wish you would not come here. If we could do you good, we might be glad to see you, but you do so much harm to the rest and bring so much discredit upon the cause at large that your absence would be better than your company. You listen to the sermon and sometimes, perhaps, have the condescension to speak well of the preacher who wishes you would not. Yet, after the sermon is done, on the road home, there may be a bar just opened at one o’clock and the brother refreshes himself and perhaps does so many times! Even if it is the Lord’s Day, it is all the same and yet he is a dear and precious child of God? No doubt he is in his own estimation! And then, during the week, he lives as others live and acts as others act—and yet congratulates himself that he knows the Truth of God and understands the Doctrines of the Gospel and, therefore, he will surely be saved! Out with you, man! Out with you! Down with your hopes! “Without holiness, no one shall see the Lord”—

“No big words of ready talkers,

No mere Doctrines will suffice—

Broken hearts and humble walkers—

These are dear in Jesus’ eyes.”

Heart-work, carried out afterwards into life-work—this is what the Lord wants! You may perish as well with true Doctrines as with false if you pervert the true Doctrine into licentiousness! You may go to Hell by the Cross as surely as you may by the theater, or by the vilest of sin. You may perish with the name of Jesus on your lips and with a sound creed sealed on your very bosom for, “except a man is born-again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” “Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.” Now, if any of you belong to either of these four classes, I think you cannot help knowing it and, being *destitute of Gospel holiness*, you have good cause to bewail your character and tremble for your destiny!

But to help you still further, Brothers and Sisters, that man is destitute of true holiness *who can look back upon his own past sin without sorrow*. Oh, to think of our past lives! There were some of us who knew the Lord at 15 years of age, but those 15 years of unregeneracy—we can never forget them! Others may say, “We did not know Him till we were 50 or sixty.” Ah, my dear Brothers and Sisters, you have much to weep over, but so have those of us who knew the Lord in early life! I can look back

upon God's mercy with delight, but I hope I shall never be able to look back upon my sins with complacency. Whenever a man looks to any of his past faults and shortcomings, it ought to be through his tears. Some recall their past lives, talk of their old sins and seem to roll them under their tongues as a sweet morsel. They live their sins over again. As it was said of Alexander—

**“He fought his battles over again,
And twice he slew the slain.”**

There are those who revel in the memory of their iniquities. They live their life in imagination all over again. They recollect some deed of lewdness, or some act of infamy and, as they think it over, they dare not repeat it, for their profession would be spoiled—but they love the thought and cultivate it with a vicious zest! You are no friend to true holiness, but an utter stranger to it unless the past causes you profound sorrow and sends you to your knees to weep and hope that God, for Christ's sake, has blotted it out!

And I am quite sure that you know nothing of true holiness *if you can look forward to any future indulgence of sensual appetites with a certain degree of delightful anticipation.* Have I someone here, a professed Christian, who has formed some design in his mind to indulge the flesh and to enjoy forbidden dainties when an opportunity occurs? Ah, Sir, if you can think of those things that may come in your way without tremor, I suspect you! I would you would suspect yourself. Since the day that some of us knew Christ we have always woke up in the morning with a fear lest we should that day disown our Master. And there is one fear which sometimes haunts me—and I must confess it—and were it not for faith in God, it would be too much for me. I cannot read the life of David without some painful emotions. All the time he was a young man, his life was pure before God and in the light of the living it shone with a glorious luster. But when gray hairs began to be scattered on his head, the man after God's heart sinned. I have sometimes felt inclined to pray that my life may come to a speedy end lest haply, in some evil hour, some temptation should come upon me and I should fall. And do you not feel the same? Can you look forward to the future without any fear? Does not the thought ever cross your mind—“He that thinks he stands may yet fall”? And the very possibility of such a thing—does it not drive you to God's Mercy Seat and do you not cry, “Hold me up my God and I shall be safe”? There is no doxology in Scripture which I enjoy more than that one at the end of the Epistle of Jude—“Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the Presence of His Glory with exceeding joy, to Him be glory.” I say you are a stranger to holiness of heart if you can look forward to a future fall without great alarm.

Again, I think you have great cause for questioning unless *your holiness is uniform.* I mean if your life is angelic abroad and devilish at home—you must suspect that it is *at home* that you are what you really are. I question whether any man is much better than he is thought to be by his wife and family for they, after all, see the most of us and know the

truth about us. And if, Sir, though you seem in the pulpit, or on the platform, or in the shop to be amiable, Christian and God-like to the passer-by—if your children should have to mark your unkindness, your lack of fatherly affection for their souls and your wife to complain of your domineering, of the absence of everything that is Christ-like—you may shrewdly suspect that there is something wrong in the state of your heart! O Sirs, true holiness is a thing that will keep by night and by day, at home and abroad, on the land and on the sea! That man is not right with God who would not do the same in the dark that he would do in the light! That man is not right with God who does not feel, “If every eye should look upon me I would not be different from what I am when no eye gazes upon me. That which keeps me right is not the judgment and opinions of men, but the eyes of the Omnipresent and the heart of the Lord who loves me.”

Is your obedience uniform? Some farmers I know in the country maintain a credible profession in the village where they live. They go to a place of worship and seem to be very good people—but there is a farmer’s dinner once a year—it is only once a year and we will not say anything about how they get home. The less of that is said, the better for their reputation. “It, is only once a year,” they tell us, but holiness does not allow dissipation even “once a year.” And we know some who when they go on the Continent, for instance, say, “Well, we need not be quite so exact there.” And therefore the Sabbath is utterly disregarded and the sanctities of daily life are neglected, so reckless are they in their recreations. Well, Sirs, if your religion is not warranted to keep in any climate, it is good for nothing! I like the remark which I heard from one of the sailors on board ship in crossing the Irish Channel. A passenger said, to try him, “Wouldn’t you like to attend a certain place of amusement?” which he mentioned. “Well, Sir,” said the sailor, “I go there as often as I like. I have a religion that lets me go as often as I think proper.” “Oh, how is that?” he enquired. “Because I never like to go at all,” was the reply. “I do not stay away because of any law, for it is no trial to me, but I should be unhappy to go there.” Surely the fish, were it asked if it did not wish to fly, would reply, “I am not unhappy because I am not allowed to fly—it is not my element.” So the Christian can say, “I am not unhappy because I do not spend my nights in worldly society, because I do not join in their revelry and wantonness—it is not my element and I could not enjoy it. Should you drag me into it, it would be a martyrdom which to my spirit would be repulsive and painful!” You are a stranger to holiness if your heart does not feel that it revolts at the thought of sin.

Then, let me further remark that *those who can look with delight or any degree of pleasure upon the sins of others are not holy*. We know of some who will not, themselves, perpetrate an unseemly jest, yet if another does so and there is a laugh excited upon some not overly-decent remark, they laugh and thus give sanction to the impropriety. If there is a low song sung in their hearing which others applaud, though they cannot quite go the length of joining in the plaudits, still they secretly enjoy

it—they betray a sort of gratification that they cannot disguise—they confess to a gusto that admires the wit while it cannot endorse the sentiment. They are glad the minister was not there! They are glad to think the deacon did not happen to see them just at that moment yet still, if there could be a law established to make the thing pretty respectable, they would not mind. Some of you know people who fall into this snare. There are professing Christians who go where you at one time could not go but, seeing that they do it, you go too—and there you see others engaged in sin and it becomes respectable because you give it countenance.

There are many things, in this world that would be execrated if it were not that Christian men go to them and the ungodly men say, “Well, if it is not righteous, there is not much harm in it, after all. It is innocent enough if we keep within bounds.” Mind! Mind! Mind, professor! If your heart begins to suck in the sweets of another man’s sin, it is unsound in the sight of God! If you can even wink at another man’s lust, depend upon it that you will soon shut your eyes on your own, for we are always more severe with other men than we are with ourselves! There must be an absence of the vital principle of godliness when we can become partakers of other men’s sins by applauding or joining with them in the approval of them! Let us examine ourselves scrupulously, then, whether we are among those who have no evidences of that holiness without which no one can see God!

But, Beloved, we hope better things of you and things which accompany salvation. If you and I, as in the sight of God feel that we would be holy if we could, that there is not a sin we wish to spare, that we would be like Jesus—O that we could!—that we would sooner suffer affliction than ever run into sin and displease our God. If our heart is really right in God’s statutes then, despite all the imperfections we bemoan, we have holiness wherein we may rejoice! And we pray to our gracious God—

***“Finish, then, Your new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be.”***

II. Now then, for the second point very briefly, indeed—“Without holiness, no one shall see the Lord.” That is to say no one can have communion with God in this life and no one can have enjoyment with God in the life to come without holiness. “Can two walk together except they are agreed?” If you go with Belial, do you think that Christ will go with you? Will Christ be a pot companion for you? Do you expect to take the Lord of Love and Mercy with you to the haunts of sin? Professor, do you think the Just and Holy One will stand at your counter to be co-trader with you in your tricks? What do you think, O man! Would you make Christ a sharer of your guilt? And yet He would be so if He had fellowship with you in it! No, if you will go on in acts of unrighteousness and unholiness, Christ parts company with you or, rather, you never did have any fellowship with Him at all! You have gone out from us because you were not of us, for, if you had been of us, doubtless you would have continued with us.

And as to Heaven, do you think to go there with your unholiness? God smote an angel down from Heaven for sin—and will He let man in with sin in his right hand? God would sooner extinguish Heaven than see sin spoil it! It is enough for Him to bear with your hypocrisies on earth—shall He have them flung in His face in Heaven? What? Shall an unholy life utter its licentiousness in the golden streets? Shall there be sin in that higher and better Paradise? No, no! God has sworn by His holiness—and He will not, He cannot lie—that those who are not holy, whom His Spirit has not renewed, who have not been, by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, made to love that which is good and hate that which is evil shall never stand in the congregation of the righteous! Sinner, it is a settled matter with God that no one shall see Him without holiness!

III. I come to my last point which is to plead with you. Doubtless, there are some in this vast crowd who have some sort of longings after salvation and after Heaven. My eye looks around. Yes, sometimes it has been my habit to gaze with sorrow upon some few here whose cases I know. Do I not remember one? He has been very often impressed and so impressed that he has not been able to sleep. Night after night he has prayed, he has wrestled with God—and there is only one thing in his way—strong drink! By the time Wednesday or Thursday comes around he begins to forget what he heard on Sunday. Sometimes he has taken the pledge and kept it three months—but the craving has been too strong for him and then he has given all resolutions and vows up and has plunged into his besetting sin worse than before!

I know others in whom it is another sin. You are here now, are you? You do not come in the morning and yet, when you come at night you feel it very severely. But why not come in the morning? Because your shop is open and that shop seems to stand between you and any hope of salvation. There are others who say, “Well, now, if I go to hear that man, I must give up the vice that disquiets my conscience—but I cannot yet, I cannot yet.” And you are willing to be damned for the sake of some paltry joy? Well, if you will be damned, it shall not be for lack of reasoning with you and weeping over you! Let me put it to you—do you say that you cannot give up the sin because of the profit? Profit? Profit? Forget it! “What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” What profit have you obtained to now? You have put it all into a bag full of holes! What you have earned one way, you have spent in another and you know that if this life were all, you surely have not been any the better for it! Besides, what is profit when compared with your immortal soul? Oh, I plead with you, lose not gold for dross! Lose not substance for shadows! Lose not your immortal soul for the sake of some temporary gain!

But it is not profit with some of you, it is pleasure—it is a morbid passion. You feel, perhaps, for some particular sin which happens to beset you, such an intense longing and, in looking back upon it afterwards, you think you could give up everything but that. Young man, is it some secret sin which we must not mention, or is it some private guilt which is

hidden from all hearts but your own? O Soul, what is this pleasure, after all? Weigh it, weigh it! What does it come to? Is it equal to the pain it costs you now—to the pangs of conscience, to the agonies of remorse? When an American doctor, who had led a loose life, came to die, he seemed to wake up from a sort of stupor and he said, “Find that word, find that word!” “What word?” they asked. “Why,” he said, “that awful word—remorse!” He said it again—“Remorse!” And then gathering up his full strength, he fairly seemed to shriek it out—“*REMORSE!*” “Write it,” he said, “write it.” It was written. “Write it with larger letters and let me gaze at it. Underline it. And now,” he said, “none of you know the meaning of that word and may you never know it! It has an awful meaning in it and I feel it now—*Remorse! Remorse!! Remorse!!!*”

What, I ask, is the pleasure of sin contrasted with the results it brings in this life? And what, I ask, is this pleasure compared with the joys of godliness? Little as you may think I know of the joys of the world, yet so far as I can form a judgment, I can say that I would not take all the joys that earth can ever afford in a hundred years for one half-hour of what my soul has known in fellowship with Christ! We who believe in Him have our sorrows, but, blessed be God, we have our joys and they are such joys—oh, such joys with such substance in them and such reality and certainty—that we could not and would not exchange them for anything except Heaven in its fruition!

And then, think, Sinner, what are all these pleasures when compared with the loss of your soul? There is a gentleman, high in position in this world with fair lands and a large estate who, when he took me by the button-hole after a sermon—and he never hears me preach without weeping—said to me, “O Sir, it does seem such an awful thing that I should be such a fool!” “And what for?” I asked. “Why,” he said, “for the sake of that court, of those gaieties of life, of mere honor and dress and fashion I am squandering away my soul! I know,” he said, “I know the Truth of God, but I do not follow it. I have been stirred in my heart to do what is right, but I go on just as I have done before. I fear I shall sink back into the same state as before. Oh, what a fool I am,” he said, “to choose pleasures that only last a little while and then to be lost forever and forever!” I pleaded hard with him, but I pleaded in vain. There was such intoxication in the gaiety of life that he could not leave it. Alas! Alas! If we had to deal with *sane men*, our preaching would be easy—but sin is a madness—such a madness that when men are bitten by it, they cannot be persuaded even though one should rise from the dead. “Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.”

“But,” I hear someone say, “it is impossible! I have tried it and I have broken down. I did try to get better, but I did not succeed. It is of no use, it cannot be done!” You are right, my dear Friend, and you are wrong. You are right—it is of no use going about it as you did. If you went in *your own strength*, holiness is a thing you cannot get—it is beyond you. The depth says, “It is not in me.” And the height says, “It is not in me.” You can no more make yourself holy than you could create a world! But

you are wrong to despair, for *Christ can do it!* He can do it for you and He can do it now! Believe on Him and that believing will be the proof that He is working in you. Trust Him and He that has suffered for your sins, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, shall come in and put to rout the lion of the Pit! He will bruise Satan under your feet shortly. There is no corruption too strong for Him to overcome, there is no habit too firm for Him to break. He can turn a lion to a lamb and a raven to a dove. Trust Him to save you and He will do it, whoever you may be, and whatever your past life may have been!

“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved”—that is, he shall be saved from his sins and delivered from his evil practices. He shall be made a new man in Christ Jesus by the power of the Spirit, received through the medium of his faith. Believe, poor Soul, that Christ is able to save you and He will do it! He will be as good as your faith and as good as His own word. May He now add His own blessing to the word I have spoken and to the people who have heard it for His own sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
PSALM 32.**

Verse 1. *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.* The Lord can bless the man who is full of sin only when his sin is covered by the Atonement—the Propitiation—which hides his sin even from the sight of God! And he is a truly blessed who, although he knows himself to be a sinner, also knows that his sin is forgiven and covered.

2. *Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.* He is an honest, truthful, guileless man. A man cannot be a blessed man while he is double-minded, while he has graft or, what is here called, guile, within him. A sincere and guileless heart is an evidence of Grace so, “blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.” But, David, how did you obtain this forgiveness? Let us hear the story of your experience.

3, 4. *When I kept silent, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.* He tells us that he had such a sense of guilt that he could not rest. And until he made confession of his sin to God, he became sick in body as well as in soul. It seemed as if his very bones, the most solid part of his frame, were beginning to decay under the influence of his grief and he was getting worse and worse in the brokenness of his spirit till he seemed like a dried-up country in which there is no dew. His moisture was turned into the drought of summer. Yes, David, but how did you get rid of your sin? We see how deeply you felt it—how did you get clear of it?

5. *I acknowledged my sin unto You, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah.* You see, as long as he covered his sin, God did

not cover it. But when he no longer tried to hide it, but made an open confession of it, then God blotted it out and covered it up forever! There was but a believing confession of sin and David's heart was at once at rest! Shall we not try the same remedy? Will we not go to God and say, "Father, I have sinned"? Is there any better course than that? Is it not right to acknowledge a wrong? Is it not the simplest and safest way to go at once to Him who blots out sin and ask for mercy?

6, 7. *For this shall everyone that is godly pray unto You in a time when You may be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come near unto him. You are my hiding place: You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.* Surely if God has given us the pardon of our sin, He will give us everything else that we need! If He has delivered us from Hell, He will certainly deliver us from trouble!

8. *I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go: I will guide you with My eyes.* The forgiven man is afraid of going wrong again. He is as anxious about his future life as he was about his past sin. So the Lord meets him and gives him the gracious promise contained in this verse.

9. *Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto you.* Do not be hard-mouthed. Be obedient to God's will. Be tender of heart and willing of spirit. The Lord will make His children go in the right way, somehow or other. He will put a bit into their mouths if nothing else will do it, but it would be much better for them if they would be of tender and gentle spirit and would yield at once to His gracious and holy will.

10. *Many sorrows shall be to the wicked.* Godly men also have many sorrows, but then they always have sweets with their bitters, but, "many sorrows shall be to the wicked," and there will be no sweets to go with them.

10. *But he that trusts in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.* He shall have mercy all round him. He who trusts his God shall find that the golden compasses of Divine Mercy shall strike a circle of gracious protection all round him—"mercy shall compass him about."

11. *Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, you righteous: and shout for joy, all you that are upright in heart.* Godly men ought to be glad men. They have a right to be happy. They recommend the Gospel when they are so and they are the true sons of the King of kings when they do not go mourning all their days.

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

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

THE WINNOWING FAN

NO. 940

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 10, 1870,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord; looking diligently lest any man fail of the Grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”
Hebrews 12:14, 15.

WELL did the Apostle declare that the righteous scarcely are saved. It is no child's play to be a Christian. The Christian life is beyond the poet's meaning, real and earnest. The hills of difficulty which lie before us are no molehills, and the giants and dragons with which we must contend are no phantoms of a disordered brain. When we reach Heaven, what monuments of Grace we shall be, and how shall we throughout eternity emulate one another's praises, each one feeling himself to be the deepest debtor to Sovereign Grace!

It will be well for us to remember that the religion of Jesus Christ is not a matter of trifling, that the gaining of Heaven is not to be achieved by a few half-hearted efforts. And if we will at the same time remember that all-sufficient succor is prepared for us in the Covenant of Grace, we shall be in a right state of mind—resolute yet humble, leaning upon the merits of Christ and yet aiming after personal holiness. I trust that in my ministry I shall never keep back the doctrines of the Grace of God, but I am anxious at the same time with equal clearness to declare the doctrine that good works are necessary evidences of Grace.

I am persuaded that if self-righteousness is deadly, self-indulgence is ruinous. Rowland Hill said he had spent a large part of his life in battling with the white devil of Arminianism, but he would now fight the black devil of Antinomianism. I desire to maintain always a balance in my ministry, and while combating self-righteousness to war perpetually with loose living. Antinomianism is a black devil, indeed, a devil whose smutty fingers have defiled full many of the pure truths of our holy faith, and made even good men shy of receiving them. We, must remember that though we are saved by Grace, yet Grace does not stupefy us, but rather quickens us into action. And though salvation depends upon the merits of Christ, yet those who receive those merits receive with them a faith which produces holiness.

The text before us is so full of weighty matter, and my own heart is so full of solemn searching, that I despair of speaking to you all that the text has spoken to me. May the Holy Spirit, the Author of Sanctification, help me, and bless the Word to you. I beg you to notice that there are before us two living things to be followed and two things to be avoided.

I. There are in the text TWO THINGS TO BE FOLLOWED. The fourteenth verse tells us what they are. “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” We are to follow peace

and holiness. The two are consistent with each other and may be followed together. Peace is to be studied, but not such a peace as would lead us to violate holiness by conforming to the ways of unregenerate and impure men. We are only so far to yield for peace's sake as never to yield a principle. We are to be so far peaceful as never to be at peace with sin—peaceful with men, but contending earnestly against evil principles.

“Follow peace,” but let the following of it be guarded by the other precept, “holiness.” With equal ardor we are to follow holiness. Some who have aimed at holiness have made the great mistake of supposing it is necessary to be morose, contentious, faultfinding and censorious with everybody else. Their holiness has consisted of negatives, protests, and oppositions for opposition's sake. Their religion mainly lies in contrarities and singularities. To them the text offers this wise counsel, follow holiness, but also follow peace. Courtesy is not inconsistent with faithfulness. It is not necessary to be savage in order to be sanctified. A bitter spirit is a poor companion for a renewed heart.

Let your determination for principle be sweetened by tenderness towards your fellow men. Be resolute for the right, but be also gentle, pitiful, courteous. Consider the meekness as well as the boldness of Jesus. Follow peace, but not at the expense of holiness. Follow holiness, but do not needlessly endanger peace.

Having thus hinted at the connection between the two, and how the two together make up a complete character, let us now take them one by one. Follow peace, “peace with all” says the text—an amplification of the expression. Follow peace with all the Church. There should be no quarrels within the sacred enclosure which the electing love of God has made. You are one in the Divine choice, you are one by the Savior's purchase, you are one by the Spirit's calling, you have one Lord, one faith, one Baptism. You are on the way to one Heaven—see that you fall not out by the way. “Let brotherly love continue.” Let each esteem others better than himself. Let each seek his brother's good to edification.

Let us by no means be divided in heart, for schisms grieve the Holy Spirit, destroy our comfort, weaken our graces, afford occasion for gain-sayers, and bring a thousand ills upon us. Whereas in these evil days the Church is so much divided into denominations, and sections, follow peace with all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Hold what you believe with firmness, for you are not to trifle with God's Truth. But wherever you see anything of Christ, there confess relationship, and act as a brother towards your Brother in Christ.

Follow peace with all, especially with your own relatives and friends at home. Call we that man a Christian who will not speak with his own brother? We may call him such, but such he cannot be. “If he loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?” When we hear of strife between husband and wife, between brother and sister, between father and child, we are ashamed that the name of Christ should be connected with such unhallowed contentions. Instead of bidding such persons follow after holiness, I would speak to them as unto carnal, and bid them first bring forth fruits meet for *repentance*.

Do not even publicans and sinners love their own relatives? Are they not often forgiving and gentle? How is it, then, that you, calling yourself a

follower of Christ, allow enmity to reign in your spirit? What are your gifts and worshipping while wrath rules within your bosom? What have you to do with worshipping God? Leave your gift before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Follow peace with all your neighbors. A Christian man should not make himself hated by all around him, yet there are some who seem to fancy that they are true to their religion in proportion as they make themselves disagreeable.

Win your neighbors by your willingness to oblige. Disarm their opposition, if possible, by courtesy, by charitableness, by kindness. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all." Do not sow nettles, nor scatter thistle seeds, but let the peaceful honeysuckle and loving jasmine adorn your neighbor's dwelling with "peace be to this house." Let the peacefulness of your deportment shame those who delight in ill will and strife. And may the Lord of Peace Himself give you peace, always by all means.

"Follow peace with all," that is, even with persecutors. Believers in Paul's day were commanded not to resent the evil done to them. They were to render to no man evil for evil, but to follow that which is good, both among themselves and to all. They were put in prison, they were robbed, calumniated, and even cruelly tormented. And yet it is wonderful to observe in history how meekly they endured their afflictions. Scarcely in any case was a word uttered by them inconsistent with the gentleness of their Savior. Now and then a hot spirit would pronounce a fiery denunciation of the cruelties practiced against the followers of Jesus—but as a rule the saints were led like sheep to the slaughter—and suffered in all the glory of patient innocence. Here is the patience of the saints!

Even thus it should be at this day. We are to follow peace with the most infidel, the most superstitious, the most wicked, the most cruel. If they will fight, let the fighting be all on one side. Or if we take up any weapons, let the weapons be those of longsuffering and of love. Let us kill fire with fire, and by the flame of love overcome the flame of hatred. The anvil, after all, breaks the hammer, because it bears every stroke and returns none. So be it with the Christian. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

The text says, "Follow peace," and the word "follow" indicates a hunter in pursuit of his game. He tracks the footsteps of his prey. He follows it over hill and dale, by the edge of the precipice, over the dangerous ridge, across the brook and along the river, through the wood and down the glen. Follow peace in this way. That is, do not merely be peaceful if nobody irritates you, but go out of your way to be peaceful—give up many things that you have a right to enjoy. The respect that is due to you, be willing to forego. In fine, yield all but Truth for peace's sake.

"Charity suffers long, and is kind." "Charity bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things." Often the Alpine hunter, when pursuing the chamois, will leap from crag to crag. He will wear out the live-long day. He will spend the night upon the mountain's cold brow, and then descend to the valleys. Then it is up again to the hills—as though he could never tire,

and could never rest until he has found his prey. So perseveringly, with strong resolve to imitate your Lord and Master, follow peace with all.

Stand still awhile, my Brother, and let me warn you that you can not follow peace with yonder burden on your back. What is it? It is a mass of pride. You can not follow peace if you are proud. Proud men must raise strife by their pride. Even if they try to exhibit good nature, yet pride neutralizes all, and inevitably excites envy and opposition. Even God Himself never sees a proud man but He resolves to pull him down—it is a part of the very nature of all intelligent beings to be offended at pride—and to desire its fall.

What have you to be proud of? Has God given you riches? You are so much the deeper in His debt. Is that a thing to boast about? Has God given you talent? You are so much the more in danger of being led astray by your own presumption. Is your greater danger a cause for pride? If your position is higher, you have more responsibility. Think less of your height, and more of the responsibility which it involves. Walk humbly, or you can not follow peace.

Nor can you follow peace whose heart is full of envy. It is true you have not the wealth of another—what would it profit you if he were as poor as yourself? It is true you have not the talent of another—in what respects would you be better if that man's gifts were taken from him? Why, Man, I will be bound to say, you have after all as much as you will make good use of, and if not, your brother's loss would not make you the richer. It is wrong to be proud, but it is equally wrong to be envious. An envious man is sure to see faults where they do not exist, and so he makes trouble.

Envy paints upon the diseased eyeballs of her victims the faults of others. The faults they see are rather in themselves than in others, yet they think they see them there. Lay aside your envy. Rejoice that another is happier and better than you are. Rejoice in his happiness—it is the way to increase your own. Rejoice in his goodness—it will make you better. If you would double your joy, enjoy another's joy, and thank God that he has it.

Nor can you follow peace, my dear Friend, you with the swift-moving tongue. It were not amiss that it moved so rapidly if it carried better burdens. But you are a tale-bearer among your Brethren. Your tongue speaks more than is true, and much more than is kind. If you perceive even a little offense in a Brother, how quick you are to spread it with exaggerations of your own! How can you follow peace till you have asked God to bridle your tongue?

What has an untamed, unruly tongue to do with peace? It is the great creator and fomentor of discord. More mischief is made by idle tittle-tattle than by downright malice. The mischief that men resolve to do is very small compared with what men and women incidentally do by mere thoughtless love of saying something. You shall not gossip, is a commandment which lies in, "you shall not bear false witness," and is akin to, "you shall not kill." Follow peace with all, and restrain that busy and wicked member, which James calls a world of iniquity, that "sets on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire of Hell."

If we would follow peace we must gird our loins with the girdle of forbearance. We must resolve that as we will not give offense, so neither will we take offense—or if offense is felt—we must resolve to forgive. After

sundown let us never harbor remembrance of an injury. As even the wasp's sting dies when the sun sets, so let our resentments pass away. Boundless is the forgiveness of Christ, so let our forgiveness be. Until seventy times seven, said Christ to Peter. We have not yet reached that, and if we have, let us begin another seventy times seven, for God has forgiven us countless numbers of offenses.

If any tell us that this is to be mean-spirited, let us tell them it is to be Christ-like. And if they call the Master Mean-spirited, we of His household will be content to be called the same. After all, what is grander than patience? What a holy vengeance it is to heap coals of fire upon an adversary's head by returning kindness for malice? O you who are the people of God, remember that your name is men of peace, that your God is the God of peace, that your Savior is the Prince of peace, that the Gospel is the Gospel of peace, that the ministers are ambassadors of peace, that your heritage on earth is your Savior's legacy of peace, and that your Heaven is peace. "If it is possible, as much as lies in you live peaceably with all men." This is the winning post towards which you are to run. The crown of olive and not the wreath of laurel is to be your coveted prize.

The second object of pursuit is a still higher attainment—would God we had reached it. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness." The amplification of the term "holiness" is the solemn declaration, "without which no man shall see the Lord." Certain theologians are so averse to the preaching of practical holiness that they have tried to import into these words the idea of *imputed* righteousness. In imputed righteousness I glory, but it is not mentioned here. No, my Hearer, it is utterly impossible that the text should mean anything of the kind, because you will observe that we are to "follow" it, whatever it may be.

Now, we do not follow imputed righteousness, for as soon as we put our trust in Christ we are justified through His righteousness. It is not a Grace to be *followed*, it is a benefit *possessed* already by every Christian. This text deals with inward, personal holiness, and nothing else. Imputed holiness is a gross misuse of terms. It is not Scriptural, and it is a thorough perversion of this passage to force such a sense upon it. This is a holiness produced in us by the Holy Spirit, which we *progressively* manifest in our hearts and lives.

"Follow holiness, without which no man can see the Lord." I understand by this sentence, in the first place, that no person who is unholy can see or understand Christ the Lord, or God His Father. That is to say, he does not know who Christ is so as to have any real fellowship with Him. He may know His name, and know His history, and have some theoretical ideas of what the Redeemer did and is, but he cannot see with spiritual eyesight as holy men do. He cannot, in fact, discern the spiritual Character and teaching of the Lord.

But perhaps the great meaning lies in this—without holiness no man can see the Lord in Heaven at last. He will see Him on the Throne of Judgment—but he cannot see Him as his Friend—he cannot see Him in that beatific vision which is appointed for the sanctified. He cannot see Him so as to find joy and delight in the sight of Him. He will not be able to enjoy eternal fellowship with God, he will not be permitted to enter Heaven—

"Those holy gates forever bar

Pollution, sin, and shame.

***None can obtain admittance there
But followers of the Lamb.***

God is so holy that He never can have fellowship with unholy creatures. Heaven, the court of God, is so holy that never can unholy beings tread its hallowed pavement. An angel once became unholy, and from the battlements of Heaven he was hurled into the deeps of Hell. God willed to save His elect, but He would not bring them to Heaven until He had sanctified them. He, therefore, sent His Son to die, that from His wounded side might flow the purifying stream. Surely He who would not spare Satan, the bright archangel, will not admit polluted man to Heaven!

And He who put His Son to death to bring His own elect to Heaven, by purifying them from sin, will not bring any of us there if we remain unholy and submit not ourselves to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the object of election—"God has chosen us from the beginning that we should be holy." This is the very end of our calling. "He has called to virtue and holiness." "As He that has called you is holy, be you holy in all manner of conversation." This is the work of the Holy Spirit. He sanctifies the soul and purifies us day by day. This is the test of likeness to Christ, for it is in true holiness that we are conformed unto the image of God's dear Son. Unholy men cannot enter Heaven, it is impossible. Sooner might God die than unholiness live in His Presence.

Now, see, my dear Friends, the text says, "Follow holiness." *Follow* it, that is to say, you will not gain it by standing still. Nobody ever grew holy without consenting, desiring, and agonizing to be holy. Sin will grow without sowing, but holiness needs cultivation. Follow it, it will not run after you. You must pursue it with determination, with eagerness, with long-continued perseverance, as a hunter pursues his prey. You have not yet gained all the holiness which you may have and ought to have.

You are in some respects holy, all of you who have believed, for you are sanctified and set apart by God the Father. You are also rendered holy, in some respects, by being dedicated to Christ and being consecrated as His servants. But you have need to follow the holiness which the Spirit of God works in you. And I do beseech you, beseeching most of all myself, listen to this word—"Follow holiness."

Ah, dear Friends, this is a very high and lofty text, and almost too high to be addressed to some professors. For some who bear the name of Christ have not even followed after *morality* yet, much less after holiness. Now, holiness is far beyond morality, and you cannot be holy while you are not even moral. I blush to confess that some professors are unchaste professors. Alas, even in this Church some have vexed us with uncleanness. I may not know who, in each particular case, may now be guilty of this sin, but such have been, such are, such will be, I fear, among the faithful.

They are men who can talk well about Christ, and yet who are living in secret indulgence of lewdness. Persons will dare to profess the religion of Christ who can enjoy a lascivious song and broad talk, who are given to what is softly styled imprudence, which is really impurity. Impure familiarities, glances, and sports are the commencement of actual crimes. Men and women who in any way injure their delicacy and modesty by insensible degrees, proceed to overt sin. All men wonder when a professor falls

into foul sin, but they would not wonder if they knew how long the transgressor had gone to the verge of the precipice.

The wonder would be rather that the moth had not burnt its wings in the candle long before. Oh, hate the very thoughts of uncleanness! Your members are members of Christ. Your bodies are to be raised in the image of Christ—defile them not, but walk with the utmost purity as in the sight of the thrice holy God.

Alas, I must further confess that some professors are not yet even honest. Shall I talk with them about being holy, when in their trade they cheat, and misrepresent, and lie? Should we see so many religious bankrupts, so many names before the civil courts of religious knaves and scoundrels, if there were not good need to preach plain morality even in the visible Church of God? I do preach it, I dare not do otherwise, even at the risk of having it thrown in my teeth by the enemies of religion. How can I talk of holiness to those who are dishonest in trading? Shame upon you to couple God's name with your knaveries.

Get you, therefore, away! What have you to do with Christ? You are His crucifiers—you put Him to an open shame. I tell such even weeping, that they above all others are the enemies of the Cross of Christ! Mournfully, I must go on and accuse some professors of being drunkards. There are still mingled with our Churches, even with our Nonconforming Churches, those who put but small restraints upon their animal appetites. They are overcharged with drunkenness in their parties and in secret. They talk like the disciples of Christ, and eat and drink like the followers of Epicures. Men given to wine cannot be filled with the Spirit!

What? Though they are not seen staggering in the streets, is their excess one whit the less sinful than that of the public drunkard? "You have lived in pleasure on the earth, and have been wanton; you have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter." Is not this living unto the flesh? And shall you not die? There are some, again, who have not yet attained to be industrious. We have those in the Church who are shamefully idle, who if they could but live on the alms of the Church would never do anything for themselves, and how the Grace of God can live in a lazy man I know not.

If laziness is detestable to good men, much more must it be to God. "My Father works up to now, and I work," says Christ. You find no idleness among angels or saints, yet these men would eat other men's bread, and deserve to be put upon the rations appointed for such by the Apostle Paul, "If any will not work, neither let him eat."

Now if I have to speak of such sins as these that are common among ungodly men, well may my heart ache when I see them in the Church of God. I am wearied with the sins of professors, and sore vexed with their inconsistencies. I long to present you as a chaste virgin unto Christ, and lo, I see sin and folly in Israel. Achan troubles the camp. How can we talk of holiness to men who fall short even in morality? Holiness is better than morality, it includes it, it goes beyond it. Holiness affects the heart. Holiness respects the motive—holiness regards the whole nature of man. A moral man does not do wrong in act. A holy man hates the thought of doing wrong.

A moral man does not swear, but a holy man adores. A moral man would not commit outward sin. A holy man would not commit inward sin—and over that inward sin, if committed—he would pour forth floods of tears. I can hardly explain to you the word “holy,” except by calling you to notice that it comes from the same Saxon root as the words “heal,” “whole,” and “all.” A man who is made spiritually whole is a complete man, all the virtues are there. His heart is right as well as his outward acts. Heal, all, whole, wholly, holy, by these steps you reach the word. A holy man aims to be like God, complete in His Character, motives, and thoughts—renewed after the image of Him that created Him in righteousness and true holiness.

Did not that word stagger you as I read the chapter this morning? Was not that a wonderful expression? “Partakers of His holiness”? That you and I should share in the holiness of God—is not this a lofty thing? And yet we must have no less than this, for without it we shall not see God. “This is a hard saying,” says one, “you judge us too severely.” Brethren, I judge you not, it is God’s Word that judges, and I pray you regard its infallible utterance—“Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.”

In the Greek there are no less than three negatives in this passage, as though it said, “No never, no man shall see the Lord.” Is he a great preacher? Without holiness he may preach, and he may win souls, but he shall never see the Lord. Is he a great giver to the cause of God? Yes, very liberal, but without holiness he shall not see the Lord. “He said he believed in Jesus Christ, and he talked a great deal about inward experience.” That may be, but without holiness, whoever he may be, he shall never see God face to face. There will be no exception made for any one of us, we must all go into that scale and be weighed there, and if we are devoid of holiness, much more if we are destitute of common morality, we shall never see the Lord.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but this word shall never pass away. If we follow not after holiness, at the gates of Heaven we shall find ourselves repulsed. Hope as we may, and boast as we may—neither you nor I—without holiness, shall never get one joyful glimpse of God.

II. Thus have I spoken on the two things to be followed, and now, with the Holy Spirit’s help, I will speak on the TWO THINGS TO BE AVOIDED. These are in the next verse—“Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the Grace of God.” The first thing to be avoided is *failure*. Even those who believe in the doctrine of falling from Grace have honestly conceded that this text does not mean that men may fall from the Grace of God, though the marginal reading might imply that. The Greek would not bear such a rendering.

There are some persons who for a time appear to possess the Grace of God, and for awhile exhibit many outward evidences of being Christians, but at last the temptations come that are most suitable to their depraved tastes, and they are carried away with it. They fail of the Grace of God. They appear to have gained it, but they fail at last—like a man in business who makes money for a time—but fails in the end. They fail of the Grace of God—like an arrow shot from the bow which goes straight towards the target for a time—but having too little impetus, fails to reach the mark.

There are some who did run well. What hinders them that they should not obey the Truth of God?—

***“The apostate soul does tire and faint,
And walk the ways of God no more;
He is esteemed almost a saint,
Yet makes his own damnation sure.”***

Perhaps a more dangerous way of failing of the Grace of God may be this. Some have maintained an admirable character to all appearance all their lives, and yet have failed of the Grace of God because of some secret sin. They persuaded even themselves that they were Believers, and yet they were not truly so. They had no inward holiness, they allowed one sin to get the mastery. They indulged in an unsanctified passion, and so, though they were laid in the grave like sheep, they died with a false hope, and missed eternal life. This is a most dreadful state to be in, and perhaps some of us are in it. Let the prayer be breathed, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Are you earnest in secret prayer? Do you love the reading of the Bible? Have you the fear of God before your eyes? Do you really commune with God? Do you truly love Christ? Ask yourselves these questions often—for though we preach the free Gospel of Jesus Christ, I hope as plainly as any—we feel it to be just as necessary to set you on self-examination and to excite in you a holy anxiety. It ought to be often a question with you, “Have I the Grace of God, or do I fall short of it? Am I a piece of rock crystal which is very like the diamond, but yet is not diamond? Am I like that famous wheel we have all heard so much of lately which had been revolving on its axis so long, but which had an unseen flaw in it, and therefore at last on its journey it snapped and destroyed many lives? Am I just that? Have I been revolving for years in my profession, and shall I break down at last with the whole weight of my eternal interests to be thereby eternally ruined?”

My dear Friends, listen earnestly to the text—it says, “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the Grace of God.” The word is “episcopountes,” a word which signifies overseeing, being true bishops, looking diligently as a man on the watchtower watches for the coming foe. See the sentry pace the rampart—he looks in one direction and he sees the brushwood stirred. He half thinks it is the foe, and suspects an ambush there. He looks to the front, across the sea, does he not discern a sail in the distance? The attack may be from the seaboard. He looks to the right, across the plain, and if even a little dust should move he watches lest the foe should be on foot.

So in the Church of God each one should be on his watchtower for himself and for others, watching diligently lest any man fail of the Grace of God. The first person who is likely to fail in this Church is myself. Each one ought to feel that. The beginning of the watch should therefore be at home. Depend upon it, dear Friends, if there is anyone likely to fall into sin it is yourself. Though I say you, I mean myself as well. Each man is himself most in danger. If you say, “I do not think so,” then there is the more reason that you should think so. If upon hearing of anyone falling into sin you have said, “I do not understand it, I know I never should have

done so," it is very likely you will, before long, fall into the same or equally vile sin.

You are just the man. Those who think they stand are the men who fall. "If any man thinks he stands, let him take heed lest he fall." You who lie low on your faces before God in self-distrust, feeling your liability to err, and asking to be kept every day—you are the least likely to fall of any. But those who say as the Pharisees, "What fools others are to be led astray in that way, I am not one of them," they are fools themselves! God help you, when you are self-reliant, for your feet have almost gone, if not to any other sin, at all events in the direction of pride. And remember a man may as easily be damned by pride as by dishonesty.

Then, next, exercise watchfulness over others. How many persons might be saved from backsliding by a little oversight! If we would speak to the Brother kindly and considerately, when we think he is growing a little cold, we might restore him. We need not always speak directly to him by way of rebuke, but we may place a suggestive book in his way, or speak generally upon the subject. Love can invent many ways of warning a friend without making him angry. And a holy example will also prove a great rebuke to sin. The very presence of some men is a check and guide to others. In the Church we ought to bear one another's burden, and so fulfill the Law of Christ, exercising the office of bishops over one another, and watching diligently lest any man fail of the Grace of God.

The second thing to be avoided is uprising evil "lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." In the center of my lawn horseradishes will sprout up. After the smallest shower of rain it rises above the grass and proclaims its vitality. There was a garden there once, and this root maintains its old position. When the gardener cuts it down, it resolves to rise again. Now, if the gardener cannot get it quite out of the ground, it is his business constantly to cut it down. We are but men, and even when associated in Church fellowship, each one brings his own particular poisonous root, and there are sure to be bad roots in the ground.

We are to watch diligently lest any of these bitter poisonous roots spring up, for if they do they will trouble us. Sin and error always bring sorrow and division, and thereby many are defiled. Sometimes the root is doctrinal error, and in these days there is a world of it. We must watch diligently lest doctrinal error springs up in our midst. I must confess I have very little charity for many of the errors of modern times, and can never degrade this Church by tolerating all sorts of views in it. If men choose errors let them form their own Churches. They have no right to thrust their views upon our community.

There is a certain form of doctrine which we believe to be Scriptural, and if any members deviate from it, their first duty is to leave the Church when they can no longer agree with its belief. As long as I am pastor I shall have no controversy about doctrines which are our settled basis of association, but shall bid those who differ go where they can hold their own views in peace. If this should not prove successful, our duty will be to follow peace by extirpating the root of bitterness, and putting the Jonah overboard. Such a case never has occurred, and by God's Grace I trust never will. But if it should, the Church must not hesitate.

I am persuaded that doctrinal differences in a Church, by breeding the spirit of contention, altogether prevent that Church from serving God aright. If we do not agree in the same Truth we had better separate. We must be one or we cannot be strong. While we hold one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, and are moved by the same spirit, we shall advance to the battle as one man, knit together in the bonds of holy unity. But when roots of bitterness spring up they must be cut down and kept down, or else ultimately they will bring defilement. Doctrinal error leads to practical error, and a Church which treats God's doctrine as nothing, will soon allow His precepts to be treated in the same way. And this would altogether defile the Church of God.

Another root of bitterness is when sin prevails in the Church. When they who preach the Gospel, or hold office in the Church, or are members of it, fall into gross and open sin, Hell laughs in derision. We should watch diligently against this. Again, I say, each man must watch himself most diligently, and his fellow next. Do, dear Friends, guard against the beginning of sin. Rest assured, Christian professors never go into great sins on a sudden. There is first a neglect of private prayer, an indulgence in something which looks innocent but is not, and by degrees it comes to open sin.

We cannot, as professors, from the very force of our training and association, plunge into foul sin all of a sudden. It is by degrees that Satan entices us away from our steadfastness, and then at last we fall a prey to the foe. On your knees pray to God to crush the eggs of the old dragon before they are hatched. For if you are children of God and go into sin, it will cost you, I know not what. It may cost you sorrow to your grave. Poor David, poor David—up to the time of his great sin, what a grand singer he was! But if you read me one of the Psalms, I can tell you whether he wrote it before or after his fall—for before that sad event his songs are jubilant and dance to the music of the timbrel—but afterwards his voice is hoarse, and bass notes preponderate, and you see traces of doubt and unbelief which never appeared before.

Beware of his sin lest you fall into his sorrow. And remember, sins which happened to some of God's people of old, who were truly God's people—if they happened to you would prove that you were not among the people of God at all. They were placed, many of them, in circumstances which, though they did not excuse the sin, yet somewhat accounted for it. You are not placed in such circumstances. You have more light given you and a clearer revelation of Christ, and therefore more is expected of you. And I tell you in God's sight, if you do not all strive after holiness, it is in vain for you to talk about faith in Christ, for there it stands and always must stand, "Be you holy, for I am holy." "Be you clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord."

The Son of Man not only came to seek the lost, but to save them, and that saying is explained by His very name. "They shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins," not IN their sins, but FROM their sins. Except we, as Believers, keep our Lord's Commandments and walk according to His will, we shall not be able to comfort ourselves even with the blood of Jesus. For Jesus never died to give us peace while we love sin and live in it. What says the Scripture, "If we walk in the

light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” See to it, then, that only as we are walking in the light as He is in the light, can we have evidence that the blood has cleansed us from sin. God grant us Grace to feel the force of this.

If rightly moved by the Truths taught in this sermon we shall be very humble. When Isaiah had heard the seraphim cry, “Holy, holy, holy,” while the posts of the doors moved, he said, “Woe is me! I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.” Do you not feel the same? Let humility prevail in your spirit. Let it rule in your heart more and more. Do not be afraid of being brought very low. You are never so safe as when you are low. Do not be afraid of having a very humble esteem of yourself.

I do not suppose any of us have in our most desponding moments ever grasped the desperate character of our own ruin by nature, and the terrible character of our personal sinfulness apart from Christ. You are undone. In your flesh there dwells no clean thing, and even your righteousnesses are as filthy rags. O child of God, get to the foot of the Cross and lie there. But what then? By all-conquering faith look up and say, “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, my faith is fixed on Him. O You precious Lamb of God, like the publican I cry, ‘Be merciful to me, a sinner,’ renew me, cleanse me, purge me. I hate my sins, deliver me from their power, keep me that I sin not against You. Hold me up and I shall be safe. On the blood which cleanses I depend. O let it come to me in all its purifying, sanctifying, force—and make and keep me pure within!”

If there is in this house, today, any who have backslidden, I beg them to mourn, indeed, and put their trust in Jesus, and begin again. And if there is any professor, young or old, who ought not to be a professor, I ask him either to lay down his profession or make it real. Do not add to your sins this sin of pretending to be a Christian if you are not. Be honest. O do not wound Christ with unnecessary wounds. If you make no profession you will at least be free from the sin of hypocrisy. But I pray you do not sell your birthright for a little pottage. Do not let your God and Savior go for a little of this world’s vanities.

May you choose Christ! May you lay hold on Him and be laid hold of by Him! And may you be kept by Him even to the end, that in the Last Great Day Jesus may say of you, “Here am I, and the children whom You have given Me.” If you have never been converted, and have made no profession, still the text has a bearing upon you. Remember, without holiness you cannot see the Lord. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Faith in Jesus is the basis of holiness. God help you to begin at the Cross, and grant you His blessing from this time forth even forever. Amen.

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THE GENERAL CONVOCATION AROUND MOUNT ZION NO. 1689

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 5, 1882,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“But you are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel.”
Hebrews 12:22-24.*

THE whole passage will be considered, but our special central text will be verse twenty-three— “To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven.” Paul is displaying the superiority of the New Covenant to the old. He tells us what Israel, after the flesh, came to at their best in the morning hours of the Law and what the first-born after the Spirit have come to under the Gospel. He pictures the great assembly of the chosen people round about Mount Sinai and then His Inspired mind describes an infinitely larger and happier gathering, to which all Believers have come, around Mount Zion. Not only the Hebrews to whom he was writing, but all the people of God are gathered together in one general assembly, of which the blessed God is the center. Paul shows us the joyful difference between the two gatherings and the feelings and pursuits of those who compose them.

What we shall need, this morning, is a little careful attention to the deep meaning of the text and an intensely earnest desire to actually enter into the enjoyment of the privileges which are herein set before us. Our text contains an incalculable wealth of meaning—it is written according to God’s riches in Glory by Christ Jesus. Surely it was written as with a pen of diamond upon plates of gold set with jewels! May God, by His Grace, lead us fully into it. We would not only speak of privilege as *possible*, but would say with Paul, “We are come unto it.” As surely as we are *not* come to the terrors of the Law, so surely we are come to the blessings of the Gospel!

Read in verse 18, “You are not come,” and then in verse 22, “But you are come.” We do not only hear of Zion and her festivities, but we are come to them! We do not merely know the letter of the Gospel, but we have come into the inner and spiritual meaning of it by personal enjoyment. “We are come.” I would ring out those words as a sort of musical accompaniment to the Truths of God uttered. All through the sermon let

our hearts rejoicingly say, “We are come!” “We are come!” We have obtained, by faith, all that which is set before us in the text!

I. First, I want to set out, as I may be able, A CONTRAST PRESENTED IN THE ENTIRE PASSAGE which we have read—a contrast between the economy of Law and the economy of Grace. Every good thing is enhanced in value by its opposite. Light is all the brighter to eyes which have wept in darkness. Food is all the sweeter after you have known hunger. And Zion is all the fairer because of Sinai. The contrast between Free Grace and Law makes Grace appear the more precious to minds that have known the rigor of the Commandments.

The contrast presented here is sevenfold. It may be that the idea of this sevenfold contrast first occurred to Bengel, that prince of critics, but I have ventured to differ from his form of it and I hope that in so doing I have set forth the contrast as to the seven things more clearly than he has done, so that even the humblest here will catch each point and retain each contrast in his memory. Notice the contrasts. First, as to place (v. 18), “You are not come unto the mount that might be touched.” Verse 22—“but you are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.” Behold Sinai with its rugged crags—scarcely had a human foot ever trod it, perhaps, until that hour in which Jehovah descended upon it in splendor—it had remained a virgin peak which the foot of man had never polluted.

There was no habitation of man upon it, neither did it yield pasture for flocks. The Mount of God stood out in terrible sublimity against the sky, holding communion with the stars, but refusing to deal with men. It was sublime, but stern and tempest-beaten. God came upon Sinai with His Law and the dread mountain became a type of what the Law would be to us. It has given us a grand idea of holiness, but it has not offered us a pathway thereto, nor furnished a weary heart with a resting place, nor supplied a hungry soul with spiritual food. It can never be the place where congregated multitudes erect a city for themselves and a Temple for the living God—it is not the shrine of *fellowship*, but the throne of *authority* and *justice*.

The Jews under the Law had that stern hill for their center and they compassed it about with pale countenances and trembling knees. We gather to quite another center, even unto the palace-crowned steep of Zion. There David dwelt of old and there David’s Lord revealed Himself. The hill of Zion rose above the city of Jerusalem and the two, together, formed the favored spot where Jehovah deigned to dwell in solemn state in the midst of His chosen nation—“For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation.” There the service of His sanctuary was carried on and around it clustered all the palaces of Judah and the habitations of the chosen people. It was called “the City of Vision” and the City of Peace. God dwelt in the midst of her and, therefore, she was not moved.

“Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion.” “God is known in her palaces for a refuge.” “God shall help her, and that right early.” This is a type of the dispensation in which the Lord comes to man in a vision of peace and manifests Himself in forgiving Grace. The Lord dwells with men in the Person of the Man, Christ Jesus, and we come to

Him and find our habitation in Him in all generations. Even as the sparrow has found a house and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, so do we come to dwell at the altars of God, in the city which His Grace has founded and His power has garrisoned.

The places in their contrast are full of teaching. This mountain that might not be touched, we are told, in the next place, “burned with fire.” God made the mountain melt and flow down. The Lord also thundered in the heavens and the Highest gave His voice—hailstones and coals of fire.” Sinai was altogether on a smoke; innumerable lightning flashed forth around the summit of the hill and Jehovah revealed Himself in flaming fire. What, then, have Believers come to, instead of fire? Why, to another form of fire—to “an innumerable company of angels”—“He makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.” Some of those bright beings are called seraphim, or, *burning* ones, for they come and go like flames of fire!

It must have been terrible to look up to Sinai and see it casting forth its flames, but it is with delight that we look towards the angels who excel in strength and spend that strength in the service of the Lord and His people! These are a wall of fire round about us. “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” Has He not given them charge over us to keep us in all our ways? It is most glorious to think of the position every Believer occupies today, for we are all come where the hosts of God encamp about us! David said, “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels.” Daniel said, “Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.” The Prophet flings his thousands about as if they were mere units!

Think of Jehovah’s legions! Jesus speaks of the Father sending Him 12 legions of angels in a moment. The Lord Jehovah has more legions to send to one spot than the Roman Empire could have mustered in all its length and breadth. And every single warrior of these legions is able to destroy a whole army in a single night, as one of them did when he smote Sennacherib. What mighty spirits, what flaming spirits, what pure spirits, what glorious spirits they are! And we have communion with them! We have come to an innumerable company of angels. We do not always realize it as we should, but these loving spirits are about us as surely as they were around Jacob in his dream. If our eyes were opened, we would see horses of fire and chariots of fire round about the Lord’s servants!

“Millions of spiritual creatures walk this earth, both when we wake and when we sleep.” God comes to us by them—“He rode upon a cherub and did fly.” Angels contend against evil spirits and are our defenders. This, then, is our position—we are come to the countless hosts of our Father’s messengers and not to devouring flames. Pursue the contrast and you find on Mount Sinai that there was blackness, doubtless made the more intensely black as the vivid lightning flashed out from it. “You are not come unto blackness,” says Paul. What is the contrast to this? “But you are come to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven.”

Perhaps you do not, for a moment, see any contrast, but I will soon show it to you. Blackness is the symbol of sorrow, it is the garb of mourning. Everywhere we associate blackness with grief, but now Paul sets be-

fore us the grandest embodiment of joy! The word for *general assembly* in the original suggests a far-reaching festivity. “You are come to the pan-equiris—to a solemn festive assembly, comparable to the National Convocation of the Greeks which was held around the foot of Mount Olympus every four or five years, when all the Greeks of different states came together to keep up the national feeling by festivities and friendly competitions which I will explain further on.

Instead of the colors of grim death, we see the joyous congregating of all the clans, the glad union of all the children of God who are scattered abroad! We, this day, in loving fellowship with the Church, are come to the great gathering of God, the holy convocation of saints of every tongue, the central home of all the tribes of His great family! It is a gathering for solemn purposes, for it is a “Church.” But still for joyous purposes, for it is a national holiday. A solemn joy, a holy delight pervades the atmosphere which the one great Church of God is breathing! You say to me, “Do you mean the Church in Heaven?” Yes, I mean the Church in Heaven, but on earth, too! Why divide it? There is only one Church!

Here and there, earth and Heaven, make a little division to our senses, but there is no division in the mind of God—He sees one general assembly of all His people, of all nations, kindreds, people and tongues. Cannot you realize the scene and note the Glory of it? Cannot your mind come to the general assembly? Cannot you feel that you are standing in company with all the chosen of God of every age, clime and place, keeping high holiday with them before the Most High, singing continually with them His praises and doing Him service with delight? I am so glad not to be alone, but to be one of the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven, that I feel ready to shout for joy! What a contrast this is between the blackness of coming sorrow by the Law and the joyous whiteness of the garments of those who believe!

Follow the next point of contrast and you have darkness mentioned. “Nor unto blackness and darkness.” The cloud on Sinai was so dark as to obscure the day, except that every now and then the lightning flash lit up the scene. What are we come to in contrast to that darkness? “To God the Judge of all.” Possibly it does not strike you with joy when I mention it, but this is, perhaps, the most joyous of *all* the clauses of the passage! “God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all.” What a contrast to the darkness of the Law is a reconciled God! “Oh, but,” you say, “He is there as the Judge of all and that makes us tremble,” Why? Why? It makes me leave off trembling when I think that I am come “to God the Judge of all,” that Christ has brought me near, even to the Judge, so that I have *nothing* to dread from Him! What can the Judge do but pronounce sentence of acquittal upon the man for whom Christ has made expiation? What can He do to harm us?

Nothing! But much to help us for, rolling every slander away, He will make the righteous to shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father! We are standing, today, in the Presence of that great God who looks upon His people with delight and awards them their several crowns. In this great gathering of the first-born, they wrestle with sin, they run the race of perseverance, they proclaim His honor and sing His praises. This

is, in fact, the highest delight of all the saints—to gather unto their God! And what follows next? Why, tempest—it is said, “You are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest.” All over the top of Sinai there swept fierce winds and terrible tornadoes, for the Lord was there!

All Heaven seemed convulsed when God did rend it and descended in majesty upon the sacred mountain! But what do you and I see? The very reverse of tempest— “The spirits of just men made perfect,” serenely resting! What more is there for them to do? They are perfect! They have fought the fight. They have run the race, they are crowned, they are full of ecstatic bliss—the light of God is on their brows, the Glory of God is reflected from their faces—everything like a storm is far gone from them! They have reached the fair haven and are tossed with tempest no more. Today you and I have come where we hold fellowship with the immutably serene who are resting in the Glory which God has appointed them! This is a part of the splendid pageantry of the Covenant of Grace, and we are come to it—

***“Even now by faith we join our hands
With those that went before
And greet the blood-besprinkled bands
On the eternal shore.”***

Faith has brought us into that one communion in which all saints live, whether they are on earth or in the Father’s house above. Follow the contrast further and you come to the sound of a trumpet. This resounded from the top of Sinai. Clarion notes most clear and shrill rang out, again and again—the high commands of the thrice-holy God. You are not come to that. Instead of a trumpet, which signifies war and the stern summons of a king, you are come unto “Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant,” and the silver tones of, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Here is nothing to disturb the ears, for, “He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench.” No message thunders out, “Stand off!” but holy affection cries, “Come, and welcome!” God has come to you in the Person of the Mediator, the Man, Christ Jesus.” In the Person of Jesus we see nothing to alarm, but everything to encourage. Oh, for faith to see, with joy, the Mediator of that New Covenant which does not so much command as *work in us* to will and to do! Is not this one of the choicest blessings of the position we now occupy, that instead of the trumpet, we hear the sweet and saving voice of Jesus bidding us repose in His salvation and be eternally blessed?

The seventh contrast lies in this—together with the trumpet, there sounded out a Voice—a Voice which was so terrible that they asked that they might not hear it again. They cowered down under it like poor, frightened children, terrified by the penetrating sound! They could not endure another word! They begged that the voice would be silent. We have come to another voice—the voice of “the blood of sprinkling—that speaks better things than that of Abel.” There is a voice from Zion, there is a voice that rolls over the heads of the innumerable company of angels, a voice of the

Lord that is full of majesty and exceedingly comfortable to the “general assembly and Church of the first-born” who know the joyful sound! The blessed Word speaks life, pardon, reconciliation, acceptance, joy, eternal bliss! Happy people, whose ears have discerned this heavenly voice! “They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Your Countenance.” The more of this voice the better—it never wearies the ear, nor distresses the heart—

***“Blood has a voice to pierce the skies,
‘Revenge,’ the blood of Abel cries!
But the dear blood of Jesus slain
Speaks peace as loud from every vein.”***

We are come to it, for we have been washed in it and its sweet, prevailing note is filling our heart with music even now!

Now, dear Friends, I have set forth the contrast and I want you to think it out by the help of the ever-blessed Spirit. To all that was transacted at Sinai the people could not come, nor did they wish to come—they kept at a distance, for they were afraid—but to all that is displayed on Zion we may come! No, what is better, I hope we can say with the Apostle, “We *are* come.” We now enter into it and delight in it—it has become our life and our joy! All that the people saw at Sinai distressed them. All that we see at Zion electrifies us with delight—we scarcely know how to bear ourselves as we think of the wondrous Glory of love!

We are not warned off; we are not driven into fear and bondage, but we come unto the Mountain of God and there we feast, rejoicing in Him, even in all that He is and does! The veil is torn from the top to the bottom and we have access to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. There I leave the instructive contrast. May the Holy Spirit bless it.

II. I beg you, in the second place, to follow me in what may not, perhaps, so much strike you, but it is certainly worthy of your attention, namely, A COMPARISON IN OUR MORE CENTRAL TEXT. Our position is that, “We are come to the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in Heaven.” It is a comparison, not with anything Jewish, for that would not have been suitable, but with a Gentile festival, which more readily lent itself to the Apostle’s great thought.

Let me give you, first of all, a rough sketch. In Greece, in her happier times, in order to preserve a national unity, the various states, kingdoms, or republics which constituted Greece proper, held, at the foot of Olympus, a great gathering to which none came as participators except citizens of the various Greek nationalities. The object of the gathering was that every part of the Greek nature might be educated and displayed and the unity of the Greek race be remembered. Poets came and sang verses which they had composed with care; orators stood and discoursed to gain the crown for eloquence; men of all kinds of mental attainments were there emulating each other. At the same time, all sorts of athletic exercises for the development of the body were going on.

The territory in which this was held was considered to be sacred. Though the states were often at war with one another, they never carried the war into that particular region. It was a quiet, peaceful, neutral spot. Do you not glimpse a parallel? No man was allowed to compete in any of the exercises and contests except he had been at least 10 months or more

in preparation for them. Those who were conquerors had no gold given them as reward—a simple crown of olive leaves was all—but it was thought a most sufficient reward for the most exhausting feats and for the greatest self-denial—such as resistance unto blood and dislocation of bones.

When the conquerors went home, we are told that they were drawn into their own cities with horses in great state, and the gates were not opened to them, but a breach was made in the city wall that they might be admitted with unusual pomp. The whole business of the festival was held in high esteem by the Greek people and religion lent its rites and ceremonies to make the gathering the more imposing. The Apostle, I do not doubt, had seen it. At any rate, the words which he uses properly and naturally suggest it. Think for a moment! Before us stands the city which is the center of this unrivalled congregation of the first-born! Jerusalem stands in her place and the Acropolis, Mount Zion, looks down upon the scene. To the city of the living God, the living children of God have come!

Look how the Presence of the Lord brings together an innumerable company! Far as imagination can fly, the space is filled with shining ones who compose the court of the Most High! Observe the free-born burgesses of the holy city, enrolled by God that they may participate in the exercises which make illustrious this noblest of all assemblies! Look, yonder are the runners and the wrestlers! Perhaps you do not think there can be much festivity about engagements which involve so much of endurance as running and striving for the mastery, but your Greeks were of another mind and these contests were a part of the pleasures of the festival.

How much I wish that we could look upon all the conflicts, sufferings and troubles of this mortal life as occupations of the great festive gathering which is now being held in Heaven and in earth around the city of our God. Look! Yonder is the Judge, the great Umpire of His people's efforts, ready to award the crowns! And who are those sitting in their seats and looking on? These are they who have taken their turn in these grand displays and, having won their crowns, there they sit, "the spirits of the just made perfect," "the cloud of witnesses." Today, my Brothers and Sisters, you are participating in that great international gathering of all the people of God! Are you not glad to be here? When I was visiting one of our sick friends, he uttered a sentence which stuck to me and, indeed, suggested my subject.

He said, "I have had some education for Heaven in attending the Tabernacle." "How is that?" "Because I have become used to worshipping with a great company of godly people—used to joining in the songs of great multitudes—and I shall feel at home among the number that no man can number." Yes, it is sweet to go up with your multitude who keep holy day! The number adds a charm to your worship and gives to our hearts a tone of exhilaration which otherwise they might have lacked. Behold, then, the countless bands of the redeemed assembled around the chosen mountain! Brethren, you are not around a blazing mountain, nor do you compose a trembling assembly of persons who, like slaves, are afraid of their great and terrible master! You are come, today, to the great festival in which earth and Heaven unite!

That assembly is one and indivisible. Around the Throne of the Most High your Apostle represents all the saints as gathered to hold one glorious feast. "Has it begun?" you ask. Yes, it is going on, now, and you are come to it—if you are living by faith as you ought to live—you are now engaged in it. "Oh, but," you say, "I am wrestling." That is a part of the festival! "I never thought of that," cries one. But it is even so. When the national meeting was held at Olympus, there were contests of all kinds and these were not regarded with sorrow, but with exultation. "What? Would you have me look at my suffering and wrestling as part of a *festival*?" Yes! I would have you glory in them and view them in the same high and heroic light in which the Apostle sets them forth in the figure before us!

The exercises are now proceeding. The sacred orators are now doing their part—you heard the singers just now. I count it a high honor to hold your attention while I tell you of the Glory of my Lord and Master who, Himself, contended here on earth and endured the Cross, despising the shame! Thousands of others are discoursing as I do, for the assembly abounds in the rich gifts of utterance. And everywhere, chosen spokesmen are telling out the wonderful wisdom and love of God! Many at this meeting have hymns to sing, or books to write, and all are doing their best to make the assembly a notable one! Look at another class of chosen men and mark how they are struggling with temptation, warring against error, running in the course, or bearing heavy weights! Yes, that is all a part of the grand display which the Lord is making before all intelligent beings, wherein the power of love, the energy of faith, the splendor of Grace and the triumph of good are being made manifest to the Glory of God by us!

"Oh," you say, "I cannot look at my sorrows in such a light." No doubt the men who were wrestling or racing found that, for the present, it was not joyous. Yet they did not shun it, for they had earnestly desired the day when they might be allowed to share in the national display. They counted it a high honor to be permitted to take part, even, in the roughest contests. None but a Greek could do so. You, also, have put your name down for a place in the Church of God—this is a high honor, to which none but the twice-born, whose names are written in Heaven, can be admitted—accept the hardship with the honor!

"Oh, but," you say, "I have run a long time, I have run for 50 years!" Splendid running, this! I do not believe that even at Olympus they ever saw a man run for 50 years at a stretch. Keep on! Do not suffer the glory of the day to fail! You say this sheds a strange light upon Christian life. Say, rather, a *blessed* light which will delight the eyes and hearts of enthusiastic Believers. The Father of all takes delight in this assembly—it is the joy of Christ to look down upon His champions, whose faith He sustains, whose faith He accepts! He is saying to devils, "Look on and see what lovers of right can do!" Look on, you innumerable company of angels, and see what Grace can do in the hearts of poor, feeble men and women, making them strong to do exploits!

My Brothers and Sisters, see what feats were performed of old! Read the 11th chapter of this Epistle. Remember how the Lord's own elect stood at the stake and burned to the death without yielding? Think how they were stretched on racks, but would not deny their Lord! They were

dragged at the heels of wild horses. They were roasted over slow fires, or were stung to death by wasps! Their endurance is more glorious than all that can be told of the heroes of Greece! What wonders men have done through Grace! God has glorified His name by what He has enabled men to bear and do! This our Lord would have us look at and unite in! Now, what can we do? God help us to do our best. Oh for Grace to *suffer* more, to *give* more, to *work* more, to be more firm in resisting temptation, more pure in all godly conversation! Champions, shall the day of Glory decline? Your feast has scarcely reached its greatest day—let not courage, or patience, or faith begin to flag. May we be jealous for the honor of the chosen race to which we belong.

Our text adds to the term, “general assembly,” that of the “Church of the first-born.” “Oh,” say the commentators, “this is tautology!” Not so. The Apostle felt bound, after having used such a remarkable comparison, to call us back to the solemnity of the matter and remind us that it is “a *Church*” which is gathered. You and I have come to a great Church meeting where all the saints of God are met at this moment. What makes a Church? An ecclesia? These words may help you—they are, first, a people *chosen*. Next, a people *called*. Then a people *culled*. Then a people *consecrated*. And then a people *congregated*. So do they become the Church of the living God—*separated* unto God by His electing love; *called* out from the world by His effectual calling; *culled* out by being separated through a work of Grace; *congregated* and gathered together into one in Christ—and forevermore consecrated to Divine service!

This is what you and I have come to. Oh for words with which to speak our joy for admission into such a company! Brothers and Sisters, notice that Paul was writing to Hebrews, and the Hebrews, no doubt, gloried in their great feasts, when all the tribes came up to Jerusalem. Yes, Paul knew all about those feasts and all that they meant—but this is an assembly to which the Jewish ritual offers us no parallel. Hebrews come to that festival, but it is by no means peculiarly theirs. “They shall come from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.” Just as at Olympus, Spartans, Thebans, Athenians and Corinthians all came and melted into Greeks, so will they come—Jews, Gentiles, men of this Church, and of that—and they will all melt into one general assembly! It is not a peculiar assembly of Hebrews, but a general assembly of all the first-born.

Note, dear Friends, the individuals who compose the company. They are all high born, for they are all first-born. There is but one emphatically first-born, namely, Jesus Christ, Himself. But being one with Him, we become the first-born of God through the new birth! By our union to Christ and by the blessed processes of Grace, we are made and known to be the first-born of God. Now the first-born among men had the ascendancy and sway in the household, even as, “the meek shall inherit the earth.” The day comes when righteousness shall be to the fore. The first-born had the excellency. “Reuben, you are My first-born, My might, and the beginning of My strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.”

The saints are the excellent of the earth, in whom is all our delight. The first-born were consecrated to God and we, too, are dedicated persons, set

apart unto God, “for you are not your own; you are bought with a price.” The first-born were redeemed—so have we been purchased with the precious blood of Christ. The first-born had the estate, the throne and the priesthood. Vast is the inheritance of the first-born of God—all things are theirs—they are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. To the first-born belonged honor—“Such honor have all the saints.” There are younger brothers in every family who receive comparatively little if they happen to be descended from great lords. But there are no younger Brothers in the family of God. They are all first-born, all heirs! And what is wonderful to tell—each one of them has *all* the estate, for it is so infinite that, though if *I* have all, *you* can have all, too—an innumerable company of this blessed first-born race can have the whole of God to be their portion forever and ever!

But then it is added that they are enrolled. As I have already told you, they enrolled the competitors in the Greek festivals and a man took care, months before, to get his name set down for a place. Thus God has enrolled the names of His people. They are written—where? In the earth? No—the *wicked* are written in the earth! But the names of the Lord’s people are written in Heaven! In the Divine decree that never changes, in the Divine heart that never alters, in the Divine memory that never fails, in the Divine thought that never forgets—all the names of the godly are written! I do not know how to set this out, but I want you to feel as if you were standing, this morning, in that great assembly with spiritual exercises going on around you—such as struggling against sin, striving for the mastery over error, patiently enduring pain and working holy work.

The Judge is looking on, with the crowns in His hands, ready to place them upon each conqueror’s head. The air breathes perfume and is full of music, for all around is joy. When a man suffers, if he looks upon it as punishment, he feels like a criminal tied up to be lashed. But if he knows that his path is a necessary part of the road to victory, he bears it without complaint. If we all understand that this period is not comparable to a *battle*, of which the result hangs in the balance, but comparable to those deeds of prowess with which of old men celebrated a victory, then the face of things is altered and our toils are transfigured! Angels come down and poor men and women are lifted up, triumphing in patience and giving pleasure to their Lord. They are bringing honor to that favored city which God has prepared for them. We are here amid the throng, not as spectators, only, but sharing in the overflowing joy! Oh, the bliss of feeling that even now, Heaven is begun below and the sufferings of this present life are but a part of the Glory of the Lord manifested in His people!

III. We will conclude by noticing the third point, which is—A COMING TO BE ENJOYED. This is the essence of it all—“We are come” unto this general assembly and Church of the first-born. How, then, do we come? A difficulty meets us at the outset. You that have never thought of this great assembly which my imagination and heart have tried to picture this morning—you cannot come. The porter stands at the barrier and keeps you back. You cry, “Let me come!” No, you may not come. This festival is only for the first-born and you are not that by nature. You must first be born again and become one of the first-born. The Spirit of God must make you

a new creature in Christ Jesus—and then the porter will open the wicket and say—“Come in, and welcome.” Which part are you going to take in this great gathering? Will you fight against sin? Will you wrestle against error? Will you run for the crown? Will you sing, or speak? What will you do in this great congress of all the saints? But these questions do not apply until, first, you are born from above!

Next, you must be enrolled, Your name must be written down, not in our Church Book, but in the Church Book of the Lord above. I would to God that some of you would be moved to say, “Oh, that my name were written there!” The name of every Believer is upon Christ’s heart, hands and shoulders. If you believe that Jesus is the Christ. If you are trusting in Him, your name is among the enrolled! If you believe in Him that rose, again, from the dead, and He is the Author and Finisher of your faith, then come and welcome—you are one of those whose names are written in Heaven! The general assembly would miss you if you were absent—yes, Heaven, itself, cannot be perfect if you do not enter its ranks—for all the saints must be there, or else it will not be a perfect gathering! Would you have them mourning in Heaven and saying, “Such an one is not here!” Why, Heaven’s songs would be suspended if *one* child of the family were left in the outer darkness! There must be a believing in Jesus and then there will be a reception into the chosen assembly!

But you say, again, “How am I to get into that assembly? I hope I have been born again and that my name is written among the Lord’s redeemed people, but I still do not feel as if I were in the festive gathering—I feel more like one in the arena contending for very life.” So did many at Olympus. They were fighting and wrestling and, while so engaged, they endured great hardships, yet their valiant strife was a part of the grand scene and they would not have been absent for any reason. So, dear Friends, what we must do is this—first, God helping us, let us partake in the joy of the one Church! Why should I not be as happy as yon angels are? They have not so much reason to be happy as I have, for Jesus never took their nature, or died for them—

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

And you, spirits of the just, why should not I participate in all *your* joy? What blessing belongs to you which does not, also, belong to me, except the one delight of absolute perfection? Am I not saved? Am I not washed? Am I not clothed? Am I not a child of God—in all things, just what *you* are, except that one finishing stroke—which I am sure to have in due time when I have concluded my wrestling and my running? Let us joy in God today and, surely, even in Heaven they know no greater bliss than this! To joy in God through Jesus Christ our Lord is happiness at its highest! May the Spirit of God help us!

If we wish to feel we are among the Lord’s host, let us participate in their service. There is something for you and for me to do—and to enjoy this holiday we must all take a share in its engagements. Come, Brother, quicken your pace! You are not making enough progress in the Divine life—hasten your steps, throw away every weight—and cast off the garment which entangles your feet. You, too, dear Brother, over there in the

workshop, where you hear bad language and see bad practices—go in for the wrestling—see what you can do! In the name of the Lord grasp the evil which opposes you! Fling an evil custom on its back and win a victory for purity and truth! Thus shall we each, by vying with the rest, contribute to the grand result and share in the general triumph!

And when we are participating in the service, let us, next, feel that we can possess the inheritance! It is “the assembly of the first-born”—let no man miss his birthright! See how the Apostle introduces Esau as a warning and how he bids us regard our afflictions as chastisements which prove our sonship? Come, then, act as sons and rejoice in your Father’s riches which are all your own! Let us not remain half-starved through the penury of our unbelief, but let us be filled to the brim through the richness of the faith which the Spirit of God has worked in us! Let us look on all things round about us with quite a different eye—not walking like slaves who dread their taskmaster and scarcely dare to call their *breath* their own—but like free men who have the Judge of all upon their side and can have nothing to fear in life or death! Deep be our reverence, but high our joy as we stand in His gracious Presence and, with all the blood-bought, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

At this moment our question is, “Lord, what will You have me to do?” Our cry is—“Here am I! Send me.” Use me, my Lord, glorify Yourself in me! And while the innumerable company of angels look on, help me to do, dare, wrestle and win till You shall give to me, also, the crown of life that fades not away! This will not be a payment of debt, but a gift of Grace. The metaphor of a Greek assembly excludes all notion of wages for work. No mercenary thought entered the mind of a single Greek who strove for the mastery at the assembly. He had nothing to win but a crown of olive leaves! No money was ever given—it would have degraded the festival to a common show!

Therefore you are not invited to contend that you may win a reward by your own merit. Ours is holiday work which it is joy to perform. Moved by a spiritual chivalry, saints do and dare for Jesus out of love for Him. His service is its own reward! To die for Him is life! To live for Him is Heaven! Let others boast their pedigree and nationality—we have reached the august convocation of the ransomed of the Lord who have come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads!

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“THE CHURCH OF THE FIRST-BORN”

NO. 3206

**A SERMON
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***“The general assembly and Church of the First-Born,
which are written in Heaven.”
Hebrews 12:23.***

PAUL had just been giving a brief description of the great gathering of the children of Israel around Mount Sinai, “the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire,” like a huge volcano. He had vividly portrayed “the blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of trumpet, and the voice of words,” and the frightened multitudes standing, trembling, at a distance, and even Moses, their great leader, so alarmed that he cried out, “I exceedingly fear and quake.” Paul intends that description to teach us the effect that the legal dispensation can produce—it can alarm and condemn—but it cannot save! You who are under the Law of God, you who are trying to win God’s favor by your good works. You who fancy that human merit can bring you salvation, look to the flames which Moses saw and sink, and tremble and despair! You who think that you can live as the Law requires and so attain to everlasting life, may well stand shivering and trembling before this Almighty, though invisible God whose lightning blazes before your eyes and whose voice of thunder must alarm the most stout heart! Terrible is the plight of the man who has to depend upon what Sinai can give him—he is wretched in life, he shall be troubled in death, he shall be lost forever in eternity! “By the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.” “As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse.” “By Grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Having given that description of Sinai by way of contrast, Paul now brings out the much more pleasing picture of the Gospel dispensation. Christians shall also have their great assembly! There is a mountain upon which all those who are under Grace shall one day gather—a mountain that does not smoke, for it is Mount Zion—the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem! There will be words there, but they will be words of sacred song and names of holy gladness. There may be trumpets there, but they will be the silver trumpets that will proclaim the eternal jubilee. Moses will be there, but no longer fearing and quaking,

for when he comes to that mount of God, he will forget all his fears and rejoice without ceasing in the Lord his God. Believers are the multitude whom no man can number, who will assemble upon that glorious mountain to keep the everlasting holy day! Happy indeed shall we be when, by Grace, we come to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven—when we shall see that sight which was revealed to John in Patmos—a Lamb standing on the Mount Zion—and with Him those who have His Father’s name written on their foreheads, who follow the Lamb wherever He goes and who are without fault before the Throne of God!

The first point to which I am going to draw your attention is *the description given of Believers as the Church of the First-Born*. Next, I want to remind you of *what is said about their enrolment*—they are written or enrolled (as the original reading renders it) in Heaven. And then, thirdly, I shall have something to say concerning their *great general assembly*, when all the righteous shall be gathered to Christ, to be parted from Him no more forever.

I. To begin then, from our text it seems that BELIEVERS IN CHRIST ARE DESCRIBED AS THE CHURCH OF THE FIRST-BORN. I shall try to make my remarks, as I utter them, self-examining, so that you and I may question ourselves to see whether we belong to this general assembly.

By the term “first-born” is often meant, in Scripture, *the most excellent, the chief*. Jesus Christ, because of the excellence of His Character, is said to be “the first-born among many brethren,” “the first-born of every creature,” “the first-born from the dead, that in all things He might have the preeminence.” So, although Believers are, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others, yet, after Christ has renewed them, they become the excellent of the earth in whom should be all our delight. Point me out a man who makes a profession of religion, but who is a drunk, and I will tell him at once that his profession is a lie! Show me another who says he is a follower of Christ, although he oppresses the poor, defrauds the laborer of his wages, is a covetous man who cares only for himself and shuts up his heart of compassion from his needy brethren—and I hesitate not to ask, “How dwells the love of God in him?” If the “Grace” we profess to have does not make us better than others, the sooner we get rid of it, the better! “What do you do more than others?” was the question of Christ to His disciples. “If you lend to them, of whom you hope to receive, what thanks have you? For sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.” Of Christians there is something to be expected that is not to be looked for in others—they profess to be twice-born, and to have God dwelling in them, as Paul says to the Corinthians, “Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” Christians profess to be heirs of Heaven and members of the mystical body of Christ, so shall they talk and act as the ungodly do, and demean themselves as those do who have never received this new and higher life?

God forbid! When Divine Grace comes, it lifts us up and keeps us up! And makes us new creatures in Christ Jesus, so that the evil things in which we once delighted, we do not so much as name, while anything that is virtuous or of good repute we pant after, that we may exhibit it to the praise of His Grace who has called us according to the counsel of His own will.

Now, dear Friends, you can make this a test by which to try yourselves. What is your life? What fruits do you bring forth? If you bring forth thorns, surely you are brambles! If you bear the grapes of Gomorrah, surely you belong to Sodom's valley! "Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?" If the stream is foul, what must the fountain be? If the outside of your cup and platter is filthy, what must the inside be? If that which men see of you is foul, how foul must you be where only God can see you? We are, none of us, better than we seem, but we are, all of us, far worse than we think! May God tear away every veil which hides us from ourselves, that we may see ourselves even as we are in His sight!

So you see that God's first-born are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation," "a peculiar people, zealous of good works," who seek to adorn the Doctrines of God their Savior in all things.

But the term, "first-born," has a second meaning in Scripture. The first-born, under the old Mosaic economy, were *chosen by God for Himself*. When He smote the first-born of Egypt, He set apart for Himself all the first-born of Israel. He might have selected the youngest of the family, or the second, if He had chosen to do so, for God does as He wills and, "He gives not account of any of His matters." You may ask Him why He does this or that, but He deigns not to answer your inquisitive or impertinent enquiries. He is not disturbed by your questions. He never gives the reasons why He chooses any man unto salvation. That He does choose them is clear enough from Scripture, so clear that even such an unbeliever as Bolingbroke said to Mr. Whitefield one day, "Let it be taken for granted that the Bible is true, then no other Doctrine but Calvinism can be true, for the Bible teaches it from beginning to end." Certainly, if men's minds were not willfully perverted, they must read this Truth of God in such words as these, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God who shows mercy." And what says the Scripture when the sinner begins to quibble at this Truth of God? "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?" It is a fact that God has ordained unto eternal life a multitude that no man can number! And just as the first-born among the Jews were typically elect,

so the saints become saints as the result of the Divine decree passed long before the earth was created. When as yet this world and the sun and moon and stars slept in the mind of God like unborn forests in an acorn cup, even then had the Almighty written the names of all His chosen in the Lamb's Book of Life and fixed the place, the date, the very *moment* when they should be born—and when they should be born a second time—when they would come to Christ and so find salvation and everlasting life! This Doctrine is far from palatable to men, but, inasmuch as it glorifies God and makes man to be but as a grasshopper before the Eternal, we delight in it, and humbly bow before the Sovereign Disposer of all events and say, “It is the Lord; let Him do what seems good to Him.”

Then, thirdly, the first-born were *inheritors of great privileges*—of which we cannot just now speak particularly, but will do so further on—and *they became so entirely by birth*. The rights of the first-born lay only in his primogeniture—not in his stature, not in his comeliness or beauty, not in his mental capacity, not even in his moral virtues. If he was as lame as Mephibosheth, yet, if he was the first-born, he could not be disinherited! Or if, instead of having the towering stature of a Saul, he was as diminutive as Zacchaeus, yet, if he was the first-born, neither his parents nor all the courts of law could reverse the rights of primogeniture! So, Beloved, all those who are Believers in Christ, who are known to men by their excellence of character while God knows them by having chosen them by His Grace, are in time brought to realize their privileges through the new birth which is worked in them by the Holy Spirit. If we are born only once, we must die twice—but if we are born twice, we die but once—and after that one death which is not really death, we enter into eternal life! Regeneration makes us actually the children of God, just as adoption makes us virtually the children of God. By regeneration, we become really and truly heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ—and our right to Heaven, to all the blessings of the Covenant of Grace, and to the promises of God—arises from this new and heavenly birth! Heaven is the inheritance of the children of God, not a possession purchased by their money, or won by any deeds that they have done. This heritage is the birth-right of all who have been born-again, born from above. So the question for everyone of us to ask is, “have I experienced this new birth?” “Except a man be born-again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and only flesh. “And that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.” And as Heaven and all the other blessings of the Covenant are spiritual, we cannot possess them until we are “born of the Spirit.”

The first-born, then, had certain rights because of their birth. And the first-born, spiritually, have certain rights because of their *new* birth. May the Lord help you all to make sure work here! I pray you do not take it for granted that all is well with your soul, nor treat this question as though it were of little account. On the fact of your being born-again, or

not being born-again, must hang your everlasting destiny! Live and die unregenerate, and unutterable woe will be your eternal portion. Pass from death unto life and all the glories of the Paradise of God become yours by a promise which death and the devil, himself, cannot break! Have you passed from death unto life? How can you tell that? “By their fruits you shall know them,” is our Lord’s own test! Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you trusting alone in Him? These are vital questions and if you can truly say—

**“My hope is built on nothing less
Then Jesus’ blood and righteousness”—**

and if that hope is accompanied by the faith which works by love and purifies the heart and life, then you are one of the children of God! And in that fact you may well “rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.”

Now, fourthly, upon the first-born, more than upon any others, God was pleased to multiply the types of redemption in order to show to us very plainly that the heirs of Heaven are a redeemed people. First of all, the great majority of the first-born were redeemed by blood. In the dark and dreadful night, the destroying angel is let loose with noiseless wings and with a sharp sword that never misses its mark. He is speeding from house to house throughout all the land of Egypt, and from the first-born of Pharaoh upon the throne, to the first-born of the slave women behind the mill, they fall dead! And Egypt’s wail goes up to Heaven in an exceedingly bitter and piercing cry. But throughout the houses of the Israelites a different scene is being witnessed. The doors are shut, a roasted lamb lies upon the table and men and women stand around it, girt as for a journey, with their staves in their hands—and they eat in haste. There is a first-born child in his mother’s arms, or a first-born male who is grown up, yet they show no sign of trepidation, though it is well known that, on that night, the first-born are to die! Why are they so calm? Had you been present, an hour or two ago, you would have seen that the father, when he slew the lamb, drained the warm lifeblood into a bowl and, as his children gathered about him, he said to them, “Come, follow me.” And taking with him a bunch of hyssop, he went to the outside of his door, and smote the lintel till it was crimsoned with the blood of the lamb. And then he sprinkled the posts on either side so that the blood-mark was all about the door. “And now,” he said, “my children, we are safe, for when God sees the blood, He will pass over us, and our first-born will not be slain—the blood will make them secure.” In like manner we who are the first-born of God are saved by the blood of Jesus! Can you, Friend, by faith say, “My confidence is in that blood alone”? Has it been applied to your heart and conscience? Has it spoken peace to your soul? Does it cleanse you from all sin? Do you now rejoice that there is no condemnation to you, as you are in Christ Jesus, and He has endured the whole of the Divine Wrath that was your due because of your sin?

But lest we should not learn this great Truth by one type, God has given us another. In the course of two years, over 22,000 children were born to that large population, and these had not been redeemed by the blood of the paschal lambs, for they were not then in being. So another method was adopted—a Levite was to stand in the place of each first-born male child and God accepted the Levite, and allowed the child to remain in his father’s house. Here was a symbol of the great truth of Substitution, but the privileges which appertained to some of the Jewish first-born in the type belong to all the spiritual first-born children of God. Christ is the Levite who stands before God in our place and who there ministers for us, and honors His Father’s Law, and fulfils its every jot and tittle on our behalf. There were 273 first-born Jewish children for whom no Levite substitute could be found, so five shekels per head had to be paid to Aaron and his sons as redemption money for them. And, in like manner, the Divine plan of Redemption is very rightly set forth by the Apostle Peter when he says, “You know that 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.”

Put these three things together—redemption by blood, redemption by substitution, and redemption by purchase—and you will then have a very clear idea of what Atonement in reference to the first-born means. Any one of the three will be sufficient for the enlightened saint, but the whole together will reflect a beautiful light upon the Cross of Christ—and in that light we may clearly see how He bore our sins in His own body on the tree and brought in everlasting Redemption for all His chosen. Let each one of us put these questions to himself or herself, “Am I redeemed with the precious blood of Christ? Did He stand as Substitute and Surety for me? Am I bought with the price that He paid for His people on the Cross? For, if not, I cannot be numbered among the first-born, for all the first-born must be redeemed in this way.”

Our time flies so quickly that I am afraid the other two divisions of my discourse will have to suffer. But I must remind you, as I promised to do, that *the first-born, having been redeemed, had very special privileges*. First, they had a double portion of their father’s goods. Hence, Elisha, who was, in the prophetic sense, the first-born of Elijah, pleaded with him as his spiritual son, “I pray you, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.” Now God is good to all men, and His tender mercies are over all His works, but His special favor is reserved for the called and chosen, and faithful ones whom He has redeemed. The first-born also had the privilege of priesthood in the old patriarchal times, and every true child of God is made a king and a priest unto God, to offer daily, spiritual and acceptable sacrifices through Jesus Christ. The first-born was, in many respects, a ruler over the whole household—and Christ, the great First-Born—is the supreme Ruler over His Church, and we, in and through Him, are made rulers over many things. And He bids us ascend the

throne and reign with Him as God’s first-born, kings and priests unto Him forever.

II. Now, secondly, and but very briefly, let us enquire WHAT IS MEANT BY THE ENROLLMENT OF THE FIRST-BORN?

Moses had to set down the names of the Jewish first-born. And we find that right down to the Apostles’ age, there were some who were very busy about what Paul calls “endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith.” But, dear Friends, there is an enrollment about which we should be greatly concerned. There are certain names written in the Lamb’s Book of Life and it should be to you and to me a matter of solemn interest to enquire if our names are written there. Is your name, is my name, inscribed upon that secret, sacred roll of the elect of God? We cannot scale the heights of Heaven to search the pages of that sealed book, nor can we discover the secrets that the Most High has recorded there. It is impossible for us to read our names there, yet there are certain evidences by which we can tell whether they are or are not there!

First of all, *do you think they are there?* Are there not many here who must truthfully say, “No, we have no reason to think they are”? When the muster-roll of our troops is called, if you are there, you can hear the names and the men’s answers. “John So-and-So?” “Here, Sir.” “Thomas?” “Here, Sir.” “Here, Sir.” “Here, Sir,” and so it goes all down the ranks. Now, suppose it could be possible for an angel to read from this pulpit the muster-roll of the redeemed? Do you think that he would read your name, and that you would be able to answer, “Here, Sir”? “No,” you say, “unless I tell a willful lie, I dare not say that I think my name is in the Lamb’s Book of Life.” Well then, if your own hearts condemn you, remember that God is greater than your hearts and knows all things—so how much more must He condemn you!

Possibly there are some who say, “We hope our names are written there.” So I ask you, dear Friends, *are you like those whose names undoubtedly are inscribed there?* Have you the faith of Abraham, or something like it? Do you desire to have such holiness as Paul craved? When you read the record of a good man’s life, do you feel that your life is in conformity with his? For character, character, *CHARACTER* must, after all, be the great ground of judgment! And if your life is not like the life of the saints, how can you hope to find your name recorded where their names are written?

Again, *all the elect have their names written beneath the name of their Lord, the Lamb.* So, are you trusting in Christ? Are you resting in Him? Is your life linked with His? Do you feel that there is a bond that cannot be snapped, which binds you and Christ together so that no one and nothing that can possibly happen shall be able to separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus your Lord? Very well then, if this is the

case with you, rest assured that your name is in that book! But, “without Christ,” you are without hope! Separated from Him, it is certain that your name is not written in Heaven, as one of “the general assembly and Church of the First-Born.”

I ask you another question, *are you really a child of God?* Can you say to Him, “Abba, Father”? Is God your Father? Have you learned to trust Him as His children trust Him and to love Him as His children love Him? Do you depend wholly upon Him? Do you seek to submit yourself entirely to His will and to walk in His Way? For, if you are not a child of God at all, certainly you are not one of His first-born!

I must also ask, *Have you passed from death unto life?* Has there ever been a vital change in you—such a change as can only be worked by the Holy Spirit? I do not mean such a change as some silly people talk of seeing, sometimes, when a man is dying. There may have been no sign of Grace whatever in the man, yet someone said, “I saw such a change come over him, his face looked so different.” Very likely it did, but it is not a change of face that is needed, but a change of *heart!* It is no physical change, but a mental, moral, *spiritual*, Divine change that is worked in regeneration! Let not any one of you be satisfied unless you have unquestionable evidence that this change has been worked in you by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit, for unless you are born-again, your name will not be found written upon the roll of God’s first-born!

Now, in closing, let me remind you that to all these first-born of God, whose names are written in Heaven, the day is coming when they shall be assembled around the Throne of God in Glory. What a meeting that will be! There shall not be one unholy person there, for they shall all have been washed white in the blood of the Lamb! How happy they will all be! There shall be no tears in any eye, nor a groan in any spirit, nor a single note of sorrow on any tongue, for the days of their mourning shall be ended forever! How united an assembly it will be! There shall be no heresy, no schism, no discord, no coldness of heart—they shall all love even as they have been loved! What a vast assembly it will be! And when ten thousand times ten thousand meet together there, what a shout of sacred joy it shall be when they lift up hallelujah upon hallelujah! John says, “I heard a voice from Heaven, as the voice of many waters.” You may have heard the sea roar in the fullness of its strength. Possibly you have heard the mighty Atlantic Ocean booming on the shore when lashed to fury by a storm. Such is to be the grandeur of the singing before the Throne of God in the general assembly and Church of the First-Born—only it is not merely to be like the voice of one water, but of many waters—oceans piled upon oceans, the Atlantic upon the Pacific, and the Arctic and the Antarctic, and all other oceans piled upon these! And such shall be the music of the saints! Such shall be the song of the blessed when they see their Father’s face without a veil and pour out their vast volume of praise “as the voice of many waters.”

Let each one of us ask himself or herself, “Shall I be there?” If anyone says, “I fear that I shall not be there,” let him cry mightily unto the Most High to pull him out of the horrible Pit and to set his feet upon the Rock and to establish his goings. Sinner, you will either be there or in that dreadful place where the wailings shall be more terrible than the cry of men in a battle or the shrieks of women in a massacre! You will either be up there in Glory or else down there where darkness, death and long despair sit on their thrones of woe! Fly, Sinner, fly away to Christ! His wounds, like clefts in the rock, are open to the doves that need a shelter. Fly, Sinner, fly! The avenger of blood pursues you! I hear the sound of his feet close behind you and he is about to strike you dead! But the City of Refuge is near at hand, standing with open gates ready to welcome you! Fly, Sinner, fly! “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” To believe on Jesus is to trust Him. To be baptized is to be immersed in water upon profession of that faith.

I dare not alter my Master’s commission—“Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believes not shall be damned.” There is no other alternative! Turn or burn! Believe and be saved, or disbelieve and be lost! May God, in His mercy, make the choice for you, Sinner, this very hour, and lead you in the Way everlasting. And unto Father, Son and Holy Spirit shall be the glory forever and ever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: HEBREWS 12.

After giving a long list of the heroes of faith, the Apostle adds—

Verses 1-3. *Therefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand on the Throne of God. For consider Him—*[See Sermon #1073, Volume 18—A HONEYCOMB—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] *Look to Him, look at Him! Study Him—know all you can about Him—meditate upon Him—*

3, 4. *That endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds. You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.* It has not yet come to that with any of you who are now here. You have not shed your yet blood for Christ, for these are not martyr days—so can you be wearied and faint? If you run with the footmen and they weary you, how will you contend with horses? We ought to be ashamed of ourselves if we grow weary in a race that is so

easy compared with that of the men and women who laid down their lives for Christ’s sake!

5. *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to children, My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked by Him.* Both these states are wrong—either to think nothing of chastisement or else to faint under it—we are not to fall into either evil, but to keep the golden mean between them.

6. *For whom the Lord loves.* The Greek word is a strong one and means, “whom the Lord tenderly loves”—

6. *He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.* Everyone does not receive the same measure of chastisement—but he who has the largest share of the love of God will feel the most of His chastising hand. Are you not willing to take that portion and to be among the Lord’s tenderly loved ones?

7. *If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chastens not?* God had one Son without sin, but He never had a son without suffering. And the Son who was without sin was the “Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.”

8. *But if you are without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons.* If you are without chastisement, you may bear the name of sons, but you are not really so—you are mere professors.

9. *Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of Spirits, and live?* Should we not give Him reverence when we are chastened, instead of murmuring and complaining against Him, thus calling Him to account at our judgment seat? Oh, yes, let us be in willing subjection to Him, and the more willingly subject we are, the less painful will the chastisement be. Our most bitter sorrow will be found at the root of our self-will—and when our self-will is gone, the bitterness of our sorrow will be past.

10. *For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.* Is there no way for us to “be partakers of His holiness” but through chastening? It would seem so from the wording of this verse! The Lord, as our loving Father, makes use of the rod that He may make us to be truly holy.

11. *Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, How could it be? It would lose the very nature of chastening if there were joy in it.*

11. *But grievous: nevertheless afterward*—[See Sermon #528, Volume 9—CHASTISEMENT—NOW AND AFTERWARDS—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] These are truly blessed words, “nevertheless afterward”—

11-13. *It yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby. Therefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the*

feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. [See Sermon #2543, Volume 49—LAME SHEEP—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Come, children of God, do not be despondent because of your tribulations. You are in a race, so run even while you are smarting from your chastisements! Still run, and keep on running until you win the prize!

14. *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.* [See Sermon #2902, Volume 50—HOLINESS DEMANDED—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] The holy God can only be seen by holy eyes. He must make us like Himself before we can see Him.

15. *Looking diligently lest any man fail of the Grace of God.* Seeming to have Divine Grace and yet not really having it.

15. *Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many are defiled.* [See Sermon #940, Volume 16—THE WINNOWING FAN—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Sin is a bitter thing and a defiling thing and unless we look diligently, it will grow in our hearts like the weeds grow in our gardens after a heavy rain—it will spring up before we are aware of it.

16. *Lest there be any fornicator.* Fornication was far too common in the early Church, but it was not thought to be sin by the great mass of the heathen! But, oh, what a defiling sin it is!

16. *Or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.* He was thus guilty of spiritual fornication, preferring his meat to his Maker, thinking more of one morsel of meat than of his birthright.

17. *For you know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.* He could not get his father to change his mind concerning Jacob. On the contrary, he said, “I have blessed him; yes, and he shall be blessed.” His many tears availed not—they were not repenting tears, but only selfish ones. He did not repent that he had bartered his birthright for a mess of pottage—he regretted that he had lost the blessing, that was all.

18-21. *For you are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the Voice of words; which Voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (for they could not endure that which was commanded, and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake).* We have not come to that mount of terror, for we are not under the Law but under Grace—we have come to a very different place from that.

22-24. *But you are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the First-Born, which are written in Heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. And to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.* [See Sermons #211, Volume 4—THE VOICE OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST; #708, Volume 12—THE BLOOD OF ABEL AND THE BLOOD OF JESUS; #1888, Volume 32—THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING (FIRST SERMON) and #1889, Volume 32—THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING (SECOND SERMON)—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] We are come to that blood, and it is that blood which has made such a change in us! We may rejoice together, now, and we ought to do so if we are all one in Christ Jesus.

25-29. *See that you refuse not Him that speaks. For if they escaped not who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaks from Heaven: whose Voice then shook the earth: but now He has promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth, only, but also Heaven. And this word, yet once more, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore we, receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have Grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire. Not “God out of Christ,” as some say, but God in Christ! God is a consuming fire anyway and we should each one pray, “Consuming Fire, Refining Fire, go through my heart and purge me of all that can be consumed! Holy Spirit, drive out of me all that can be shaken and removed, that only Your abiding Kingdom may remain in me, and Yours shall be the praise and the glory forever! Amen.”*

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
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THE VOICE OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

NO. 211

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 29, 1858,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“The blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel.”
Hebrews 12:24.***

OF all substances blood is the most mysterious and in some senses the most sacred. Scripture teaches us—and after all there is very much philosophy in Scripture—that “the blood is the life thereof”—that the life lies in the blood. Blood, therefore, is the mysterious link between matter and spirit. How it is that the soul should in any degree have an alliance with matter through blood we cannot understand. But certain it is that this is the mysterious link which unites these apparently dissimilar things together so that the soul can inhabit the body and the life can rest in the blood. God has attached awful sacredness to the shedding of blood.

Under the Jewish dispensation, even the blood of animals was considered sacred. Blood might never be eaten by the Jews. It was too sacred a thing to become the food of man. The Jew was scarcely allowed to kill his own food—certainly he must not kill it except he poured out the blood as a sacred offering to Almighty God. Blood was accepted by God as the symbol of the atonement. “Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin,” because, I take it, blood has such an affinity with life, that inasmuch as God would accept nothing but blood, He signified that there must be a life offered to Him and that His great and glorious Son must surrender His life as a sacrifice for His sheep.

Now we have in our text “blood” mentioned—two-fold blood. We have the blood of murdered Abel and the blood of murdered Jesus. We have also two things in the text—*A comparison between the blood of sprinkling and the blood of Abel.* And then *a certain condition mentioned.* Rather, if we read the whole verse in order to get its meaning we find that the righteous are spoken of as coming to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than the blood of Abel—so that the condition which will constitute the second part of our discourse is *coming to that blood* of sprinkling for our salvation and glory.

I. Without further preface I shall at once introduce to you the CONTRAST AND COMPARISON IMPLIED IN THE TEXT. “The blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel.” I confess I was very much astonished when looking at Dr. Gill and Albert Barnes and several

of the more eminent commentators, while studying this passage, to find that they attach a meaning to this verse which had never occurred to me before. They say that the meaning of the verse is not that the blood of Christ is superior to the blood of murdered Abel, although that is certainly a Truth of God, but that the *sacrifice* of the blood of Christ is better and speaks better things than the sacrifice which Abel offered.

Now, although I do not think this is the meaning of the text and I have my reasons for believing that the blood here contrasted with that of the Savior *is* the blood of the murdered man Abel, yet on looking to the original there is so much to be said on both sides of the question that I think it fair in explaining the passage to give you both meanings. They are not conflicting interpretations. There is indeed a shade of difference but still they amount to the same idea.

First, then, we may understand here a comparison between the offerings Abel presented and the offerings Jesus Christ presented when He gave His blood to be a ransom for the flock.

Let me describe Abel's offering. I have no doubt Adam had from the very first of his expulsion from the garden of Eden offered a sacrifice to God. We have some dim hint that this sacrifice was of a beast, for we find that the Lord God made Adam and Eve skins of beasts to be their clothing and it is probable that those skins were procured by the slaughter of victims offered in sacrifice. However, that is but a dim hint—the first absolute record that we have of an obligatory sacrifice is the record of the sacrifice offered by Abel. Now, it appears that very early there was a distinction among men. Cain was the representative of the seed of the serpent and Abel was the representative of the seed of the woman.

Abel was God's elect and Cain was one of those who rejected the Most High. However, both Cain and Abel united together in the outward service of God. They both of them brought on certain high days a sacrifice. Cain took a different view of the matter of sacrifice from that which presented itself to the mind of Abel. Cain was proud and haughty—he said, "I am ready to confess that the mercies which we receive from the soil are the gift of God, but I am not ready to acknowledge that I am a guilty sinner, deserving God's wrath, therefore," said he, "I will bring nothing but the fruit of the ground."

"Ah but," said Abel, "I feel that while I ought to be grateful for temporal mercies, at the same time I have sins to confess, I have iniquities to be pardoned and I know that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Therefore," said he, "O Cain, I will not be content to bring an offering of the ground, of the ears of corn, or of first ripe fruits. I will bring of the firstlings of my flock and I will shed blood upon the altar, because my faith is that there is to come a great Victim who is actually to make

atonement for the sins of men and by the slaughter of this lamb, I express my solemn faith in Him.”

Not so Cain. He cared nothing for Christ. He was not willing to confess his sin. He had no objection to present a thank-offering, but a *sin*-offering he would not bring. He did not mind bringing to God that which he thought might be acceptable as a return for favors received, but he would not bring to God an acknowledgment of his guilt, or a confession of his inability to make atonement for it, except by the blood of a Substitute. Cain, moreover, when he came to the altar, came entirely without faith. He piled the unhewn stones as Abel did. He laid his sheaves of corn upon the altar and there he waited. It was to him a matter of comparative indifference whether God accepted him or not.

He believed there was a God, doubtless, but he had no faith in the promises of that God. God had said that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head—that was the Gospel as revealed to our first parents. But Cain had no belief in that Gospel—whether it were true or not, he cared not—it was sufficient for him that he acquired enough for his own sustenance from the soil. He had no faith. But holy Abel stood by the side of the altar and while Cain, the infidel, perhaps laughed and jeered at his sacrifice, he boldly presented there the bleeding lamb as a testimony to all men, both of that time and all future times, that he believed in the seed of the woman—that he looked for Him to come who should destroy the serpent and restore the ruins of the Fall.

Do you see holy Abel, standing there, ministering as a priest at God's altar? Do you see the flush of joy which comes over his face when he sees the heavens opened and the living fire of God descend upon the victims? Do you note with what a grateful expression of confident faith he lifts to Heaven his eyes which had been before filled with tears and cries, “I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that You have accepted my sacrifice, inasmuch as I presented it through faith in the blood of Your Son, my Savior, who is to come”?

Abel's sacrifice, being the first on record and being offered in the teeth of opposition, has very much in it which puts it ahead of many other of the sacrifices of the Jews. Abel is to be greatly honored for his confidence and faith in the coming Messiah. But compare for a moment the sacrifice of Christ with the sacrifice of Abel and the sacrifice of Abel shrinks into insignificance. What did Abel bring? He brought a sacrifice which showed the necessity of blood-shedding—but Christ brought the blood-shedding itself. Abel taught the world by his sacrifice that he looked for a victim, but Christ was the actual Victim. Abel brought but the type and the figure, the Lamb which was but a picture of the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world. But Christ was that Lamb. He was the Substance of the shadow, the Reality of the type.

Abel's sacrifice had no merit in it apart from the faith in the Messiah with which he presented it. But Christ's sacrifice had merit of itself. It was in itself meritorious. What was the blood of Abel's lamb? It was nothing but the blood of a common lamb that might have been shed anywhere. Except for the faith in Christ the blood of the lamb was but as water, a contemptible thing. But the blood of Christ was a sacrifice indeed, richer far than all the blood of beasts that ever were offered upon the altar of Abel, or the altar of all the Jewish high priests. We may say of all the sacrifices that were ever offered, however costly they might be and however acceptable to God, though they were rivers of oil and tens of thousands of fat beasts—they were less than nothing and contemptible in comparison with the one sacrifice which our High Priest has offered once and for all whereby He has eternally perfected them that are sanctified.

We have thus found it very easy to set forth the difference between the blood of Christ's sprinkling and the blood which Abel sprinkled. But now I take it that there is a deeper meaning than this, despite what some commentators have said. I believe that the allusion here is to the blood of *murdered* Abel. Cain smote Abel and doubtless his hands and the altar were stained with the blood of him who had acted as a priest. "Now," says our Apostle, "that blood of Abel spoke." We have evidence that it did, for God said to Cain, "The voice of your brother's blood cries unto Me from the ground," and the Apostle's comment upon that in another place is—"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God *testifying* of his gifts and by it he being dead yet speaks," speaks through his blood, his blood crying unto God from the ground. Now, Christ's blood speaks, too. What is the difference between the two *voices*?—for we are told in the text that it "speaks better things than that of Abel."

Abel's blood spoke in a threefold manner. It spoke in Heaven. It spoke to the sons of men. It spoke to the conscience of Cain. The blood of Christ speaks in a like threefold manner and it speaks better things.

First, the blood of Abel spoke in Heaven. Abel was a holy man and all that Cain could bring against him was, "his own works were evil and his brother's were righteous." You see the brothers going to the sacrifice together. You mark the black scowl upon the brow of Cain, when Abel's sacrifice is accepted while his remains untouched by the sacred fire. You note how they begin to talk together—how quietly Abel argues the question and how ferociously Cain denounces him. You note again how God speaks to Cain and warns him of the evil which he knew was in his heart. And you see Cain, as he goes from the presence chamber of the Most High, warned and forewarned—with the dreadful thought in his heart that he will imbrue his hands in his brother's blood.

He meets his brother. He talks friendly with him—he gives him, as it were, the kiss of Judas. He entices him into the field where he is alone. He takes him unaware. He smites him and smites him yet again, till there lies the murdered bleeding corpse of his brother. O earth! Earth! Earth! Cover not his blood. This is the first murder you have ever seen! The first blood of man that ever stained your soil. Hark, there is a cry heard in Heaven, the angels are astonished. They rise up from their golden seats and they enquire, “What is that cry?”

God looks upon them and He says, “It is the cry of blood, a man has been slain by his fellow. A brother by him who came from the bowels of the self-same mother has been murdered in cold blood, through malice. One of my saints has been murdered and here he comes. And Abel enters into Heaven blood-red, the first of God’s elect who had entered Paradise and the first of God’s children who had worn the blood-red crown of martyrdom. And then the cry was heard, loud and clear and strong. And thus it spoke—“Revenge! Revenge! Revenge!” And God Himself, rising from His throne, summoned the culprit to His presence, questioned Him, condemned Him out of his own mouth and made him henceforth a fugitive and a vagabond to wander over the surface of the earth, which was to be sterile henceforth to his plow.

And now, Beloved, just contrast with this the blood of Christ. That is Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God. He hangs upon a tree. He is murdered—murdered by His own Brethren. “He came unto His own and His own received Him not, but His own led him out to death.” He bleeds. He dies. And then is heard a cry in Heaven. The astonished angels again start from their seats and they say, “What is this? What is this cry that we hear?” And the Mighty Maker answers yet again, “It is the cry of blood. It is the cry of the blood of My only-begotten and well-beloved Son!” And God, rising up from His throne, looks down from Heaven and listens to the cry. And what is the cry? It is not revenge. But the voice cries, “Mercy! Mercy! Mercy!” Did you hear it? It said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Herein, the blood of Christ “speaks better things than that of Abel,” for Abel’s blood said, “Revenge!” and made the sword of God start from its scabbard. But Christ’s blood cried “Mercy!” and sent the sword back again and bade it sleep forever—

***“Blood has a voice to pierce the skies,
‘Revenge!’ the blood of Abel cries;
But the rich blood of Jesus slain,
Speaks peace as loud from every vein.”***

You will note, too, that Abel’s blood cried for revenge upon one man only—upon Cain. It required the death of but one man to satisfy it, namely, the death of the murderer. “Blood for blood!” The murderer must die the death. But what says Christ’s blood in Heaven? Does it speak for

only one? Ah, no, Beloved. “The free gift has come upon many.” Christ’s blood cries mercy! Mercy! Mercy! Not on one, but upon a multitude whom no man can number—ten thousand times ten thousand.

Again—Abel’s blood cried to Heaven for revenge, for *one* transgression of Cain. What Cain had done, worthless and vile *before*, the blood of Abel did not demand any revenge. It was for the *one* sin that blood clamored at the Throne of God and not for many sins. Not so the voice of the blood of Christ. It is “for many offenses unto justification.” Oh, could you hear that cry, that all-prevailing cry, as now it comes up from Calvary’s summit—“Father, forgive *them!*” Not one, but many. “Father, forgive them.” And not only forgive them this offense, but forgive them all their sins and blot out all their iniquities. Ah, Beloved, we might have thought that the blood of Christ would have demanded vengeance at the hands of God.

Surely, if Abel is revenged seven fold, then must Christ be revenged seventy times seven. If the earth would not swallow up the blood of Abel till it had had its fill, surely we might have thought that the earth never would have covered the corpse of Christ until God had struck the world with fire and sword and banished all men to destruction. But, O precious blood! You say not one word of vengeance! All that this blood cries is peace! Pardon! Forgiveness! Mercy! Acceptance! Truly it “speaks better things than that of Abel.”

Again—Abel’s blood had a second voice. It spoke to the whole world. “He being dead yet speaks”—not only in Heaven, but on earth. God’s Prophets are a speaking people. They speak by their acts and by their words as long as they live and when they are buried they speak by their example which they have left behind. Abel speaks by his blood to us. And what does it say? When Abel offered up his victim upon the altar he said to us, “I believe in a sacrifice that is to be offered for the sins of men,” but when Abel’s own blood was sprinkled on the altar he seemed to say, “Here is the ratification of my faith. I seal my testimony with my own blood. You have now the evidence of my sincerity, for I was prepared to die for the defense of this Truth of God which I now witness unto you.”

It was a great thing for Abel thus to ratify his testimony with his blood. We should not have believed the martyrs half so easily if they had not been ready to die for their profession. The Gospel in ancient times would never have spread at such a marvelous rate if it had not been that all the preachers of the Gospel were ready at any time to attest their message with their own blood. But Christ’s blood “speaks better things than that of Abel.” Abel’s blood ratified his testimony and Christ’s blood has ratified His testimony, too. But Christ’s testimony is better than that of Abel. For what is the testimony of Christ? The Covenant of Grace—that Everlasting Covenant.

He came into this world to tell us that God had from the beginning chosen His people—that He had ordained them to eternal life and that He had made a Covenant with His son Jesus Christ that if He would pay the price they should go free—if He would suffer in their stead they should be delivered. And Christ cried before, “He bowed His head and gave up the ghost,” “It is finished.” The Covenant purpose is finished. That purpose was “to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins and to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness.” Such was the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ, as His own blood gushed from His heart to be the die stamp and seal that the Covenant was ratified. When I see Abel die I know that *his testimony* was true. But when I see Christ die I know that the *Covenant* is true—

**“This Covenant, O Believer, stands
Your rising fears to quell;
'Tis signed and sealed and ratified,
In all things ordered well.”**

When He bowed His head and gave up the ghost, He did as much say, “All things are made sure unto the seed by My giving Myself as Victim.” Come, Saint, and see the Covenant all blood-stained and know that it is sure. He is “the faithful and true Witness, the Prince of the kings of the earth.” First of martyrs, my Lord Jesus, You had a better testimony to witness than they all, for You have witnessed to the Everlasting Covenant. You have witnessed that You are the Shepherd and Bishop of souls. You have witnessed to the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Yourself. Again—I say, come, you people of God and read over the golden roll. It begins in election—it ends in everlasting life and all this the blood of Christ cries in your ears. All this is true. For Christ’s blood proves it to be true and to be sure to all the seed. It “speaks better things than that of Abel.”

Now we come to the third voice, for the blood of Abel had a three-fold sound. It spoke in the conscience of Cain. Hardened though he was and like a very devil in his sin, yet he was not so deaf in his conscience that he could not hear the voice of blood. The first thing that Abel’s blood said to Cain was this—“Ah, guilty wretch, to spill your brother’s blood!”—as he saw it trickling from the wound and flowing down in streams. He looked at it and as the sun shone on it and the red glare came into his eye, it seemed to say, “Ah, cursed wretch, for the son of your own mother you have slain. Your wrath was vile enough, when your countenance fell, but to rise up against your brother and take away his life, Oh, how vile!”

It seemed to say to him, “What had he done that you should take his life? Wherein had he offended you? Was not his conduct blameless and his conversation pure? If you had smitten a villain or a thief, men might not have blamed you. But this blood is pure, clean, perfect blood. How could you kill such a man as this?” And Cain put his hand across his brow and felt there was a sense of guilt there that he had never felt before.

And then the blood said to him again, "Why, where will you go? You shall be a vagabond as long as you live." A cold chill ran through him and he said, "Whoever finds me will kill me." And though God promised him he should live, no doubt he was always afraid. If he saw a company of men together, he would hide himself in a thicket, or if in his solitary wanderings he saw a man at a distance, he started back and sought to bury his head, so that none should observe him. In the stillness of the night he started up in his dreams.

It was but his wife that slept by his side. But he thought he felt someone's hands gripping his throat and about to take away his life. Then he would sit up in his bed and took around at the grim shadows, thinking some fiend was hunting him and seeking after him. Then, as he rose to go about his business, he trembled. He trembled to be alone, he trembled to be in company. When he was alone he seemed not to be alone. The ghost of his brother seemed staring him in his face. And when he was in company he dreaded the voice of men, for he seemed to think everyone cursed him and he thought everyone knew the crime he had committed and no doubt they did and every man shunned him.

No man would take his hand, for it was red with blood and his very child upon his knee was afraid to look up into his father's face, for there was the mark which God had set upon him. His very wife could scarcely speak to him—for she was afraid that from the lips of him who had been cursed of God some curse might fall on her. The very earth cursed him. He no sooner put his foot upon the ground where had been a garden before it suddenly turned into a desert and the fair rich soil became hardened into an arid rock. Guilt, like a grim chamberlain with fingers bloody red, did draw the curtain of his bed each night. His crime refused him sleep. It spoke in his heart and the walls of his memory reverberated the dying cry of his murdered brother.

And no doubt that blood spoke one more thing to Cain. It said, "Cain, although you may now be spared there is no hope for you. You are a man accursed on earth and accursed forever. God has condemned you here and He will damn you hereafter." And so wherever Cain went, he never found hope. Though he searched for it in the mountaintop, yet he found it not there. Hope that was left to all men, was denied to him—a hopeless, houseless, helpless vagabond—he wandered up and down the surface of the earth. Oh, Abel's brood had a terrible voice indeed.

But now see the sweet change as you listen to the blood of Christ. It "speaks better things than that of Abel." Friend, have you ever heard the blood of Christ in your conscience? I have and I thank God I ever heard that sweet soft voice—

***"Once a sinner near despair;
Sought the mercy seat by prayer."***

He prayed—he thought he was praying in vain. The tears gushed from his eyes; his heart was heavy within him. He sought, but he found no mercy. Again, again and yet again, he besieged the Throne of heavenly Grace and knocked at Mercy's door. Oh, who can tell the millstone that lay upon his beating heart and the iron that did eat into his soul? He was a prisoner in sore bondage—deep, as he thought—in the bondage of despair was he chained, to perish forever. That prisoner one day heard a voice, which said to him, "Away, away to Calvary!" Yet he trembled at the voice, for he said, "Why should I go there, for there my blackest sin was committed. There I murdered the Savior by my transgressions? Why should I go to see the murdered corpse of Him who became my brother born for adversity?"

But mercy beckoned and she said, "Come, come away, Sinner!" And the sinner followed. The chains were on his legs and on his hands and he could scarcely creep along. Still the black vulture Destruction seemed hovering in the air. But he crept as best he could, till he came to the foot of the hill of Calvary. On the summit he saw a Cross—blood was distilling from the hands and from the feet and from the side and Mercy touched his ears and said, "Listen!" And he heard that blood speak. And as it spoke the first thing it said was, "Love!" And the second thing it said was, "Mercy!" The third thing it said was, "Pardon." The next thing it said was, "Acceptance." The next thing it said was, "Adoption." The next thing it said was, "Security." And the last thing it whispered was, "Heaven."

And as the sinner heard that voice, he said within himself, "And does that blood speak to me?" And the Spirit said, "To you—to you it speaks." And he listened and oh, what music did it seem to his poor troubled heart, for in a moment all his doubts were gone. He had no sense of guilt. He knew that he was vile but he saw that his vileness was all washed away. He knew that he was guilty, but he saw his guilt all atoned for through the precious blood that was flowing there. He had been full of dread before. He dreaded life, he dreaded death. But now he had no dread at all. A joyous confidence took possession of his heart. He looked to Christ and he said, "I know that my Redeemer lives." He clasped the Savior in his arms and he began to sing—"Oh, confident am I. For this blest blood was shed for me." And then despair fled and destruction was driven clean away and instead thereof came the bright white-winged angel of Assurance and she dwelt in his bosom, saying evermore to him, "You are accepted in the Beloved. You are chosen of God and precious. You are His child now and you shall be His favorite throughout eternity." "The blood of Christ speaks better things than that of Abel."

And now I must have you notice that the blood of Christ bears a *comparison* with the blood of Abel in one or two respects, but it excels in them all.

The blood of Abel cried "Justice!" It was but right that the blood should be revenged. Abel had no private resentment against Cain. Doubtless could Abel have done so, he would have forgiven his brother. But the blood spoke justly and only asked its due when it shouted, "Vengeance! Vengeance! Vengeance!" And Christ's blood speaks justly, when it says, "Mercy!" Christ has as much right to demand mercy upon sinners as Abel's blood had to cry vengeance against Cain. When Christ saves a sinner, He does not save him on the sly, or against Law or justice, but He saves him justly. Christ has a right to save whom He will save, to have mercy on whom He will have mercy, for He can do it justly, He can be just and yet be the Justifier of the ungodly.

Again—Abel's blood cried *effectively*. It did not cry in vain. It said, "Revenge," and revenge it had. And Christ's blood, blessed be His name, never cries in vain. It says, "Pardon," and pardon every Believer shall have. It says, "Acceptance," and every penitent is accepted in the Beloved. If that blood cries for me, I know it cannot cry in vain. That all-prevailing blood of Christ shall never miss its due. It must, it shall, be heard. Shall Abel's blood startle Heaven and shall not the blood of Christ reach the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth?

And again—Abel's blood cries *continually*—there is the mercy seat and there is the Cross and the blood is dropping on the mercy seat. I have sinned a sin. Christ says, "Father, forgive him." There is one drop. I sin again—Christ intercedes again. There is another drop. In fact, it is the drop that intercedes, Christ need not speak with His mouth. The drops of blood as they fall upon the mercy seat, each seems to say, "Forgive him! Forgive him! Forgive him!"

Dear Friend, when you hear the voice of conscience, stop and try to hear the voice of the blood, too. Oh, what a precious thing it is to hear the voice of the blood of Christ. You who do not know what that means, do not know the very essence and joy of life. But you who understand that can say, "The dropping of the blood is like the music of Heaven upon earth." Poor Sinner! I would ask you to come and listen to that voice that distils upon your ears and your heart today. You are full of sin. The Savior bids you lift your eyes to Him. See, there, His blood is flowing from His head, His hands, His feet and every drop that falls, still cries, "Father, O forgive them! Father, O forgive them." And each drop seems to cry also as it falls, "It is finished—I have made an end of sin, I have brought in everlasting righteousness." Oh, sweet, sweet language of the dropping of the blood of Christ." It "speaks better things than that of Abel."

II. Having thus, I trust, sufficiently enlarged upon this subject, I shall now close by addressing you with a few earnest words concerning the second point.—The CONDITION INTO WHICH EVERY CHRISTIAN IS BROUGHT. He is said to "come to the blood of sprinkling." I shall make

this a very brief matter, but a very solemn and pointed one. My Hearers, have you come to the blood of Christ? I do not ask you whether you have come to a *knowledge* of doctrine, or of an *observance* of ceremonies, or of a certain form of *experience*. But I ask you if you have *come to the blood of Christ*. If you have, I know how you came. You must come to the blood of Christ with no merits of your own. Guilty, lost and helpless, you must come to that blood and to that blood, alone, for your hopes. You come to the Cross of Christ and to that blood, too, I know, with a trembling and an aching heart.

Some of you remember how you first came—cast down and full of despair. But that blood recovered you. And this one thing I know—if you have come to that blood once, you will come to it every day. Your life will be just this—“Looking unto Jesus.” And your whole conduct will be epitomized in this—“To whom coming as unto a living stone.” Not to whom I *have* come, but to whom I am *always* coming. If you have ever come to the blood of Christ you will feel your need of coming to it every day. He that does not desire to wash in that fountain every day has never washed in it at all. I feel it every day to be my joy and my privilege that there is still a fountain opened. I trust I came to Christ years ago but ah, I could not trust to that unless I could come again today. Past experiences are doubtful things to a Christian. It is *present* coming to Christ that must give us joy and comfort. Did you not, some of you, sing twenty years ago that hymn—

**“My faith does lay her hand
On that dear head of Yours
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin”?**

Why, Beloved you can sing it as well today as you did then. I was reading the other day some book in which the author states that we are *not* to come to Christ as sinners as long as we live. He says we are to grow into saints. Ah, he did not know much, I am sure. For saints are sinners, still, and they have always to come to Christ as sinners. If ever I go to the Throne of God as a saint, I get repulsed. But when I go just as a poor, humble, seeking sinner—relying upon nothing but Your blood, O Jesus—I never can be turned away, I am sure. To whom coming as unto “blood that speaks better things than that of Abel.” Let this be our experience every day.

But there are some here who confess that they never did come. I cannot exhort you, then, to come every day but I exhort you to come *now* for the first time. But you say, “May I come?” Yes, if you are wishing to come you may come. If you feel that you have need to come you may come—

**“All the fitness He requires,
Is to feel your need of Him.”**

And even—

“This He gives you,

‘Tis His Spirit’s rising beam.”

But you say, “I must bring some merits.” Hark to the blood that speaks! It says, “Sinner, I am full of merit—why bring your merits here?” “Ah, but,” you say “I have too much sin.” Hark to the blood—as it falls, it cries, “Of many offenses unto justification of life.” “Ah, but,” you say, “I know I am too guilty.” Hark to the blood! “Though your sins are as scarlet I will make them as wool; though they are red like crimson they shall be whiter than snow.” “No,” says one, “but I have such a poor desire, I have such a little faith.” Hark to the blood! “The bruised reed I will not break and smoking flax I will not quench.”

“No, but,” you say, “I know He will cast me out, if I do come.” Hark to the blood! “All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me and him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” “No, but,” you say, “I know I have so many sins that I cannot be forgiven.” Now, hear the blood once more and I have done. “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleans us from *all* sin.” That is the blood’s testimony and its testimony to you. “There are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit and the water and the blood.” And behold the blood’s witness is—“The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleans us from *all* sin.” Come, poor Sinner, cast yourself simply on that Truth of God. Away with your good works and all your trust! Lie simply flat on that sweet word of Christ. Trust His blood. And if you can put your trust alone in Jesus, in His sprinkled blood, it shall speak in your conscience better things than that of Abel.

I am afraid there are many that do not know what we mean by believing. Good Dr. Chalmers, once visiting a poor old woman, told her to believe in Christ and she said, “But that is just the thing I do not know what you mean by.” So Dr. Chalmers said, “*Trust Christ.*” Now, *that* is just the meaning of believing. Trust Him with your soul. Trust Him with your sins. Trust Him with the future. Trust Him with the past. Trust Him with everything. Say—

***“A guilty, weak and worthless worm,
On Christ’s kind arms I fall
Be You my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all.”***

May the Lord now give you His blessing. For Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

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THE BLOOD OF ABEL AND THE BLOOD OF JESUS

NO. 708

DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 2, 1866.

“And He said, ‘What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries unto Me from the ground.’”
Genesis 4:10.

“And to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel.”
Hebrews 12:24.

The first shedding of human blood was a very terrible experiment. Whether Cain's murderous blow was premeditated or not, the sight of a bleeding human corpse must have been a terrible novelty to him. He had not been hardened by reading details of warfare, or listening to tales of murder. Killing and slaying were new terrors to mankind, and he who was the ringleader in such violence must have been filled with mingled astonishment at the result of his blow, and apprehension as to its consequences.

I think I see him standing there by the corpse, for a moment stiff with fear, awe-struck at the sight of blood. Will the skies dart malignant fires upon him? Will the earth produce speedy avengers from her astonished soil? What questions must have flashed through the murderer's mind! And lo, the warm lifeblood flows in a crimson stream upon the earth, and some ghastly comfort arises to the mind of the guilty wretch as he observes the earth soak in the blood. It stands not in a pool, but the earth opens her mouth to receive and to conceal his brother's blood. Sad memorials bespatter the herbage and crimson the soil, but still the dreadful flood is drying up, and the murderer feels a momentary joy.

Perhaps Cain went his way dreaming that the terrible matter was all over. He had done the deed and it could not be undone. He had struck the blow, rid himself of the presence of one who was obnoxious to him. But the blood had been swallowed up by the earth and that was the end to the business which need cause no further thought. There was no machinery in those days of police, and law, and judges, and gallows—and therefore Cain had little or nothing to fear. Strong and hale man, with no one to punish him and nobody to accuse or upbraid him except his father and his mother, and those, possibly, too bowed with grief and too mindful of their own offense to show much resentment toward their first-born.

He may, therefore, have imagined that the deed was speechless and silent, and that now oblivion would cover his crime so that he might go his way as though the deed were never done. It was not so, however, for though that blood was silent in the seared conscience of Cain, it had a voice elsewhere! A mysterious voice went up beyond the skies—it reached

the ear of the Invisible, and moved the heart of Eternal Justice, so that breaking through the veil which conceals the Infinite from man, God revealed Himself and spoke to Cain: "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries unto Me from the ground."

Then Cain knew that blood could not be idly spilt—that murder would be avenged—for there was a tongue in every drop of the vital essence which flowed from murdered manhood which prevailed with God. So God would interpose and hold a solemn inquest. Brethren, that was a more terrible experiment, still, which was tried at Calvary when not the first man was slaughtered but the Son of God Himself! He who was Man but yet was more than man. God manifest in the flesh. It was a dread experiment when, having dragged Him before the judgment seat and falsely condemned Him, having shouted, "Away with Him, away with Him," they actually dared to take the nails and fasten the Son of God to the accursed tree! Terrible, indeed, to lift up His body between earth and Heaven, and there to watch its griefs till they ended in His death, when they pierced His side, and from it flowed blood and water!

No doubt Pilate, who had washed his hands in water, thought that no mischief would come of it. The Scribes and Pharisees went their way, and said, "We have silenced the accusing voice. There will no more be heard in our streets of Him who said, 'Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.' We shall no longer be disturbed in our hypocrisy and formality by the Presence of a pure and holy Being, whose simple honesty shall be a stern rebuke to us. We have murdered Him. We have put Him to death without just reason, but that is the end of it. There will be no voice to that blood."

Little did they know that up to Heaven the cry of Jerusalem had already gone, "His blood be on us, and on our children," was registered in the tablets of Justice, and before long Jerusalem became the treasure house of woe and a den of misery, so that the like of her destruction has not been, neither ever shall be, upon the face of the earth. Far more delightful is the fact that another and more melodious cry went up to Heaven from the Cross of Calvary. "Father, forgive them," resounded from the wounds of Immanuel.

The blood of Abel was not voiceless, and the blood of Jesus was not dumb—it cried so as to be heard amid the thrones of Heaven, and blessed be God—it spoke *for* us and not *against* us! It spoke not worse things, as it might well have done, but better things than that of Abel. It did not demand fiercer vengeance than that which fell upon Cain. It did not ask that we might be driven vagabonds and fugitives upon the face of the earth, and to be at last banished from God into Hell forever, but it cried, "Father, forgive them"! And it prevailed, and the curse was taken away! And a blessing came to the sons of men.

This morning we propose to keep our discourse to the subject of the voice of the blood of Abel and the voice of the blood of Jesus, as standing in comparison the one with the other. They both spoke. That is evident. Abel being dead yet speaks, said the Apostle, and we know, to our abiding comfort, that the blood of Jesus pleads before the Eternal Throne. All

blood has a voice, for God is jealous of its preservation. The blood of excellent and just men has a more heavenly speech, still, but the voice of the blood of Jesus far surpasses all, and among ten thousand voices it bears the palm.

I. In the first place, Jesus' blood speaks better things in general. What did the blood of Abel say? Was it not the blood of *testimony*? When Abel fell to the ground beneath his brother's club he bore witness to spiritual religion. Cain was the lover of a merely outward worship in which faith had no place. He loved a worship of show and pomp—he garnished the altar with fruits and decked it with flowers—his was a religion of taste and elegance, a religion of his own devising.

And it was devoid of a humble, believing, *spiritual* reference to the promised Deliverer. Abel stood there the professor of an ungarnished religion of *faith* in the promised Sacrifice. On the altar was a lamb, bleeding from its death wound, and laid in order for burning—a ghastly spectacle not to be delighted in by taste—a thing from which the lovers of the beautiful would turn away. Abel had chosen such an offering because God had chosen it, and because it was the fit means for leading his faith to its true object—the Lord Jesus Christ. He saw, by faith, in the bleeding lamb the memorial of the Lord's great propitiation for sin, which could not be seen in Cain's offering of the fruits of the earth, however tasteful that offering might be.

Abel stands forth before us as the first in a cloud of witnesses, bearing brave testimony, and prepared to seal it with their lives. He died a martyr for the truth, the grandly God-like truth that God accepts men according to their faith. All honor to the martyr's blood which speaks so effectually for precious truth! Our Lord Jesus Christ, being also a testifier and witness for the faith of God, spoke better things than Abel because He had more to speak, and spoke from more intimate acquaintance with God. He was a fuller witness of Divine Truth than Abel could be, for He brought life and immortality to light and told His people clearly of the Father.

Our Lord Jesus Christ had been in the bosom of the Father, and knew the Divine secret. This secret He revealed to the sons of men in His ministry, and then He sealed it by His blood. It is not to be forgotten that though the death of Christ was in chief an atonement for sin, yet it was also a testimony to the Truth of God, for He is said to be a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people, and as a dying, bleeding martyr, it will be clear to you that this blood testifies to fuller, brighter, and more glorious Truth than did the blood of Abel.

Moreover, the blood of Abel spoke good things in that it was the proof of faithfulness. This dear servant of the Great Master was faithful under his brother's opposition—yes, faithful unto death. It could not be said of him as the Apostle said of certain others, "You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." He resisted sin even unto blood! He was faithful in all his house as a servant. He turned not from his integrity and counted not his life dear unto him. His blood, as it fell to the ground, spoke this good thing—it said, "Great God, Abel is faithful to you." But the blood of Jesus Christ testifies to yet greater faithfulness, still, for it was

the sequel of a spotlessly perfect life, which no act of sin had ever defiled—whereas Abel’s death furnished, it is true, a life of faith—but not a life of perfection.

The faithfulness of Jesus was complete from the day of His birth to the hour of His death, and inasmuch as He needed not to die, His voluntary yielding up of life was all the more an act of *obedience*, and the better proof of His fidelity to His trust. Moreover, we must never forget that all that Abel’s blood could say as it fell to the ground was but the shadow of that more glorious substance to which Jesus’ death assures us. Jesus did not *typify* Atonement, but *offered* it! He was not the *representative* of sacrifice—He was the great *Sacrifice* itself! And inasmuch as the substance must ever excel the shadow, the blood of Jesus Christ speaks better things than that of Abel.

It is well to add that our Lord’s Person was infinitely more worthy and glorious than that of Abel, and consequently His death must yield to us a more golden-mouthed discourse than the death of a mere man like Abel. He who dies at the hand of Cain is but one of our race, testifying to truth and righteousness, testifying by faith to a sacrifice to come. But He who died at the hand of Herod and of Pilate was Divine and came upon no common errand, with no ordinary message to deliver. When the glorious Son of God bowed His head and gave up the ghost, the voice that arose from His blood must necessarily have been louder, sweeter, more full, and more God-like than the voice of the martyred Abel’s gore.

We understand, then, before coming to details, that on general principles we may be pretty clear that the blood of Jesus would speak better things than that of Abel.

II. Now we will enter the very heart of our text, while we remember that the blood of Jesus speaks better things to God than the blood of Abel did. The blood of Abel cried in the ears of the Lord, for thus He said to Cain, “The voice of your brother’s blood cries unto Me from the ground.” That cry did not go round to seek a mediator, but went directly to the judgment seat of God and laid an accusation against the murderer.

Now what did Abel’s blood say to God? Standing by the spot where Abel fell, and marking the ground all crimson with clotted gore, what would the blood seem to you to say? What would be your own reflection? What would you conceive that the blood said to God? It said just this, “O God, one of Your own creatures, the product of your matchless skill, has been dashed in pieces and barbarously destroyed. A living, sensitive body formed by art and skill, such as only You could show, has been wantonly broken. The potter will not bear that the vessel which has been fashioned upon the wheel with much cost and labor should be wantonly broken, but here is a body far more costly, far more wonderful than anything which human art could create, and this has been destroyed. Great God, the Creator of all things, will You look on this with patience, will You bear to see the work of Your own hands most cruelly destroyed?”

Was there not much in this cry? Then that blood would plead still further, “O God, Your creature has been destroyed without cause. No just reason of provocation has been given. No offense has been committed

which could deserve so terrible a stroke. One of Your feeble creatures who has a claim upon Your kind protection has been wantonly and needlessly slain—his blood appeals to You! Judge of all the earth, will You let the weak be trod down by the strong, and will You suffer the innocent to be struck by the fierce hand of the wicked?”

You see the cry gathers force. At first it is, “O God, Your creature has been destroyed.” Next it is, “O God, Your subject has been maltreated by one of his fellow subjects, by one who has become Your enemy—will You not interfere?” Yet the blood of Abel said more than this. It said, “O God, the blood shed here was shed for You.” It seemed to say, “If it were not for love of You this blood had not been shed! If these drops had not been consecrated by devotion, if this blood had not flowed in the veins of a man who loved God with all his heart it had not been poured out upon the ground! O God,” cries every drop, “I fell upon the ground for You—will You endure this? Shall a creature that You have made yield up its life with pain and anguish for You, and will You be like a cold, motionless, unmoved, immovable statue and look on without emotion? Will You not bestir Yourself, O God? Shall blood be shed on Your behalf, shed unjustly, too, the blood of Your own loving, righteous creature, and will You not interfere?”

What force there is in such a voice! Yet the blood added to this, “O God, I have been shed in defiance of You,” for the stroke which came from Cain’s hand was not aimed merely at Abel—it was in spirit aimed at God, for if Cain could have done the same to God as he did to his brother, Abel, he doubtless would have done it. He was of that Wicked One, and therefore slew his brother, and the wickedness which was in him was Deicidal—he would have slain God Himself if it had been in his power—and so the blood cried, “O God, here is the gauntlet of defiance thrown down to You! Cain defies You. He has struck the first blow at You—he has struck down the vanguard of the army of Your elect. Will You look on quietly? Will You take no vengeance? Will You have no regard? Shall there be silence in Heaven when there are groans and cries on earth? Shall Heaven’s heart be cold when the heart of the enemy is hot with rage and fierce with rebellion? O God, will You not interpose?”

Surely this is a Heaven-piercing cry, but this is not all. The blood of the proto-martyr added to all this such an appeal as the following: “O God, this is the first of human blood that has been murderously shed, and shed by an unnatural brother’s hand. Will You pass this by? Then how can You be just? Did not this blood challenge the very existence of justice in God? O God, if You do not punish this first barbarous man-slayer, who kills his brother, than all down the ages men will riot in blood and wanton in murder, and they will say, ‘How does God know? He that sits in the heavens regards not, He will not so much as speak!’ ” It were as though God should issue a license for man to shed each other’s blood and give permission for red-handed murder to lord it over the whole creation if the first murder should pass unnoticed by the great Judge of all.

Do you hear, my Brothers and Sisters, what a cry the blood of Abel must have had, and with what power it arose to Heaven? But we are not

left to conjecture as to the power of that cry, for we are told that God heard, and when He heard it He came to reckoning with Cain, and He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries to Me from the ground." Then came the withering sentence of it. The ground which had drank in the blood became accursed to Cain so that dig it as he might it could not yield him a bounteous harvest. Plow it as he would, with all his skill and craft, it never could yield its strength to him. The original curse of the thorn and the thistle, which had fallen upon it when Adam survived, was now doubled to Cain so that he reaped but handfuls and gathered scanty sheaves.

This would be a constant bitter mingled with his daily bread, while over and above that he received unto his heart a curse which made him the slave of his own dreads. He served Fear and Trembling as his gods, and went about the earth with darkness within him and darkness round about him, never more rejoicing, but wearing the mark of reprobation fixed upon his brow. His life was doubtless Hell upon earth and at last he was driven forever from the Presence of the Most High God. Blood has a voice in it, and when it is heard against a man it brings upon him a curse untold.

Well now, Brethren, it is a very sweet task to ask you to turn your minds away from the blood of Abel to the blood of Jesus. I feel persuaded that you did just now recognize the voice of Abel's blood and I want your minds to hear with equal distinctness the voice of Jesus Christ's blood, for there are the same reasons for its loudness, but they are all far more emphatic. Can you stand at Calvary and view the flowing of the Savior's blood from hands, and feet, and side? What are your own reflections as to what that blood says to God? Think, now, at the foot of the Cross. That blood cries with a loud voice to God, and what does it say?

Does it not say this? "O God, this time it is not merely a creature which bleeds, but though the body that hangs upon the Cross is the creature of Your Holy Spirit, it is Your own Son who now pours out His soul unto death! O God, it is Your only-begotten One, dear to You, essentially One with You, One in whom You are well-pleased, whose obedience is perfect, whose love to You has been unwavering—it is He who dies! O God, will You despise the cries and the tears, the groans, the moans, the blood of Your own Son? Most tender Father, in whose bosom Jesus lay from the foundations of the earth, He dies! And will You not regard Him? Shall His blood fall to the ground in vain?"

Then, moreover, the voice would plead, "It is not only Your Son, but Your perfectly innocent Son, in whom was no necessity for dying because He had no original sin which would have brought corruption on Him—who had, moreover, no *actual* sin—who throughout life had done nothing worthy of death or of bonds. O God, it is Your only Begotten, who, without a fault, is led as a lamb to the slaughter and stands like a sheep before her shearers. Can You see it, God of all? Can You see the infinitely holy and just Son of Your heart led here to die? Can You see it and not feel the force of the blood as it cries to You?"

Was there not added to this fact that our Lord died to vindicate the honor of His Father? “For You, O God, for You He dies! He who hangs on Calvary hangs there in deference to Your own decree, in fulfillment of Your own purpose, in vindication of the honor of Your Law, that You may Yourself be glorified! That Your justice may have full scope, and Your mercy may have illimitable sway. O God, the Sufferer, pale in death, whose wounds are torn open with the cruel nails, and whose soul is racked with pain unutterable, dies for You! If there had been no God He need not die. If there were no Law to vindicate, no Truth to defend, no honor, and majesty, and justice to which to pay homage, it need not that He died. If You were content to stain Your honor or to restrain Your mercy, there were no need that He should give Himself. But it is for You! For You with each pang, for You with each groan, for You each drop of blood, and will You not be moved by it all?”

Brethren, is there not power in this voice? Yet over and above this the blood must have pleaded thus with God: “O God, the blood which is now being shed, thus honorable and glorious in itself, is being poured out with a motive which is divinely gracious. He who dies on this Cross dies for His enemy, groans for those who make Him groan, suffers for those who thrust the dart into His soul, and then mock at the agony which they themselves have caused! O God, it is a chain for God in Heaven which binds the victim to the horns of the altar, a chain of everlasting love, of illimitable goodness.”

Now, dear Friends, you and I could not see a man suffer out of pure benevolence without being moved by his sufferings, and shall God be unmoved? The perfectly holy and gracious God—shall He be indifferent where you and I are stirred to deep emotion? The sight of blood makes some of us shudder. The sight of blood shed from an innocent person—shed by the hand of violence—would make our very souls chill within us! But the thought of that blood being shed with a motive so marvelous, because of a disinterested affection towards undeserving criminals—this would move us, indeed! And do you dream that it did not move the heart of God?

Blessed be His name, we are not left to conjecture here! It so moved our heavenly Father that to this day God has come to man, and speaking to us through that blood He has said, “What have you done? Whatever you have done, however black and filthy your sin may have been, the voice of My Son’s blood cries unto Me from the ground, and now from this day forth I have taken off the curse from the earth for His sake, neither will I curse it any more. You shall be blessed in your basket and in your store, in your going out and in your coming in. I have forgiven you your iniquities. I have set a mark upon you and no man shall hurt you. Neither shall justice smite you, for in the Person of my dear Son I have received and accepted you, guilty as you are. Go your way and live happily and peaceably, for I have taken away your iniquities and cast your sins behind My back. And the day has come in that if your sins are searched for, they shall not be found, yes, if they are sought out they shall not be found, says the Lord, for I have pardoned them whom I have reserved.”

Abel's blood had mighty prevalence to curse, but Jesus' blood has prevalence to bless the sons of men! I want you to dwell a little over this thought to digest it. I wish I had the power to send it home! Only the Holy Spirit, however, can do that. I want you, however, just to dwell on it, that you may get into the soul of it. Observe that the blood of Abel spoke to God long before Cain spoke. Cain was deaf to the voice of his brother's blood, but God heard it. Sinner, long before you hear the blood of Jesus, God hears it and spares your guilty soul! Long before that blood comes into your soul to melt you to repentance, it pleads for you with God! It was not the voice of Cain that brought down vengeance, but the voice of Abel's blood—and it is not the cry of the sinner seeking mercy that is the cause of mercy—it is the cry of that blood of Jesus!

I know you will tell me you cannot pray. Oh what a mercy it is that the *blood* can! And when you cannot plead so as to prevail, the blood pleads. If you are to win mercy from God and get forgiveness, it will not be by the efficacy of your prayers and tears, but through the efficacy of that blood of God's dear Son! Cain did not ask for vengeance, but it came unsought through the blood. And you, though you feel as if you hardly dare look for mercy, yet shall find it if you can trust the blood of Jesus which speaks for you. The blood does not need *your* voice to increase its power with God—He will hear your voice—but it is because He hears the blood of Jesus first of all. It is a mercy for us that the blood of Abel spoke against the guilty—Jesus' blood pleads not for the innocent, if such there are—they need no plea from an atoning sacrifice.

Jesus pleads for the rebellious, that the Lord God may dwell among them—for you that have broken His laws, and despised His love, and fought against His power—the blood of Jesus pleads for such as you for He came into the world to save sinners. “The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,” the precious Book speaks constantly. Did you notice that word in the text? “That speaks.” Not, “that *did* speak,” but, “that speaks.” The blood of Jesus pleaded for the thief upon the cross, but it—

**“Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Is saved to sin no more.”**

Brothers and Sisters, when prevailing sin oppresses the conscience it is a thousand mercies to know that we have even now a prevailing Savior! Years ago some of us came to Christ and we found pardon. But our faith occasionally faints, and our doubts grow strong. Come, let us go afresh to the Fountain, let us look anew to the Cross, for the blood still speaks! Still in effect our Lord Jesus bleeds today as much as He did 1800 years ago, for the blood is just as certain in its power with God at the present moment as when the thief said, “Lord, remember me.” Let us think of this and rejoice in this.

My Soul, when you cannot plead with God, when you dare not, when your tongue is silent and despair gags your mouth, even then Jesus pleads! Now lay hold upon the Intercessor! Come and cast yourself upon Him! Rest wholly in Him! He must prevail though you cannot! He must

succeed though you have no power whatever! Come then, and link yourself with the infallible prevalent plea of the precious blood, and it is all well with you, all safe with you, and safe forever! God grant us Grace to do this, each one of us, and His be the praise!

III. Furthermore, Jesus' blood speaks better things to us in our own hearts than did the blood of Abel. I suppose most of you read the account written by the newspaper correspondents who have passed over the battlefields of Königgratz or Sadowa. How it sickens one to read of ditches filled with blood and of the smell from putrid corpses being so intolerable that travelers had to leave the battlefield in haste. I would not like to be Bismarck, nor the Crown Prince of Prussia, nor the King, nor anyone who had a hand in a war so unjustifiable!

I suppose that wholesale assassins grow used to such things. I suppose that they can read of thousands mangled by shot and shell without emotion, and even see the heaps of corpses without a shudder—but I am certain of this—that it would drive me mad. Ah, to have the blood of one person knowingly laid at my door would be enough to dash all comfort from my life. But to have the blood of tens of thousands poured out to gratify my ambition! I think that must make Reason reel at once. It must be an absence of conscience which makes Reason to keep her throne when men have been wading through their fellows' blood for mere purposes of selfish gain.

Seeing that there had been no wars in Cain's day, and that the human heart had not been brutalized as it now is so as to speak of war as we now do in such gentle terms, surely if he had had any conscience at all, it must have been a horrible thought to him that he had killed his brother! "I have killed a man, I have shed his blood." Surely it made him start in his sleep! How could he be quiet upon his lonely couch? That red-handed man! Guilt, a grim chamberlain, with fingers bloody red would surely draw the curtains of his bed.

Would not the spectacle all come up before his mind? The talk in the field, the sudden impulse, the blow, the blood, the look of his victim as he cried for pity as one cruel stroke succeeded another? And then the sight of the ghastly body and the streaming blood, and the crimson marks on the earth! Oh, it must have been a recollection clinging like a viper around the murderer wherever he might be! He might well build a city, as we are told he did, in order to quench these fiery remembrances.

Then would the thought come upon him, "You slew him though he was your brother." "Am I my brother's keeper?" he said, but men can talk sometimes more braggingly than their heart talks in secret. The horror of brother-killing must have haunted Cain: "I slew my *brother*. I, the first that was born of woman slew the second born." And then it would be suggested, "And why did I slay him? What evil had he done me? What if he did offer a different sacrifice from mine, and what if God did accept him and not me, yet what hurt had *he* done *me*?" The innocence of his victim, if Cain had any conscience, must have increased his uneasiness for he would remember how inoffensively he had kept those sheep of his, and

had been like one among them, so lamblike, that shepherd-man himself, a true sheep of God's pasture.

"Yet," Cain would say, "I slew him because I hated God, the God before whose bar I am soon to stand, the God who set this mark on me." Can you picture the man who had thus to be daily schooled and upbraided by his brother's blood? It needs a poet's mind to teach him. Think how you would feel if you had killed your own brother! How the guilt would hang over you like a black cloud and drop horror into your very soul.

Now, Brethren, there is more than equal force in the cry of the blood of Jesus, only it acts differently, and it speaks better things. Let it be remembered, however, that it speaks those better things with the same force. Comforts arise from the blood of Jesus as powerful as the horrors which arose from the blood of Abel. When the sinner looks to Jesus slain, he may well say, "If I did not know that all this blood was shed for me as well as by me, my fears would multiply a thousand fold. But when I think that that precious blood is blood shed instead of mine—that it is blood which God planned and ordained should be shed for me from before the foundation of the world—when I think that that is the blood of God's own dear Son whom He has struck instead of striking me, making Him bear the whole of His wrath that I might not bear it, O my God, what comforts come streaming from this blessed fountain!"

Just in proportion as thought of murder would make Cain wretched, in the same proportion ought *faith* to make you happy as you think upon Jesus Christ slain! For the blood of Christ, as I said at the beginning of the sermon, cannot have a less powerful voice. It must have a more powerful voice than that of Abel, and it cries, therefore, more powerfully for you than the blood of Abel cried against his brother Cain. Oh, then, my clamoring Sins, I can hear you, but I am not afraid of you, for the blood of Jesus speaks louder than you all! Oh, then, Conscience, I can hear your accusation, but I am not alarmed, for my Savior died. I come before God with perfect confidence, because I am sprinkled with the blood of my Substitute.

If the horror of Cain with an awakened conscience might be unendurable, so the peace which comes to me through the precious blood of Jesus is indescribable and unutterable, a peace like a river, a righteousness like the waves of the sea. Sweet peace have all they who hear the blood speaking in their souls, telling them that sin is forgiven, that God is reconciled, that we are accepted in the Beloved, and that now we are preserved in Christ Jesus, and shall never perish, neither shall any pluck us out of His hand! I trust you know. I know many of you do, the sweet power of this peace-speaking blood! Such innocent blood, ordained on purpose to give peace, is precious beyond all price. O my Soul! Never look for peace elsewhere, and never be afraid of finding peace here.

If today, O Christian, you have lost your confidence. If today you are conscious of having been false to your Lord, and of having done despite to His Spirit. If today you feel ashamed of the very name of a Christian because you have dishonored it. If today despair is ready to strangle your hope and you are tempted to give it all up—yet come now, even now—to

this precious blood of Jesus Christ! Do not think that my Savior can save merely the little sinners! He is a great Savior—mighty to save. I know your sins speak very loudly—ah, well they may—and I hope you will hear their voices and hate them in the future. But they cannot speak so loudly as the blood of Jesus does! It says, “Father, Father, shall I die in vain? Father, I paid My blood for sinners, shall not sinners be saved? I was struck for the guilty, shall the guilty be struck, too?”

The blood says, “O God, I have vindicated Your Law, what more do You demand? I have honored Your Justice, why should You cast the sinner into Hell? O Divine Benignity! Can You take two exactions for one offense, and punish those for whom Jesus suffered? O Justice! Will you here revenge? O Mercy! When the way is cleared, will you not run to guilty sinners? O Love Divine, when the pathway is opened for You, will You not show Yourself to the rebellious and the vile?” The blood shall not plead in vain! Sinners shall be saved, and you and I, I hope, among them to the praise and glory of His Grace.

IV. Two or three words to close with. Jesus’ blood, even in my text, speaks better things than that of Abel. It speaks the same things but in a better sense. Did you notice the first text? God said unto Cain, “What have you done?” Now that is what Christ’s blood says to you: “What have you done?” My dear Hearer, do you not know that your sins slew the Savior? If we have been playing with sin, and fancied it to be a very little thing, a trifle to play with and laugh at, let us correct the mistake!

Our Savior hangs on the Cross, and was nailed there by those sins of ours—shall we think little of them? Looking from the Cross, Jesus says to us, “What have you done?” O my Hearer, what have you done? You have slain your best Friend and ruined yourself! Let me come home personally to everyone. Make an inventory now of your sins. Go over the black list from your childhood till now. What have you done? Ah Lord, done enough to make me weep forever if it were not that You have wept for me! Drops of grief can never repay the debt which is due to Your blood. Alas, I have done evil, Lord, but You have done good to me. What have you done? “What have you done?” was a dreadful accusation to Cain, it might have gone through him like a dart. But to you and to me it is the soft inquiring voice of a Father’s love bringing us to repentance. May it bring us now!

What I want mainly to indicate is this. If you notice in the second text, this blood is called “the blood of sprinkling.” Whether Abel’s blood sprinkled Cain or not I cannot say, but if it did it must have added to his horror to have had the blood actually upon him. But this adds to the joy in our case, for the blood of Jesus is of little value to us until it is sprinkled upon us. Faith dips the hyssop in the atoning blood and sprinkles it upon the soul, and the soul is clean! The application of the blood of Jesus is the true ground of joy and the sure source of Christian comfort. The application of the blood of Abel must have been horror, but the application of the blood of Jesus is the root and ground of all delight.

There is another matter in the text with which I conclude. The Apostle says, “We are come to the blood of sprinkling.” He mentions that among other things to which we are come. Now, from the blood of Abel every rea-

sonable man would flee away. He that has murdered his fellow desires to put a wide distance between himself and the accusing corpse. But we *come* to the blood of Jesus! It is a topic in which we delight as our contemplations bring us nearer and nearer to it. I ask you, dear Christian Friends, to come nearer to it this morning than you have ever been. Think over the great truth of Substitution. Portray to yourselves the sufferings of the Savior.

Dwell in His sight, sit at the foot of Calvary, abide in the presence of His Cross, and never turn away from that great spectacle of mercy and of misery. Come to it! Be not afraid! Ho, Sinners, who have never trusted Jesus, look here and live! May you come to Him now!—

***“Come, guilty souls, and flee away,
Like doves to Jesus’ wounds.”***

No, do not run away from the wounds which you have made, but find shelter in them! Don’t forget the sufferings of Christ, but rest in them! Your only hope lies in trusting in Jesus, resting wholly upon Him. Think much of the griefs of your Lord! And if I might suggest to some of you who will not be going out this afternoon, perhaps if you could spend an hour or two between services in considering the sufferings of the Savior, those considerations might be the means of bringing faith to you.

Faith comes by hearing, but it is a thoughtful hearing. And hearing comes by the Word of God, but the Word must be thought over. Open the Word, read the story of the Cross. Ask the Master to bless it to you, and who knows but through the Divine Spirit some of you may yet hear the voice of that blood which speaks better things than that of Abel! The Lord bless every one of you for His name’s sake. Amen.

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THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING (FIRST SERMON) NO. 1888

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 28, 1886,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“And to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel. See that you refuse not Him who speaks. For if they escaped not who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape, if we turn away from Him who speaks from Heaven.”
Hebrews 12:24, 25.*

WE are joyfully reminded by the Apostle that we have *not* come to Mount Sinai and its overwhelming manifestations. After Israel had kept the feast of the Passover, God was pleased to give His people a sort of Pentecost and more fully to manifest Himself and His Law to them at Sinai. They were in the wilderness with the solemn peaks of a desolate mountain as their center. And from the top, thereof, in the midst of fire, blackness, darkness, tempest and, with the sound of a trumpet, God spoke to them. “The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.” We have not come to the dread and terror of the Old Covenant, of which our Apostle says in another place, “The covenant from the Mount Sinai gave birth to bondage” (Gal 4:24). Upon the Believer’s spirit there rests not the slavish fear, the abject terror, the fainting alarm which swayed the tribes of Israel, for the manifestation of God which he beholds, though not less majestic, is far more full of hope and joy! Over us there rests not the impenetrable cloud of apprehension—we are not buried in a present darkness of despair, we are not tossed about with a tempest of horror and, therefore—we do not exceedingly fear and quake. How thankful we should be for this! Israel was *privileged* in receiving a fiery Law from the right hand of Jehovah, but we are far more favored, since we receive “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.”

Our Apostle next tells us what we have come to. I suppose he speaks of all the saints after the death and resurrection of our Lord and the descent of the Holy Spirit. He refers to the whole Church, in the midst of which the Holy Spirit now dwells. We have come to a more joyous sight than Sinai and the mountain burning with fire. The Hebrew worshipper, apart from his sacrifices, lived continually beneath the shadow of the darkness of a broken Law—he was often startled by the tremendous note of the trumpet which threatened judgment for that broken Law—and thus he

always lived in a condition of bondage. To what else could the Law bring him? To convict of sin and to condemn the sinner is its utmost power! The Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ lives in quite another atmosphere. He has not come to a barren crag, but to an inhabited city, Jerusalem above, the metropolis of God! He has left the wilderness for the land which flows with milk and honey and the material mount which might not be touched for the spiritual and heavenly Jerusalem! He has entered into fellowship with an innumerable company of angels who are to him, not cherubim with flaming swords to keep men back from the tree of life, but ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation!

He is come to the joyous assembly of all pure intelligences who have met, not in trembling, but in joyous liberty, to keep the feast with their great Lord and King. He thinks of all who love God throughout all worlds and he feels that he is one of them, for he has come to “the general assembly and Church of the First-Born, which are written in Heaven.” Moreover, he has come “to God the Judge of All,” the Umpire and Rewarder of all the chosen citizens who are enrolled by His command, the Ruler and Judge of all their enemies. God is not to them a dreadful Person who speaks from a distance—He is their Father and their Friend in whom they delight themselves—in whose Presence there is fullness of joy for them!

Brothers and Sisters, our fellowship is with the Father, our God! To Him we have come, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, in the power of the Spirit of God we realize the oneness of the Church both in Heaven and earth—and the spirits of just men made perfect are in union with us. No gulf divides the militant from the triumphant! We are one army of the living God! We sometimes speak of the holy *dead*, but there are none such—they live unto God—they are perfected as to their spirits even now and they are waiting for the moment when their bodies, also, shall be raised from the tomb to be again inhabited by their immortal souls. We no longer shudder at the sepulcher, but sing of resurrection! Our condition of heart, from day to day, is that of men who are in fellowship with God, fellowship with angels, fellowship with perfect spirits.

We have also come to Jesus, our Savior, who is All and in all. In Him we live! We are joined unto Him in one spirit; He is the Bridegroom of our souls, the delight of our hearts. We are come to Him as the Mediator of the New Covenant. What a blessed thing it is to know that Covenant of which He is the Mediator! Some in these days despise the Covenant, but saints delight in it. To them the Everlasting Covenant, “ordered in all things, and sure,” is all their salvation and all their desire. We are covenanted ones through our Lord Jesus! God has pledged Himself to bless us. By two Immutable things wherein it is impossible for Him to lie, He has given us strong consolation and good hope through Grace, even to all of us who have fled for refuge to the Lord Jesus. We are happy to live under the Covenant of Grace, the Covenant of Promise, the Covenant symbolized by Jerusalem above which is free and the mother of us all!

Then comes the last thing of all, mentioned last, as I shall have to show you, for a purpose. We have come “*to the blood of sprinkling.*” On that first day at Sinai no blood of sprinkling was presented, but afterwards it was

used by Divine order to ratify the national Covenant which the tribes made with Jehovah at the foot of the hill. Of that Covenant the Lord says, "which My Covenant they broke, although I was an husband unto them." He never broke His Covenant, but they broke it, for they failed to keep that condition of *obedience*, without which a Covenant founded upon *works* falls to the ground. We have come to the blood of sprinkling which has fallen upon a Covenant which never shall be broken, for the Lord has made it to endure though rocks and hills remove! This is called by the Holy Spirit, "a better Covenant which was established upon better promises." We have come to the Covenant of Grace, to Jesus the Mediator of it and to His blood which is the seal of it!

Of this last we are going to speak at this time—"The blood of sprinkling which speaks better things than that of Abel." I shall need, this morning, to occupy all the time with what I regard as only the first head of my discourse. What is it? "The blood of sprinkling." It will be our duty, afterwards, to consider where we are—"we have come unto this blood." And, thirdly, to remember, what then? "See that you refuse not Him who speaks."

I. FIRST, WHAT IS IT? What is this "blood of sprinkling?" In a few words, "the blood of sprinkling" represents the pains, the sufferings, the humiliation and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ which He endured on the behalf of guilty man. When we speak of the blood, we wish not to be understood as referring solely or mainly to the literal material blood which flowed from the wounds of Jesus. We believe in the literal fact of His shedding His blood, but when we speak of His Cross and blood, we mean those sufferings and that death of our Lord Jesus Christ by which He magnified the Law of God. We mean what Isaiah intended when he said, "He shall make His soul an offering for sin." We mean all the griefs which Jesus vicariously endured on our behalf at Gethsemane, Gabbatha and Golgotha—and especially His yielding up His life upon the tree of scorn and doom. "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." "Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins" and the shedding of blood intended is the death of Jesus, the Son of God!

Remember that His sufferings and death were not only *apparent*, but true and real—and that they involved an incalculable degree of pain and anguish. To redeem our souls, cost our Lord an exceedingly sorrowfulness, "even unto death." It cost Him the bloody sweat, the heart broken with reproach and especially the agony of being forsaken of His Father till He cried, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Our Mediator endured death under the worst possible aspects, bereft of those supports which are, in all other cases of godly men, afforded by the goodness and faithfulness of God. His was not merely a natural death, but a death aggravated by supernatural circumstance which infinitely intensified its woe! This is what we mean by the blood of Christ—His sufferings and His death.

These were voluntarily undertaken by Himself out of pure love to us and in order that we might, thereby, be justly saved from deserved pun-

ishment. There was no *natural* reason on His own account why He should suffer, bleed and die. Far from it—"He, only, has immortality." But out of supreme love for us, that man might be forgiven without the violation of Divine rectitude, the Son of God assumed human flesh and became in very deed, a Man, in order that He might be able to offer in man's place a full vindication to the righteous and unchangeable Law of God. Being God, He thus showed forth the wondrous love of God to man by being willing to *personally* suffer rather than the redeemed should die as the just result of their sin! The matchless majesty of His Divine Person lent supreme efficacy to His sufferings. It was a Man that died, but He was also *God* and the death of Incarnate God reflects more Glory upon Law than the deaths of myriads of condemned creatures could have done. See the yearning of the great God for perfect righteousness! He had sooner die than stain His Justice even to indulge His Mercy! Jesus the Lord, out of love to the Father and to men, undertook willingly and cheerfully, for our sakes, to magnify the Law and bring in perfect righteousness. This work was so carried out to the utmost that not a jot of the suffering was mitigated, nor a particle of the obedience foregone—"He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." Now He has finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness, for He has offered such an Expiation that God is just and the justifier of him that believes. God is at once the righteous Judge and the infinitely loving Father through what Jesus has suffered.

Brothers and Sisters, though I have said that there was no reason why the Son of God should bleed and die on His own account, yet towards us there *was* a reason. Our Lord, from of old, in the Everlasting Covenant was constituted the Head and Representative of all who were in Him. And so, when the time came, He took the place, bore the sin and suffered the penalty of those whom the Father gave Him from before the foundations of the world! He is as much the representative Man as the first Adam was the representative man. And, as in Adam the sin was committed which ruined us, so in the second Adam the Atonement was made which saves us. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." There was no other Person so fit to undertake the enterprise of our redemption as this second Man, who is the Lord from Heaven! He properly, but yet most generously and spontaneously, came and shed His precious blood in the place of sinners to bring the guilty near to God.

But the text does not merely speak of the blood *shed*, which I have explained to you, but of, "the blood of *sprinkling*." This is the Atonement applied for Divine purposes and especially applied to our own hearts and consciences by faith. For the explanation of this sprinkling we must look to the types in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament the blood of sprinkling meant a great many things. In fact, I cannot just now tell you all that it meant. We meet with it in the Book of Exodus, at the time when the Lord smote all the first-born of Egypt. Then the blood of sprinkling means preservation. The basin filled with blood was taken, a bunch of hyssop was dipped into it and the lintel and the two side posts of every house tenanted by Israelites were smeared with the blood. And when God

saw the blood upon the house of the Israelite, He bade the destroyer pass that family by and leave their first-born unharmed. The sprinkled blood meant preservation—it was Israel's Passover and safeguard.

The sprinkled blood very frequently signified the *confirmation* of a covenant. So is it used in Exodus 24, which I read to you just now. The blood was sprinkled upon the Book of the Covenant and also upon the people, to show that the Covenant was, as far as it could be, confirmed by the people who promised, "All that the Lord has said will we do." The blood of bulls and of goats in that case was but a type of the sacrificial blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The lesson which we learn from Exodus 24 is that the blood of sprinkling means the blood of *ratification or confirmation* of the Covenant, which God has been pleased to make with men in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Since Jesus died, the promises are Yes and Amen to all Believers and must assuredly be fulfilled. The Covenant of Grace had but one condition and that condition Jesus has fulfilled by His death, so that it has now become a Covenant of pure and unconditional promise to all the seed.

In many cases the sprinkling of the blood meant *purification*. If a person had been defiled, he could not come into the sanctuary of God without being sprinkled with blood. There were the ashes of a red heifer laid up and these were mixed with blood and water. And by their being sprinkled on the unclean, his ceremonial defilement was removed. There were matters incident to domestic life and accidents of outdoor life which engendered impurity—and this impurity was put away by the sprinkling of blood. This sprinkling was used in the case of recovery from infectious disease, such as leprosy. Before such persons could mingle in the solemn assemblies, they were sprinkled with the blood and thus were made ceremonially pure. In a higher sense this is the work of the blood of Christ. It preserves us, it ratifies the Covenant and wherever it is applied, it makes us pure, for "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin." We have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, for we have come unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

The sprinkling of the blood meant, also, *sanctification*. Before a man entered upon the priesthood, the blood was put upon his right ear, on the big toe of his right foot and on the thumb of his right hand, signifying that all his powers were thus consecrated to God. The ordination ceremony included the sprinkling of blood upon and round about the altar. Even thus has the Lord Jesus redeemed us unto God by His death and the sprinkling of His blood has made us kings and priests unto God forever. He is made of God unto us, sanctification, and all else that is needed for the Divine service.

One other meaning of the blood of the sacrifice was *acceptation and access*. When the High Priest went into the Most Holy Place once a year, it was not without blood, which he sprinkled upon the Ark of the Covenant and upon the Mercy Seat, which was on the top thereof. All approaches to God were made by blood. There was no hope of a man drawing near to God, even in *symbol*, apart from the sprinkling of the blood! And now, today, our only way to God is by the precious Sacrifice of Christ. The only

hope for the success of our prayers, the acceptance of our praises, or the reception of our holy works is through the ever-abiding merit of the atoning Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ! The Holy Spirit bids us enter into the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus—there is no other way!

There were other uses besides these, but it may suffice to put down the sprinkling of the blood as having these effects, namely, that of preservation, satisfaction, purification, sanctification and access to God. This was all *typified* in the blood of bulls and of goats, but actually *fulfilled* in the great Sacrifice of Christ.

With this as an explanation, I desire to come still closer to the text and view it with great care, for to my mind it is singularly full of teaching. May the Holy Spirit lead us into the Truth of God which lies herein like treasure hid in a field!

First. *The blood of sprinkling is the center of the Divine Manifestation under the Gospel.* Observe its innermost place in the passage before us. You are privileged by almighty Grace to come first to Mount Zion, to climb its steeps, to stand upon its holy summit and to enter the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. In those golden streets, surrounding the hallowed shrine, you behold an innumerable company of angels. What a vision of Glory! But you must not rest here, for the great general assembly, the festal gathering, the solemn convocation of the enrolled in Heaven is being held and all are there in glad attire, surrounding their God and Lord! Press onward to the Throne of God, itself, where sits the Judge of all, surrounded by those holy spirits who have washed their robes and, therefore, stand before the Throne of God in perfection.

Have you not come a long way? Are you not admitted into the very center of the whole Revelation? Not yet. A step further lands you where stands your Savior, the Mediator, with the New Covenant. Now is your joy complete! But you have a further object to behold. What is in that innermost shrine? What is that which is hidden away in the Holy of Holies? What is that which is the most precious and costly thing of all, the last, the ultimatum, God's grandest Revelation? The precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot—*the blood of sprinkling!* This comes last—it is the innermost truth of the dispensation of Grace under which we live. Brothers and Sisters, when we climb to Heaven, itself, and pass the gate of pearl, and wend our way through the innumerable hosts of angels and come even to the Throne of God and see the spirits of the just made perfect and hear their holy hymn—we shall not have gone beyond the influence of the blood of sprinkling! No, we shall see it there more truly present than in any other place.

“What?” you say, “the blood of Jesus in Heaven?” Yes. The earthly sanctuary, we are told, was purified with the blood of bulls and of goats, “but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these” (Heb 9:23). When Jesus entered, once and for all, into the Holy Place, He entered by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us—so says the Apostle in the 9th chapter of this Epistle. Let those who talk lightly of the precious blood correct their view before they are guilty of *blasphemy*, for the Revelation of God knows no lower deep—this is the

heart and center of all. The manifestation of Jesus under the Gospel is not only the Revelation of the Mediator, but especially of His Sacrifice! The appearance of God, the Judge of all, the vision of hosts of angels and perfect spirits do but lead up to that Sacrifice which is the source and focus of all true fellowship between God and His creatures!

This is the character which Jesus wears in the innermost shrine where He reveals Himself most clearly to those who are nearest to Him. He looks like a lamb that has been slain! There is no sight of Him which is more full, more glorious, more complete, than the vision of Him as the great Sacrifice for sin! The Atonement of Jesus is the concentration of the Divine Glory—all other Revelations of God are completed and intensified here. You have not come to the central sun of the great spiritual system of Grace till you have come to the blood of sprinkling—to those sufferings of Messiah which are not for Himself, but are intended to bear upon others, even as drops when they are sprinkled exert their influence where they fall. Unless you have learned to rejoice in that blood which takes away sin, you have not yet caught the key-note of the Gospel dispensation! The blood of Christ is the life of the Gospel! Apart from Atonement, you may know the skin, the rind, the husk of the Gospel—but its inner kernel you have not discovered.

I next ask you to look at the text and observe that *this sprinkling of the blood*, as mentioned by the Holy Spirit in this passage, is *absolutely identical with Jesus, Himself*. Read it. “To Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel. See that you refuse not *Him* who speaks.” He says it is the *blood* that speaks and then he proceeds to say, “See that you refuse not *Him* who speaks.” This is a very unexpected turn which can only be explained upon the supposition that Jesus and the blood are identical in the writer’s view. By what we may call a singularity in grammar, in putting *Him* for *it*, the Spirit of God intentionally sets forth the striking Truth of God that the *Sacrifice* is identical with the Savior! “We are come to the Savior, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks; see that you refuse not Him.”

Beloved Friends, there is no Jesus if there is no blood of sprinkling! There is no Savior if there is no Sacrifice! I put this strongly because the attempt is being made, nowadays, to set forth Jesus apart from His Cross and Atonement. He is held up as a great ethical teacher, a self-sacrificing spirit who is to lead the way in a grand moral reformation and, by His *influence*, to set up a kingdom of moral influence in the world! It is even hinted that this kingdom has never had prominence enough given to it because it has been overshadowed by His Cross! But where is Jesus apart from His Sacrifice? He is not there if you have left out the blood of sprinkling which is the blood of Sacrifice! Without the Atonement, no man is a Christian and Christ is not Jesus! If you have torn away the sacrificial blood, you have drawn the heart out of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and robbed it of its life! If you have trampled on the blood of sprinkling and counted it a common thing, instead of putting it above you upon the lintel of the door and all around you upon the two side posts, you have fearfully

transgressed! As for me, God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, since to me that Cross is identical with Jesus, Himself!

I know no Jesus but He who died, the Just for the unjust. You can separate Jesus and the blood materially, for by the spear-thrust and all His other wounds, the blood was drawn away from the body of our Lord. But *spiritually* this “blood of sprinkling” and the Jesus by whom we live, are inseparable! In fact, they are one and indivisible, the same thing, and you cannot truly know Jesus, or preach Jesus, unless you preach Him as slain for sin! You cannot trust Jesus except you trust Him as making peace by the blood of His Cross. If you have done with the blood of sprinkling, you have done with Jesus altogether—He will never part with His mediatorial Glory as our Sacrifice—neither can we come to Him if we ignore that Character! Is it not clear in the text that Jesus and the blood of sprinkling are one? What God has joined together, let no man put asunder. Note this right carefully.

Thirdly, observe that *this “blood of sprinkling” is put in close contact with “the New Covenant.”* I do not wonder that those who are lax in their views of the Atonement have nothing honorable to say concerning the Covenants, Old or New. The Doctrine of the Covenants is the marrow of divinity, but these vain-glorious spirits choose to despise it. This is natural, since they speak slightingly of the Atonement. What covenant is there without blood? If it is not ratified, if there is no sacrifice to make it sure, then is it no covenant in the sight of God or of enlightened men. But, O Beloved, you who know your Lord and follow on to know Him yet better, to you the Covenant of promise is a heritage of joy and His Atonement is most precious as the confirmation of it! To us the sacrificial death of our Lord is not *a* Doctrine, but *the* Doctrine! It is not an outgrowth of Christian teaching, but the *essence* and *marrow* of it! To us, Jesus, in His Atonement, is Alpha and Omega. In Him, the Covenant begins and ends! You see how it was confirmed by blood. If it is a man’s covenant, if it is confirmed, it stands. But *this is God’s* Covenant, confirmed with promises, oaths and *blood*—and it stands fast forever and ever! Every Believer is as much interested in that Covenant as was Abraham the father of Believers, for the Covenant was made with Abraham and his *spiritual* seed. And in Christ it is confirmed to all that seed forever by His most precious blood! That, also, is evident enough in the text—fail not to consider it well.

But, fourthly, I want you to notice that according to the text, *the blood is the voice of the new dispensation.* Observe that on Sinai there was “the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them anymore.” You look, therefore, under the new dispensation, for a *voice*, and you do not come to any till you reach the last object in the list—and there, see, “*the blood of sprinkling that speaks.*” Here, then, is the voice of the Gospel! It is not the sound of a trumpet, nor the voice of words spoken in terrible majesty, but the *blood* speaks and, assuredly, there is no sound more piercing, more potent, more prevailing! God heard the voice of Abel’s blood and visited Cain with deserved punishment for killing his brother. And the

precious blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cries in the ears of God with a voice which is always heard. How can it be imagined that the Lord God should be deaf to the cry of His Son's Sacrifice? Lo, these many ages the blood has cried—"Forgive them! Forgive them! Accept them! Deliver them from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom!"

The blood of sprinkling has a voice of instruction to us even as it has a voice of intercession with God. It cries to us, "See the evil of sin! See how God loves righteousness! See how He loves men! See how impossible it is for you to escape from the punishment of sin except by this great Sacrifice in which the Love and the Justice of God equally appear! See how Jehovah spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all!"

What a voice there is in the Atonement!—a voice which pleads for holiness and love, for justice and Grace, for truth and mercy. "See that you refuse not Him who speaks."

Do you not hear it? If you take away the blood of sprinkling from the Gospel, you have silenced it! It has no voice if this is gone. "Oh," they say, "the Gospel has lost its power!" What wonder when they have made it a dumb gospel! How can it have power when they take away that which is its life and speech? Unless the preacher is always preaching this blood and sprinkling it by the Doctrine of Faith, his teaching has no voice either to awaken the careless or to cheer the anxious! If ever there should come a wretched day when all our pulpits shall be full of modern thought and the old Doctrine of a Substitutionary Sacrifice shall be exploded, then will there remain no word of comfort for the guilty or hope for the despairing! Hushed forever will be those silver notes which now console the living and cheer the dying! A dumb spirit will possess this sullen world and no voice of joy will break the blank silence of despair. The Gospel speaks through the Propitiation for sin and if that is denied, it speaks no more. Those who preach not the Atonement exhibit a dumb and dummy gospel—a mouth it has, but speaks not—they that make it are like unto their idol!

Let me draw you nearer, still, to the text. Observe, that *this voice is identical with the voice of the Lord Jesus*, for it is put so. "The blood of sprinkling that *speaks*. See that you refuse not *Him* who speaks." Whatever the Doctrine of the Sacrifice of Jesus may be, it is the main teaching of Jesus, Himself. It is well to notice that the voice which spoke from Sinai was also the voice of Christ. It was Jesus who delivered that Law, the penalty of which He was, Himself to endure! He that read it out amidst the tempest was Jesus! Notice the declaration—"Whose voice then shook the earth." Whenever you hear the Gospel, the voice of the precious blood is the voice of Jesus, Himself, the voice of Him that shook the earth at Sinai! This same voice shall, by-and-by, shake not only the earth, but also Heaven! What a voice there is in the blood of sprinkling since, indeed, it is the voice of the eternal Son of God who both makes and destroys! Would you have me silence the Doctrine of the Blood of Sprinkling? Would any one of you attempt so horrible a deed? Shall we be censured if we continually proclaim the Heaven-sent message of the blood of Jesus? Shall we speak with bated breath because some affected person shudders at the sound of the word, "blood?" or some "cultured" individual rebels at the

old-fashioned thought of sacrifice? No, verily, we will sooner have our tongue cut out than cease to speak of the precious blood of Jesus Christ! For me there is nothing worth thinking of or preaching about but this grand Truth of God which is the beginning and the end of the whole Christian system, namely, that God gave His Son to die that sinners might live! This is not the voice of the blood, only, but the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself! So says the text and who can contradict it?

Further, my Brothers and Sisters, from the text I learn another Truth of God, namely, that *this blood is always speaking*. The text says not, “the blood of sprinkling that *spoke*,” but “that *speaks*.” It is always speaking, it always remains a plea with God and a testimony to men. It never will be silenced, either one way or the other. In the intercession of our risen and ascended Lord, His Sacrifice always speaks to the Most High. By the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the Atonement will always speak in edification to Believers still upon the earth. It is the blood that speaks, according to our text—this is the only speech which this dispensation yields us. Shall that speech ever be still? Shall we decline to hear it? Shall we refuse to echo it? God forbid! By day, by night, the great Sacrifice continues to cry to the sons of men, “Turn from your sins, for they cost your Savior dearly! The times of your ignorance God winked at, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, since He is able to forgive and yet be just. Your offended God has, Himself, provided a Sacrifice—come and be sprinkled with its blood and be reconciled once and for all.”

The voice of this blood speaks wherever there is a guilty conscience, wherever there is an anxious heart, wherever there is a seeking sinner, wherever there is a believing mind. It speaks with a sweet, familiar, tender, inviting voice. There is no music like it to the sinner’s ear—it charms away his fears. It shall never cease its speaking so long as there is a sinner yet out of Christ—no, so long as there is one on earth who still needs its cleansing power because of fresh backslidings. Oh, hear its voice! Incline your ears and receive its blessed accents! It says, “Come, now, and let us reason together, says the Lord; though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

This part of my discourse will not be complete unless I bid you notice that we are expressly told that this precious blood speaks “better things than that of Abel.” I do not think that the whole meaning of the passage is exhausted if we say that Abel’s blood cries for vengeance and that Christ’s blood speaks for pardon. Dr. Watts puts it—

***“Blood has a voice to pierce the skies!
‘Revenge!’ the blood of Abel cries!
But the dear stream when Christ was slain
Speaks peace as loud from every vein.”***

That is quite true, but I conceive that it is not all the sense and, perhaps, not even *the* sense here intended. Revenge is scarcely a good thing, yet Abel’s blood spoke good things, or we should hardly read that Christ’s blood speaks “better things.” What does the blood of Abel speak? The blood of Abel speaks to a complete and believing obedience to God. It shows us a man who believes God and, notwithstanding the enmity of his

brother, brings to God the appointed sacrifice of faith, strictly following up, even to the bitter end, his holy obedience to the Most High. That is what the blood of Abel says to me. And the blood of Jesus says the same thing most emphatically. The death of Jesus Christ was the crown and close of a perfect life. It was a fit completion of a course of holiness. In obedience to the Great Father, Jesus even laid down His life. But if this is all the blood of Jesus speaks, as some say that it is, then it does not speak better things than the blood of Abel, for it only says the same things in a louder voice. The martyrdom of any saint has a voice for obedience to God as truly as the martyrdom of Jesus. But the death of our Lord says far more, infinitely more than this! It not only witnesses to complete obedience, but it provides the way by which the disobedient may be forgiven and helped to obedience and holiness. The Cross has a greater, deeper, gladder Gospel for fallen men than that of a perfect example which they are unable to follow!

The blood of Abel said this, too—that he was not ashamed of his faith, but witnessed a good confession concerning his God, even to the death. He put his life in his hands and was not ashamed to stand at the altar of God and avow his faith by obediently offering the ordained sacrifice. Now, I grant you that the blood of Jesus also declares that He was a faithful and true Witness who willingly sealed His witness with His blood. He proved, by shedding His blood, that He could not be turned aside from truth and righteousness, even though death stood in His way. But if that is all that the blood of sprinkling speaks, it says no better things than the blood of Abel. “Be faithful unto death,” is the voice of Abel as well as of Jesus. Jesus must have said *more* than this by his blood-shedding.

The blood of Abel said good things. That is implied in the fact that the blood of Jesus Christ says better things. And no doubt the blood of Abel rises to the dignity of teaching self-sacrifice. Here was a man, a keeper of sheep, who, by his mode of life, laid out his life for the good of those committed to his charge. And at the last, in obedience to God, he yielded himself up to die by a brother’s hand. It was the first draught of a picture of self-sacrifice. Our Lord Jesus Christ also made a complete self-sacrifice. All His life He gave Himself to men. He lived never for Himself. The Glory of God and the good of men were united in one passion which filled His whole soul. He could say, “The zeal of Your House has eaten Me up.” His death was the completion of His perfect self-sacrifice. But if that were all, the blood of Jesus says no better thing than Abel’s death says, though it may say it more emphatically.

Our Lord’s blood says “better things than that of Abel.” And what does it say? It says, “There is redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His Grace.” “He, Himself, bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we were healed.” “He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” The voice of the blood is this, “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” Now,

my Brothers and Sisters, these are better things than Abel's blood could say and they are what the blood of Jesus speaks to everyone upon whom it is sprinkled by faith! It must be applied to each one of us by *faith*, or it says *nothing* to us. But when it falls on each *believing* individual, it says to him words of blessing which pacify his conscience and delight his soul!

The Apostle says that "You have come to the blood of sprinkling." Is it so? Has that blood of sprinkling ever been applied to *you*? Do you feel it? Are you preserved? Are you cleansed? Are you brought near to God? Are you sanctified unto God's service by the atoning Sacrifice? If so, then go out and, in firm confidence that never can be shaken, make your glory in the blood of sprinkling! Tell every sinner whom you meet, that if the Lord Jesus washes him, he shall be whiter than snow! Preach the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God and then sing of it! Remember that wondrous threefold song in the 5th chapter of Revelation, where, first of all, the elders and living creatures round about the Throne of God sing a new song, saying, "You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Then ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels take up the strain and cry, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

Nor is this all, for the Apostle tells us, "Every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honor, and Glory, and power, be unto Him that sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." See you not that they all extol the Lord Jesus in His *sacrificial* Character as the Lamb slain? I have scant patience with those who dare to put this great Truth of God into the background and even sneer at it or misrepresent it on purpose. Sirs, if you would be saved, you must have the blood of Jesus sprinkled upon you! He that believes not in Christ Jesus, in Jesus the Atoning Sacrifice, must perish!

The eternal God must repulse with infinite disgust the man who refuses the loving Sacrifice of Jesus! Inasmuch as he counted himself unworthy of this wondrous Sacrifice, this marvelous Expiation—there remains no other Sacrifice for sin—and nothing for him but that eternal blackness and darkness and thunder which were foreshadowed at Sinai! Those who refuse the Atonement which Wisdom devised, which Love provided and which Justice has accepted, have signed their own death warrant—and none can wonder that they perish!

The Lord lead us to Glory in Christ Crucified! Amen.

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THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING (SECOND SERMON) NO. 1889

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 28, 1886,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“You have come...to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant,
and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things
than that of Abel. See that you refuse not Him who speaks.”
Hebrews 12:24, 25.***

IN the former part of this sermon the text grew upon me so largely that it was quite impossible to express all its meaning. In as condensed a manner as possible, I explained what was meant by, “the blood of sprinkling,” and I also enlarged upon the high position which this precious blood occupies in the Gospel dispensation. But I was obliged to leave, for this second occasion, two practical questions which the text is sure to raise if it is carefully thought upon.

The doctrinal portion of our meditation was greatly blessed to our hearts, for God the Holy Spirit refreshed us thereby—may He now fulfill His sacred office with equal power by revealing the things of Christ to us in a way which shall cause self-examination—and awaken us to give more earnest heed than ever to the voice of Him who speaks from Heaven. No theme can excel in value and excellence that of the precious blood of Jesus! Unless the Holy Spirit shall prepare our hearts, even with such a topic as this before us, we shall not be profited. But if He will show these choice Truths of God to us, we shall be comforted, quickened, edified and sanctified by them.

It is a considerable disadvantage to some of you that you have not heard the former part of the sermon [Sermon #1888, “The Blood of the Sprinkling (First Sermon)] but I hope you will read it at your leisure, and then, if you read this in connection with it, the whole subject will be before you. Not that I can set it all out in words—I only mean that it will be before you as the ocean is before us when we sit on the beach—or as the heavens are before us when we gaze upon Arcturus with his sons. Finite language fails to convey the Infinite and if ever there was a text which deserved to be called Infinite, it is that which is now before us!

Having touched, as with a swallow's wing, the surface of our great theme under the first division of the sermon, I have now to speak with you upon the second, which is this—*Where are we with reference to this blood of sprinkling?* The text says, “You have come.” We have not come to Mount Sinai, but we have come to Mount Zion, to angels and their God, to saints

and their Mediator—and to the blood of sprinkling. This having had its share of our thoughts, we are to conclude with the question, *What then?* If we have come to this blood of sprinkling, what then? The answer is, “See that you refuse not Him who speaks.” Let us give to the wondrous Truths of God revealed to us by the sacrifice of Jesus the most earnest heed, that our souls may hear and live. May the Holy Spirit enable us to hear the heavenly voice at this hour! “Faith comes by hearing”—may it come at this time by our reverently hearing the voice of the blood of sprinkling!

II. My business under the second head of my discourse is to answer the question, WHERE ARE WE? I have to explain what is meant by the expression which is found in the 22nd verse of the chapter, “You have come.” Link the 22nd verse with this 24th and read, “You have come to the blood of sprinkling.”

Well, first, you have come to the *hearing of the Gospel of the atoning Sacrifice*. The Israelites left Egypt and, having passed the Red Sea, they entered the desert and, at length, came to the mount of God, even to Sinai, that terrible mountain! In the valley around that Throne of God they were gathered together in their thousands. What a sight that vast multitude must have been! Probably two millions or more were encamped before the mount. Then, “The Lord came from Sinai and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran; and He came with ten thousands of His saints; from His right hand went a fiery Law for them.” Israel crouched in the valley below, subdued by the terrible majesty of the scene and overawed by the trumpet Voice which pealed forth from the midst of the thick darkness. The Lord spoke with them, but their uncircumcised ears could not bear His glorious voice, and they entreated that Moses might act as mediator and speak in God’s place.

You and I have not come to such a terrible sight at this hour. No quivering mountain smokes before you, no terrible lightning appalls you, no thunder distresses you—

***“Not to the terrors of the Lord,
The tempest, fire, and smoke.
Not to the thunder of that Word
Which God on Sinai spoke.
But we have come to Sion’s hill
The city of our God,
Where milder words declare His will
And spread His love abroad.”***

Among the great things which you are called upon to consider under the Gospel is, “the blood of sprinkling.” Count yourselves happy that you are privileged to hear of the divinely appointed way of reconciliation with God! You have come to hear, not of your sin and its doom, not of the last judgment and the swift destruction of the enemies of God—but of love to the guilty, pity for the miserable, mercy for the wicked, compassion for those who are out of the way! You have come to hear of God’s great expedient of Wisdom by which He, by the same act and deed condemns sin and lets the sinner live—by which He honors His Law and yet passes by transgression, iniquity and sin! You have come to hear, not of the shedding of your own blood, but of the shedding of His blood who, in His infi-

nite compassion, deigned to take the place of guilty men—to suffer, that they might not suffer—and die, that they might not die!

Blessed are your ears that they hear of the perfect Sacrifice! Happy are your spirits, since they are found where Free Grace and boundless love have set forth a great Propitiation for sin! Divinely favored are you to live where you are told of pardon freely given to all who will believe on the name of the Lord Jesus, as the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world! You hear at this hour not Law, but Gospel! Not the sentence of judgment, but the proclamation of Grace! “See that you refuse not Him who speaks.” It is no small thing for the Kingdom of God to have come so near unto you. Awake to a sense of your privilege! You do not sit in heathen midnight, nor in Popish gloom, nor in Jewish mist—but day has dawned on you—do not refuse the Light of God!

In a better sense, going a little further, we have not only come to the blood of sprinkling by hearing about it, but we have come to it because *the great God now deals with us upon methods which are founded and grounded upon the atoning Sacrifice of Christ*. If God were to deal with us upon the terms laid down at Sinai, He need not be long in finding the “two or three witnesses” to prove that we have broken His Law! We would be, ourselves, compelled to plead guilty! No witnesses would be required. Truly, He has not dealt with us after our sins! We are so faulty that we can draw no comfort from the prospect of judgment by the Law of God—we appeal to mercy, alone, for on any other ground our case is hopeless! “This do and you shall live” is a Covenant which brings us no ray of comfort, for its only word to us is that thunderbolt—“The soul that sins, it shall die.”

By the works of the Law, none can be justified, for by that Law we are all condemned. Read the Ten Commandments and pause at each one—and confess that you have broken it either in thought, word or deed. Remember that by a *glance* we may commit adultery! By a *thought* we may be guilty of murder! By a *desire* we may steal. Sin is any lack of conformity to perfect holiness and that lack of conformity is justly chargeable upon every one of us! Yet the Lord does not, under the Gospel dispensation, deal with us according to Law. He does not, now, sit on the Throne of Judgment, but He looks down upon us from the Throne of Grace! Not the iron rod, but the silver scepter is held over us! The long-suffering of God rules the age and Jesus, the Mediator, is the gracious Lord-Lieutenant of the dispensation. Instead of destroying offending man from off the face of the earth, the Lord comes near to us in loving condescension and pleads with us by His Spirit, saying, “You have sinned, but My Son has died. In Him I am prepared to deal with you in a way of pure mercy and unmingled Grace.”

O Sinner, the fact that you are alive proves that God is not dealing with you according to strict justice, but in patient forbearance! Every moment you live is another instance of Omnipotent long-suffering. It is the Sacrifice of Christ which holds back the axe of Justice which otherwise must execute you! The barren tree is spared because the great Dresser of the vineyard, who bled on Calvary, intercedes and cries, “Let it alone this

year, also.” O my Hearer, it is through the shedding of the blood and the mediatorial reign of the Lord Jesus that you are, at this moment, on praying ground and pleading terms with God! Apart from the blood of Atonement you would now be past hope, shut up forever in the place of doom! But see how the great Father bears with you! He stands prepared to hear your prayer, to accept your confession of sin, to honor your faith and to save you from your sin through the Sacrifice of His dear Son!

Through our Lord Jesus, Sovereign Grace and Infinite Love find a free way to the most undeserving of the race! Through the Divine Sacrifice, the Lord says, “Come now and let us reason together: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” Thus the rebel is treated as a child and the criminal as a beloved one! Because of yonder death on Calvary’s cruel tree, God can invite guilty men to come to Him and He can receive them to the bosom of His love. O my dear Hearers, do remember this! I am not sent to scold you, but to woo you! I am not sent to thunder at you, but to let the soft cleansing drops from the heart of Jesus fall upon you! I beg you not to turn away, as men may well do when the tidings are heavy, but listen diligently, for the message is full of joy!

You are now in the house of prayer, addressed by one of the Lord’s ambassadors, and the tidings are of peace through a Propitiation which God, Himself, has provided and accepted. We cry not to you, “Prepare for vengeance,” but we proclaim, “a God ready to pardon!” We do not threaten that He will no more have mercy upon you, but we tell you that He waits to be gracious. If I had to say, “You have provoked Him past bearing and He now means to destroy you,” what a miserable man I would be! How could I bring such evil tidings to my fellow creatures? Then would it have been woe to me that my mother bore me for so hard a fate! Thank God, it is not so! By virtue of the blood of sprinkling the language of boundless Love is heard among our apostate race and we are entreated to acquaint ourselves with God and be at peace!

No, my Hearer, the day of Grace is not over—you have not come to Sinai. No, you are not yet condemned past all hope, for you are still within reach of Jesus, the Mediator! There is forgiveness. The fountain which was opened of old for sin and for uncleanness is still open. If you have sinned like David, if you will but accept the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, I am able to speak to you as Nathan did to the guilty king and say, “The Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die.” At any rate, God is now dealing with you on Gospel terms—he sits on Zion—not on Sinai! He pronounces invitations of Grace and does not utter the stern sentence of Justice!

Further, there is a far more effectual way of coming to the blood of sprinkling than this—*when, by faith, that blood is sprinkled upon our souls*. This is absolutely needed—the blood shed must become, to each one of us, the blood sprinkled. “How can I know,” says one, “that the blood of Christ is upon me?” Do you trust yourself with Christ? Do you believe that He made an atonement on the Cross and will you venture your eternal destiny upon that fact, trusting in what Jesus did and in

that, alone? If you do thus trust, you shall not trust in vain! Do you apply your heart to the precious blood of Jesus? Then that precious blood is applied to your heart! If your heart bleeds for sin, bring it to the bleeding heart of Jesus and it shall be healed!

I showed, in the early part of this discourse, that the blood sprinkled on the lintel and the two side posts of the door preserved the Israelites on the night of the Passover—it shall also preserve you. The blood sprinkled upon the defiled made them ceremonially clean—it shall cleanse you. Have I not often quoted those blessed words, “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin”? That blood put upon the sons of Aaron dedicated them to God! And if it is applied to you, it shall consecrate you to God and you shall become the accepted servant of the Most High! Oh, what a blessed thing to assuredly know that we have come to the blood of sprinkling by a true and humble faith! Can you say that you rely only on Jesus for salvation? Can you call Heaven and earth to witness that you have no other confidence? Then remember the Words of the Lord—“He that believes in Him has everlasting life. He that believes in Him is not condemned.” “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.”

Are not these words full of strong assurance? Indeed, we have not come to Mount Sinai, the place of trembling, but to Zion, the place which is beautiful for situation, the joy of the earth, the vision of peace, the home of infinite blessedness! Conscience no longer thunders at you for your sins, for your sins are gone! The Expiation has covered them—the sprinkling of the blood has put them all away! Your iniquities are cast into the depths of the sea—God has cast them behind His back! The handwriting of ordinances that was against you, Christ has taken away, nailing it to His Cross, as a record in which there is no more condemning force! The debt is paid, the bill is receipted! Who can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? O Beloved, it is a most blessed thing to come to the blood of sprinkling!—

***“The terrors of Law and of God
With me can have nothing to do!
My Savior’s obedience and blood
Hide all my transgressions from view.”***

The act of faith whereby we accept and trust in the Lord Jesus as our Mediator and Sacrifice is the true and effectual coming to the blood of sprinkling. May none of us forget to come! He is the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world—and those who come to Him shall be led into full salvation. Have you thus come? If you have not, why do you delay? He says, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” Come to Him, for He is calling you! Come to Him, even as you now are, and He will receive you without fail!

Further, to come to this blood of sprinkling means *thankfully to enjoy all that comes to us through the blood of sprinkling*. I have intruded upon this, somewhat, already. Brothers and Sisters, if you have come to the blood of sprinkling, believe in the full pardon which God has given you and in your consequent peace with God. It is a blessed word in the Creed, “I believe in the forgiveness of sins.” Do you believe in the forgiveness of sins? I have seen some of the children of God who have believed in Jesus,

but it has been with a faith which did not realize the full blessing promised to them—for they were as troubled about their sins as if they had never been forgiven! Now, a man who receives a free pardon from the Queen and goes his way out of prison, rejoices in that pardon as a reality and, therefore, walks abroad without fear. You must believe in the pardon of God as a reality and act accordingly. If He has absolved you for Jesus' sake, then you are absolved! Why tremble like a guilty wretch waiting for the verdict? Why talk about fearing Divine wrath? If you are pardoned, the deed of Grace is done and can never be undone, for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance on His part. His remission of sin is a clear jail delivery, a sure plea, a full acquittal!—

***“Oh, how sweet to view the flowing
Of our Lord’s atoning blood,
With Divine assurance knowing
He has made my peace with God!”***

I want every child of God, in his inmost soul, to come to the blood of sprinkling by full assurance of his justification and then to go on to enjoy constant access to the Mercy Seat and communion with the Lord God! We may now, with holy boldness, speak with God in prayer, for the Mercy Seat is sprinkled with the blood! O pardoned one, be not backward to enjoy your liberty of fellowship! You are *clean* through the blood and, therefore, you may enter into the closest communion with the Divine Father! You are consecrated by the blood and, therefore, you may abound in the service of your God! Seeing your sin is pardoned, treat your God as a child would treat a father and be not so awed by His majesty as to be cast down and distressed because of past sin! Take the good that God provides you. Enjoy the peace the blood has bought you. Enter into the liberty that your ransom price has ensured you. Do not stand in feelings, fears and dreams, but come unto this blood of sprinkling and rest there—and be filled with joy and peace through believing! With such a ransom found for you, dream not of going down into the Pit, but ascend with gladness unto the hill of the Lord and stand in His Holy Place!

I think, once more, that this coming to the blood of sprinkling means, also, that *we feel the full effect of it in our lives*. The man who knows that Jesus shed His blood for him—and has had that blood applied to his conscience—becomes a sin-hating man, consecrated to Him who has cleansed him. “The love of Christ constrains us because we thus judge that if One died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not from this day on live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” I believe that there is no fruitful source of virtue like faith in the precious blood of Jesus! I hope your conduct will always support me in this assertion. Those who are debtors for salvation to their dying Lord should be the most holy of men. You people who think that you will get to Heaven by some other way than by “the blood of sprinkling” have no sure bonds to hold you to holiness. You trust partly to your own works and partly to what Jesus has done. Well, you do not owe Him much and, therefore, you will not love Him much! And, therefore, you will not feel bound to live strict, holy, gracious lives.

But the man who knows that his many sins are all washed away through the blood of Jesus and that thus he is saved—he is the man who will serve the Lord with all his heart! He who has received a finished righteousness and complete salvation is under boundless obligations of gratitude—and the force of these obligations will urge him to a consecrated life. Over him the supreme power of gratitude will exert its sacred influence and he will not only be carefully obedient, but ardently zealous in the service of his Redeemer. We know it is so and we mean to prove it by our daily conduct! Brothers and Sisters, I would have you exhibit more and more of the influence of the precious blood in sanctifying your lives. Are there not Christians who hold the Doctrine of the Atoning Blood and yet are no better than others? Alas, it is so! But it is one thing to hold to a doctrine and another thing for that doctrine to take hold upon your heart and influence your life! Oh, if we believed *practically* what we profess to believe, what manner of persons should we be in all holy conversation and godliness!

Hear me, my Brothers and Sisters, and answer the appeals I make to you as in the Presence of the Lord. Blood-bought, can you live for yourself? Blood-washed, can you defile your garments? Marked with the King's own name, in the King's own blood—how can you yield yourself to other rulers? God grant that we may come unto the blood of sprinkling till it shall purify our nature and fill us with an all-consuming enthusiasm for Him whose heart was pierced for us!

I ask you, then, to put the question closely home, “Have I come unto this blood of sprinkling? If not, why should I not come at once?” I read the other day an imaginary story which describes the need of looking well to this great business. Receive it as a parable—A little daughter of the house of Israel had heard the commandment concerning the Passover night and, as she lay ill in her bed she cried, “Father, have you sprinkled the blood upon the lintel and the two side posts?” Her father answered, “Not yet, my child. It shall be done.” The daughter was distressed and filled with fear. After waiting a little while she again cried, “Father, Father, have you sprinkled the blood upon the door?” He answered carelessly, “Child, I have told Simeon to sprinkle it and I have no doubt it is done.” “But, Father,” she cried, “it is near midnight and the destroying angel will soon be abroad. Are you sure that the blood is over the door? Jehovah our God has said that we must sprinkle the blood upon the lintel and the two side posts, or else the Destroyer will not pass over us. Father, are you sure it is done?” The father passed over her enquiry. He had been eating of the lamb with his friends and thought that this was sufficient. He did not care to give too much prominence to the ghastly idea of blood. He was of a liberal mind and would not believe that a merciful God would smite his household for so small an omission.

Then his daughter arose from her bed, made strong by the God of Israel. Nothing would content her until she had been outside and seen, for herself, whether the saving mark was over the door of her father's house. It was almost midnight, but by the light of the moon she looked and no blood-mark was there! How great was her distress! “Father,” she cried,

“make haste and bring the basin.” There it stood, filled with blood, for the Paschal Lamb had been slain. The father, at her entreaty, dashed the hyssop into it, struck the lintel and the two side posts and shut the door—and as he did so, the midnight hour arrived. They were saved so as by fire! The daughter’s obedient care and reverence of the Lord had warded off the sword of the Destroyer.

Oh that the holy anxiety of someone now present would work the same blessing for other households! Ask, dear child, ask the question, “Father, have you come to the blood of sprinkling? Is the blood of the Lamb above your head, between you and God? Is it on both sides of you, when you come in and go out?” O Soul, be thus anxious about yourself and rest not till you have, by faith, been purged with hyssop and cleansed by the blood of the one Sacrifice for sin!

III. The last part of our subject is this—WHAT THEN? According to our text, the blood of Jesus is the Voice of the new dispensation. It is the blood which speaks and it speaks better things than the blood of Abel. What, then, is our duty? How does the Apostle express our obligation? “See that you refuse not Him who speaks.”

I would have a quarter of an hour’s very quiet talk with you, without excitement or quibbling debate. Lend me your ears, for I speak in all love for your souls. I want, dear Friends, that this great Truth of the Atonement which I so often preach may have a fair hearing and not be left to lie among the number of forgotten things.

Do not refuse the voice of Jesus by cold indifference. God was made flesh and dwelt among men and, in due time, He took upon Himself our sin and suffered for it in His own body on the tree, that sin might be put away by the Sacrifice of Himself. By His death upon the Cross, our Lord made atonement for the sin of man—and those who believe in Him are delivered from evil and its consequences. The main point is that Jesus died for us, the Just for the unjust. His atoning blood has a voice—“See that you refuse not Him who speaks.” The text says see to it; look to it; make sure of it; be careful about it. Do not miss the salvation of your Lord through neglect, for he who dies by neglecting the healing medicine will as surely perish as he who stabs himself! Be in earnest to accept the Savior—I beseech you to do so, for I am afraid that many refuse Him who speaks because they never think of Him, or of His Sacrifice. It seems to me that if I were a young man I would give this matter very early notice. However deeply I might be engaged in business, I would feel that my first concern ought to be to set myself right with God. Other matters would be sure to drop into order if I could be right with the Lord of All! If I heard it said that salvation came by the blood of Christ, I think I would pull myself together and resolve to understand this amazing statement. I would not let it go by me, but would endeavor to reach the bottom of it and understand it practically. I would meditate much upon teaching so wonderful as this—that the Son of God, in man’s stead, honored the justice of God by death and so put away sin.

When I was a youth I had a great longing to begin life on right principles. I longed to find deliverance from sin. I would wake up with the sun

in summer time to read my Bible and such books as Bunyan's, "Grace Abounding," Baxter's, "Call to the Unconverted," Alleine's, "Alarm" and Doddridge's, "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." In these books I tried to discover the way of salvation, but the chief thing I longed to know was, "How can man be just with God? How can God be just with man and yet put away his sin?" Do you not think that these questions are of high importance? I beg that they may not have the cold shoulder from you. Give this question due space. I know that a great many things demand your attention nowadays, but I claim for this, which is the innermost Revelation of God, that it should have an early and earnest hearing. God Incarnate in Christ Jesus—bleeding and dying for human sin—is a marvel of love too great to be passed over without thought! I pray you, therefore, "refuse not Him who speaks." Do not say, "I pray you, have me excused." I do not suppose that you will become an infidel or act as a blasphemer towards this grand Truth of God. I will not accuse you of denying the fact of the Atonement, but my great fear is lest you should be *indifferent* to it! If it is so, that God, Himself, has come to earth to bleed and die to save guilty man, it is the greatest, gladdest news that ever came to our poor erring race—and every member of that race should receive it with hopeful attention!

When you resolve to study the Doctrine, *do not approach it with prejudice through misapprehension*. Those that hate the Gospel of Christ are very busy in caricaturing the Doctrine of the Atonement. They assert that we preach that God was not merciful by nature, but must be appeased by the blood of His own Son. They charge us with saying that Jesus, by His death, made God loving. We distinctly teach the very opposite of that statement! What we do say is this, that God is infinitely loving—that, in fact, God is Love—but that love does not cause Him to be unjust or unholy, for that, in the long run, would not be love. God is the Judge of all the earth and He must do right. The Lord, as the great moral Governor, if He makes a Law and threatens a penalty, must execute that penalty, or else His Law will lose its authority. If the penalty threatened is not executed, there is a tacit acknowledgment that it was threatened in error. Could you believe in a *fallible* God? The Lord has made a Law which is perfect, just and good.

Would you rather be without Law? What reasonable person desires anarchy? God has backed up that Law with a threat. What is the use of a Law if to break it involves no evil consequences? A government that never punishes offenders is no government at all! God, therefore, as moral Ruler, must be just and must display His indignation against wrong and evil of every kind. It is written on the conscience of men that sin must be punished. Would you have it go unpunished? If you are a just man, you would not. To meet the case, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ, by Himself bearing the penalty of death, has honored the Divine Law. He has shown to all intelligences that God will not wink at sin, that even His infinite mercy must not come in the way of His justice.

This is the Doctrine—do not listen to those who twist and pervert it. It is the love of God which has provided the great Atonement by which, in a

judgment better than ours, the Law finds a glorious vindication and the foundation of moral government is strengthened! Consider this matter and judge it fairly, with candid minds. We assure you from God's Word that apart from the Atonement of our Lord Jesus, you can never be saved either from the guilt or power of evil. You will find no peace for your conscience that is worth having, no thorough and deep peace, except by believing in this atoning Sacrifice! Neither will you meet with a motive strong enough to rescue you from the bonds of iniquity. Therefore, "See that you refuse not Him who speaks." Hear, and your soul shall live! Quibble, and you will die in your sins.

Do not refuse the voice of the Lord Jesus by rejecting the principle of expiation. If God is content with this principle, it is not for us to raise objection. The Lord God is infinitely more concerned to fix matters on a right foundation than we ever can be and if He feels that the Sacrifice of Jesus meets the case in all points, why should we be dissatisfied with it? If there were a flaw in the proceedings, His holy eyes would see it. He would not have delivered up His own Son to die unless that death would perfectly fulfill the design intended by it. A mistake so expensive He would never have perpetrated! Who are you to raise the question? If God is satisfied, surely you should be! To refuse the Atonement because we are too wise to accept so simple a method of mercy is the utmost height of folly! What? Will you refuse Him who speaks because the present phase of human madness dares to dispute the Divine way of human redemption? I pray you, do not!

Once more. *Do not refuse this voice of mercy by preferring your own way of salvation.* You have, no doubt, a way of salvation in your own mind, for few men have given up all hope. Perhaps your chosen hope is that you will be saved by doing your best. Alas, no man does his best—and the best acts of a rebel must be unaccepted of his king! So long as he is a rebel, his acts are those of a rebel and of no esteem with his prince. Perhaps your hope lies in saying so many prayers, going to church, or attending chapel—or are you so unwise as to trust to a minister or priest? Now, we beseech you, hear the Witness of God which He has given us in this Book and learn that other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ the Righteous! There is *one* salvation and there can be no other! All other hopes are lying vanities and arrogant insults to Jesus. God has set forth Christ to be a Propitiation for sin. There is no other propitiation, or atonement, or way of acceptance—and if you reject this way—you will die in your sins!

I cannot help it if you do not like this teaching, although I shall be grieved if you refuse it. I can only tell you the Truth of God and leave it with your own hearts. Do not willfully refuse it. When I meet you face to face in that last day, to which we all must come, I shall not be clear of your blood unless I tell you what is assuredly the Truth of God—that in the precious blood of Christ is the only cleansing from sin—and the only acceptance with God. By believing in Jesus, as slain for you, you shall be saved! But do what you may, pray as you may, fast as you may, give alms as you may—you shall not enter Heaven by any other road! The way to

Glory is by the way of the Cross. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." Look to Him whom you have pierced and mourn for your sins. Look not to any other, for no other is needed, no other is provided, no other can be accepted! Jesus is the only Messenger of the Covenant of life and peace. "See that you refuse not Him who speaks."

"See that you *refuse* not." Then there is a *choice* about it! If you had never heard the Gospel, you could not have refused it—but now that you have heard the message, it lies within your power—and it is an awfully dangerous power to refuse Him who speaks! Oh, can you, will you, *dare* you refuse my bleeding Savior—refuse the Lord of Love? I see Him now. The crown of thorns is about His brow. He is hanging on His Cross, expiring in unutterable agony! Can you refuse Him while He presents such a spectacle of sacrifice? His eyes are red with weeping—have you no tears for such sorrow? His cheeks are all stained with the brutal soldiers' spit—have you no love and homage for Him? His hands are fastened to the wood—His feet the same—and there He hangs to suffer in the sinner's place. Will you not yield yourselves to Him? I could joyfully bow before the foot of the Cross to kiss His dear feet Stained with blood! What a charm He has for me! And you—do you refuse Him?

He is no mere man! It is God, Himself, who hangs upon the Cross! His body is that of a man, but it is in union with the Godhead. He who died at Calvary is God over all and this makes His death so effectual. He whom you have offended, in order to be justly able to pardon you, hangs there and dies for you—and do you turn your back on Him? O Sirs, if you are wise, you will come, as I said I gladly would come, and kiss those bleeding feet and look up and say, "My Lord, I am reconciled to You—how could I be otherwise? My enmity is dead. How can I be an enemy to Him that died for me? In shame, scorn and misery Jesus dies that I may live! O Lord Jesus, You have worked in me not merely reconciliation, but full submission and hearty love. I joy to sink myself in You and to be Yours forever." See that you refuse not my Lord. May the sweet Spirit who loves the Cross and, like a dove, hovers round it now, descend upon you all who hear my message! May the Holy Spirit apply the blood of sprinkling to you and may you feel that instead of refusing Him who speaks, you will rejoice in His name!

When the text says, "See that you refuse not," it tacitly and pleadingly says, "See that you accept Him." Dear Hearers, I trust you will receive my Lord into your hearts! When we read of refusing, or receiving, we perceive an action of the *will*. Jesus must be willingly received—He will not force Himself upon any man. Whoever accepts Jesus is, himself, accepted of Jesus. Never was there a heart willing to receive Him to whom Jesus denied Himself. Never! But you must be willing and obedient. *Grace works this in you*—and in you this must be. Till the heart entertains Jesus gladly, nothing is done. All that is short of a willing hearing of Jesus and a willing acceptance of His great Atonement, is short of eternal life. Say, will you have this Savior, or do you decline His love? Will you give Him a cold refusal? Oh, do not but, on the contrary, throw open the doors of your heart and entreat your Lord and Savior to come in!

I do not wonder that the Israelites asked that they might no longer hear the Voice of thunder from the top of Sinai—it was too terrible for human ears—but you have no such excuse if you refuse Him who speaks, for Jesus speaks in notes more sweet than music, more tender than a mother's sonnet to her babe! Let me remind you that He was known to say, "Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls." He declared that all manner of sin and of blasphemy should be forgiven unto men. He stood and cried, on the last day of the feast, "If any man thirsts, let him come unto Me and drink." I am telling you no fables, for Christ, who was born at Bethlehem and died on Calvary, by His own blood which He shed for many, assures you that there is forgiveness for every one of you who, confessing his sin, will come and put his trust in Him!

"See that you refuse not Him who speaks," for though you hear only my poor feeble voice pleading with you, with an honest, loving heart at the back of it, yet God the Holy Spirit is speaking and Jesus Christ, Himself, is speaking to you! Refuse *me* if you please, but do not refuse my Lord! The blood of Jesus says, "I was poured out for the guilty. I was shed to manifest Divine Love. I am sprinkled to cleanse from sin." Each drop, as it falls, creates peace of heart. Stand where that blood is falling! Let it sprinkle you!

Thus the blood speaks. Will you not answer, "Lord, we come to You, for You have drawn us. Your wounds have wounded our hearts. Your death has killed our enmity. Sprinkle us unto Yourself. Bedew us with Your blood. Let us be accepted in the Beloved." Amen. So may God hear us!

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GOD'S WORD NOT TO BE REFUSED

NO. 3492

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1915.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 27, 1870.

“See that you refuse not Him who speaks. For if they escaped not who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him who speaks from Heaven.”
Hebrews 12:25.

WE are not a cowering multitude gathered in trembling fear around the smoking mount of Horeb—we have come where the great central figure is the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. We have gathered virtually in the outer circle of which the saints above and holy angels make the inner ring. And now, tonight, Jesus speaks to us in the Gospel. So far as His Gospel shall be preached by us, here, it shall not be the word of man, but the Word of God. And although it comes to you through a feeble tongue, yet the Truth of God, itself, is not feeble, nor is it any less Divine than if Christ, Himself, should speak it with His own lips! “See that you refuse not Him who speaks.” The text contains—

I. AN EXHORTATION OF A VERY SOLEMN, EARNEST KIND.

It does not say, “Refuse not Him who speaks,” but, “See that you refuse not Him who speaks”—that is, “be very circumspect that by no means, accidental or otherwise, you refuse the Christ of God, who now, in the Gospel, speaks to you! Be watchful, be earnest, lest even through inadvertence you should refuse the Prophet of the Gospel dispensation—Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who speaks in the Gospel from Heaven to the sons of men.” It means, “Give earnest heed and careful attention, that by no means, and in no way you refuse Him who speaks.” My objective tonight will be to help you, beloved Friends, especially you that have not laid hold on Christ—who are not the children of Zion, who are joyful in their king—to help you, tonight, that you may see to it.

And to go to our point at once, we shall have many things to say, and we shall speak them in brief sentences, hoping that the thoughts, as they arise, may be accepted by your mind and may, by God's Spirit, work upon your hearts and conscience. There is great need of this exhortation from many considerations not mentioned in the text. A few of these we will hint at first.

First, from *the excellence of the Word of God, itself*. “See that you refuse not Him who speaks.” That which Jesus speaks concerns your soul, concerns your everlasting destiny—it is God's wisdom, God's way of

mercy—God's plan by which you may be saved! If this were a secondary matter, you need not be so earnest about receiving it, but of all things under Heaven, nothing so concerns you as the Gospel. See, then, that you refuse not this precious Word of God, more precious than gold or rubies, which alone can save your souls!

See to this, again, because *there is an enemy of yours who will do all he can that you may refuse Him who speaks*. Satan is always busiest where the Gospel is most earnestly preached! Let the sower scatter handfuls of seeds—and birds will find the seeds and soon devour them! Let the Gospel be preached, and these birds of the air, fiends of Hell, will soon by some means try to remove these Truths from your hearts, lest they should take root in your hearts and bring forth fruit unto repentance.

Give earnest heed, again, “that you refuse not Him who speaks,” because *the tendency of your own mind* will be to refuse Christ. Oh, Sirs, you are fallen through your first father, Adam, and the tendencies now of your souls are towards evil—not towards the right—and when the Lord comes from Heaven to you, you will reject Him if left to yourselves! Watch, then, I say! See that you refuse not! Stir up your souls, awaken your minds, lest this delirious tendency of sin should make you angry with your best Friend and constrain you to thrust from you that which is your only hope for the hereafter! When a man knows that he has a bad tendency which may injure him, if he is wise, he watches against it. So, knowing this, which God's Word tells you, watch, I pray you, lest you refuse Him who speaks!

Think well, too, that you have need to see to this, because *some of you have rejected Christ already long enough!* He has spoken to you from this pulpit, from other pulpits, from the Bible, from the sickbed. He spoke to you lately in the funeral knell of your buried friend—many voices, but all with this one note, “Come to Me! Repent and be saved!” But until now you have refused “Him who speaks.” Will not the time past suffice to have played this mischievous game? Will not the years that have rolled into eternity bear enough witness against you? Must you add to all this weight by again refusing? Oh, I implore you to see to it that you do not again “refuse Him who speaks from Heaven,” for there is not a Word of that which He speaks, but what is love to your souls! Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came not armed with terrors to work wrath among the sons of men! All was mercy, all was Grace—and to those who listen to Him, He has nothing to speak but tenderness and loving kindness—your sins shall be forgiven you! The time of your ignorance, God will wink at. Your transgressions shall be cast into the depths of the sea—for you there shall be happiness on earth and glory hereafter! Who would not listen when it is good news to be heard? Who would not listen when the best tidings that God, Himself, ever sent forth from the excellent Glory is proclaimed by the noblest Ambassador that ever spoke to men, namely, God's own Son, Jesus Christ, the once crucified, but now exalted Savior?

For these reasons, then, at the very outset I press upon you this exhortation, "See that you refuse not Him who speaks such precious Truth," which the enemy would gladly take out of your minds—the Truth of God which you, yourselves, have refused long enough already—and Truth which is sweet and will be exceedingly precious to your souls if you receive it! But now the text gives us—

II. SOME FURTHER REASONS for seeing to it that we do not "refuse Him who speaks." One reason I see in the text is this—see to this because *there are many ways of refusing Him who speaks*, and you may have fallen into one or other of these. See to it! Pass over in examination your own state and conduct, lest you may have been refusing Christ! *Some refuse the Savior by not hearing of Him.* In His day there were some who would not listen, and there are such now. The Sabbath days of some of you are not days of listening to the Gospel. Where were you this morning? Where are you usually all the Lord's-Day long? Remember, you cannot live in London, where the Gospel is preached, and be without responsibility! Though you will not come to the House of God to hear of it, yet be sure of this—the Kingdom of God has come near unto you. You may close your ears to the invitation of the Gospel, but at last you will not be able to close your ear to the denunciation of wrath! If you will not come and hear of Christ on the Cross, you must one day see for yourselves Christ on His Throne. "See that you refuse not Him who speaks to you from Heaven" by refusing to be found where His Gospel is proclaimed!

Many come to hear it, and yet refuse Him who speaks, *for they hear listlessly*. In many congregations—I will not judge this—a very large proportion of hearers are listless hearers. It little matters to them what is the subject in hand. They hear the sentences and phrases that come from the speaker's tongue, but these penetrate the ears, only, and never reach their heart. Oh, how sad it is that this should be the case with almost all who have heard the Gospel a long time, but who are not converted! They get used to it. No form of alarm could reach them and, perhaps, no form of invitation could move them to penitence. The preacher may exhaust his art. They are like the adder that is deaf. He may know how to charm others, but these he cannot charm, charm he ever so wisely! Oh, see to it, you Gospel hearers up yonder, and you below here, that have been hearing Christ these many years, see that you refuse not Him who day by day during so long a time has spoken to you in the preaching of the Gospel out of Heaven!

But there are some who do hear and have a very intelligent idea of what they hear, but who *actually refuse to believe it*. For diverse reasons best known to themselves, they reject the testimony of the Incarnate God. They hear that God, the Word, was made flesh and dwelt among us, and He has borne testimony that whoever believes in Him is not condemned. They know but they will not believe in Him. They will give you

first, one excuse, and then another, but all the excuses put together will never mitigate the fact that they do not believe the testimony of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ! And so they “refuse Him who speaks.” How many, how many here are by their unbelief refusing the Christ that speaks out of Heaven?

Some are even *offended at the Gospel*, as in Christ's day. When He came to a tender point in His preaching they went back and walked no more with Him. Such there are to be found in our assemblies. The Gospel galls them—there is some point that touches their prejudices, something that touches their favorite sin—and they are vexed and irritable. They ought to be angry—angry with their sin—but they are angry with Christ instead. They ought to denounce themselves, and patiently seek mercy, but this is not palatable to them! They would rather denounce the preacher, or denounce the preacher's Master.

Some will even hear the Gospel, the very Gospel of Christ to catch at words and pervert sentences to make play of the preacher's words which he uses, when they are honestly the best he can find and, worse still, make play with the sense, too, with the very Gospel—and find themes for loose jokes and profane and ribald words, even in the Cross! Rolling dice, like the soldiers at the foot of the Cross, with the blood falling on them, so some make merriment when the blood of Jesus is falling upon them to their condemnation! May it not be so with any here, present, but there have been such who have even reviled the Savior and had hard words for God in human flesh—could not believe that He bore the guilt of sin, could not admire the astounding love that made Him suffer for the guilt of His enemies, would not see anything admirable in the heroic Sacrifice of the great Redeemer—but rather turned on their heels against their Benefactor and poured forth venomous words on Him who loved the sons of men and died saying, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

And some have practically shown they have refused Him who speaks, for they have begun *to persecute His people!* They have maltreated those that sought the Glory of God, and anything that had a savor of Christ about it has been despicable and detestable to them.

Oh, dear Hearers, I shall ask you, since there are all these ways of refusing Christ, to see to it that you do not fall into any of them! The grosser forms, perhaps, you would be too shocked at, but don't fall into the others. Do not especially fall into that indifference which has almost as much insult to the Savior as blasphemy! Is it nothing to you? Is it nothing to you that God should come from Heaven that He might be just in the salvation of men, and that, coming from Heaven to be thus just, He should, Himself, suffer that we might not suffer—the Christ of God bleed and die instead of the undeserving, Hell-deserving sinners? Shall this be told you—pressed upon you and will you refuse it? Will you refuse Him who speaks, Himself, in His own Sacrifice? And in the blood which He

has carried within the veil continues now to speak—will you, will you refuse Him? Pray God you may see to it that in no form you do!

And now passing on, but keeping to the same point, striking the hammer on the head of the same nail, there are many reasons why men refuse Christ. Therefore, see that for none of these reasons you do it. Some refuse Him *out of perfect indifference!* The great mass of men have not a thought above their food and their drink. Like the cock that found the diamond on the dunghill, they turn it over and wish it were a grain of barley. What care they for Heaven, or the pardon of sin? Their mind does not reach to that. See that you—that you, none of you, are so sensuous as to “refuse Him who speaks from Heaven” for such a reason as this! Some reject Him because of their self-righteousness—they are good enough. Jesus Christ speaks against them, they say! “He does not applaud their righteousness, He rather ridicules them. He tells them that their prayers are long prayers and their many good works are, after all, a poor ground for reliance.” So as the Savior will not patronize their righteousness, neither will they have anything to do with Him. Oh, say not you are rich and increased in goods—you are naked, and poor, and miserable! Say not you can win Heaven by your merits—you have none! Your merits drag you down to Hell. Yet many will refuse the Savior because of the insanity of their self-righteousness!

Some, too, reject Him because of *their self-reliant wisdom*. “Why,” they say, “this is a very thoughtful age.” And everywhere I hear it dinned into my ears, “thoughtful preaching,” “thinkers,” “intellectual preaching.” And what a mass of rottenness before high Heaven the whole lot is that is produced by these thinking preachers and these intellectual men! For my part I would rather say to them, “See that you refuse not Him who speaks,” for one Word of God is better than all the thoughts of all the philosophers—and one sentence from the lips of Christ I do esteem to be more precious than the whole Alexandrian library—and also the Bodleian, if you will, so much as it comes from man. No, it is the thinking of Christ we have to think about! Otherwise our thinking may prove our curse. A man, if he is drowning, if he has a rope thrown to him, had better lay hold of it rather than merely thinking about the possibilities of salvation by some other means. While your souls are being lost, Sirs, there is better employment for you than merely indulging in rhapsodies and inventions of your own supposed judgment! Take hold of this, the Gospel of Jesus revealed of God, lest you perish, and perish with a vengeance!

Some reject the Savior from another cause—they *do not like the holiness of Christ's teaching*. They refuse Him who speaks because they think Christ's religion too strict, too precise—it cuts off their pleasures, it condemns their lusts. Yes, yes, it is so, but to reject Christ for such a reason is certainly to be most unreasonable, for it should be in every man a desire to be delivered from these passions and lusts—and because

Christ can deliver us, shall we, therefore, reject Him? God forbid that we should be led astray by such a reason!

Some reject Him because they have a *fear of the world*. If they were Christians, they would probably be laughed at as Methodists, Presbyterians, Puritans, or some other name. And shall we lose our souls to escape the sneers of fools? He is not a man—call him by some other name—he is no man that flings away his soul because he is such a coward that he cannot bear to do and believe the right thing and bear the frown of fashion!

There are others who refuse the Savior *simply out of procrastination*. They have no reason for it, but they hope they shall have a more convenient season. They are young people as yet, or they are not so very old, or if they are old, yet still life will linger a little while—and so still they refuse Him who speaks.

I have not mentioned a worthy reason for refusing Him who speaks, nor do I believe there is a worthy reason. It seems to me that if it is so, that God Himself has taken upon Himself human form, and has come here to effect our redemption from our sin and misery, there cannot be any reason that will stand a moment's looking at for refusing Him who speaks! It must be my duty and my privilege to hear what it is that God has got to say to me—it must be my duty to lend Him all my heart, to try and understand what it is that He says—and then to give Him all my will to do, or to be whatever He would have me to do or to be!

“But did God thus come?” asks one. I always feel that the very declaration is its own proof. No heart could ever have contrived or invented this as a piece of imagination—the love, the story of the redeeming love of God in Christ Jesus! If I had no evidence but the mere statement, I think I must accept it, for it wears the Truth of God upon its very forefront! Who should conceive it? The offended God comes here to redeem His creatures from their own offense. Since He must in justice, punish, He comes to bear the punishment Himself, that He may be just and yet be inconceivably gracious! My soul flies into the arms of this Revelation! It seems to be the best news my troubled conscience ever had—God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them! Oh, there cannot be a reasonable motive for rejecting the Savior, and I, therefore, impress it upon you, since so many unreasonable motives carry men away, see that you refuse not Him who speaks! And may the Spirit of God grant that you may not be able to refuse! But now coming to the text again, we have—

III. A VERY HIGH MOTIVE GIVEN for seeing that we refuse not Him who speaks. It is this—because *in refusing Him, we shall be despising the highest possible authority*. When Moses spoke in God's name, it was no light thing to refuse such an ambassador! Still, Moses was but a man. Though clothed with Divine Authority, yet he was but a man and a servant of God. But Jesus Christ is God by Nature. See that you refuse not Him who is of heavenly origin, who came from Heaven, who is clothed

with such Divine Powers that every word He speaks is virtually spoken from Heaven, and who, being now in Heaven, speaks through His ever living Gospel directly out of the excellent Glory! Regard this, I pray you, and remember well the parable which Jesus gave. A certain man planted a vineyard and let it out to vinedressers. And when the time came that he should receive the fruit, he sent a servant, and they stoned him! He sent another, and they beat him. He sent another, and they maltreated him. After he had thus sent many of his servants, and the dressers of the vineyard had incurred his high displeasure by the shameful way in which they had treated the servants, he sent his own son, and he said, "They will respect my son." It was the highest degree of guilt when they said, "This is the heir, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours." Then they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. You know how the Savior was treated by the sons of men—but here is the point I aim at—it is this—to reject Jesus Christ, to refuse Him, to refuse His Gospel if He did not speak in it, might not be so high a misdemeanor, but to refuse Him—I don't know how it is, but my heart feels very heavy even to sinking at the thought that any man here should be able to refuse Christ, the Son of God, the Everlasting and the Ever Blessed! But I cannot speak out what I feel. It fills my soul with horror to think that any creature should refuse his God, when his God speaks, but much more when God comes down on earth in Infinite, wondrous, immeasurable love, takes upon Himself the form of Man and suffers, and then turns round to His rebellious creature and says, "Listen, I am ready to forgive you. I am willing to pardon you. Do but listen to Me."

Oh, it seems monstrous that men should refuse Christ! I don't know how you feel about it, but if you have ever measured that in your thoughts, it will have seemed to be the most monstrous of all crimes! If, in order to be saved, the terms were hard and the conditions difficult, I could understand a man saying, "It mocks me." But when the Gospel is nothing but this, "Turn you, turn you; why will you die?" When it is nothing but, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved," what shall I say? I cannot fashion an excuse for any of you and if you, after having heard the Gospel, are cast into Hell, I dare not think that its utmost pains will be too severe for so high an insult to such wondrous love! You will not be saved, Sirs! You put from you, your own life! You will not be saved when the way of salvation is plain, easy, simple, close to your hand—

***"What chains of vengeance they deserve
That slight the bonds of love!"***

I cannot—I could not—conceive a punishment too severe for men who, knowing that their rejection of Christ will bring upon them everlasting punishment, yet willfully reject Him! You choose your own delusion. If you drank poison and did not know it, I could pity you—if you made all your veins to swell with agony and caused your death—but when we stand up and say, "Sirs, it is poison! See others drop and die—touch it

not!"—when we give you something a thousand times better, and bid you take that, but you will not take that, but *will* have the poison—then if you will, you must. If, then, you would destroy your soul, it, must be so.

But we would plead with you yet again. "See, see that you refuse not Him who speaks." I wish I could raise Him before you tonight—even the Christ of God and bid Him stand here—and you would see His hands and His feet, and you would ask, "What are these marks we see there?" He would reply, "These are the wounds that I received when I suffered for the sons of men." And He bares His side and says, "See here, here went the spear when I died that sinners might live." In Glory now, yet once, says He, "This face was defiled with spit, and this body mangled with Pilate's scourge and Herod's rod, and I, whom angels worshipped, was treated as a menial, yes, worse—God Himself forsook Me! Jehovah hid His face from Me, that I, bearing the punishment of sin, might really bear it, not in fiction, but in fact, and might suffer the equivalent for all the miseries that souls redeemed by Me ought to have suffered had they been cast into Hell!" Will you look at His wounds and yet refuse Him? Will you hear the story of His love, and yet reject Him? Must He go away and say in His heart, "They have refused Me. They have refused Me. I told them of salvation—I showed them how I bought salvation, but they have refused Me. I will go My way and they shall never see My face again till that day when they shall say, 'Mountains fall upon us! Hide us from the face of Him who sits upon the Throne.'" If you will not have Him in mercy you must have Him in judgment! And if the silver scepter of God will not touch you, the Christ of God, the Man of Nazareth, will come a second time on the clouds of Heaven, and woe unto you in that tremendous day! Then shall the nations of the earth weep and wail because of Him. They would not have Him as their Savior—so they must have Him as their Judge—and out of His mouth shall the sentence come, "Depart! Depart!"

Now I have to close with the last reason that is given in the text why we should see that we "refuse not Him who speaks." It is this—that if we do—

IV. THERE IS A DOOM TO BE FEARED, for if they escaped not who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from Heaven. You hear the din that goes up from the Red Sea when the angry billows leap over Pharaoh and his horsemen. Why is the king asleep in the midst of the waters? Why are the chivalry of Egypt cut off? They rejected Moses when he said, "Thus says the Lord, Let My people go." If Pharaoh escaped not when he refused him who spoke on earth, oh, dreadful shall be that day when the Christ who this day speaks to you, and whom you reject, shall lift up the rods of His anger and the Lake of Fire, more direful than the Red Sea, shall swallow up His adversaries! See you that next sight? A number of men are standing there holding censers of incense in their hands, and there stands Moses, the servant of God, and he says, "If these die the

death of common men, God has not spoken by me," for they have rebelled against Moses. Do you see the sight? Can you picture it? If they escaped not who refused him who spoke on earth, how shall we escape if we refuse Him who speaks from Heaven? Go through the peninsular of the Arabian desert. See how the tribes drop, one by one, and leave graves behind them as the track of their march. Of all that came out of Egypt, only two entered into Canaan! Who slew all these? They were all slain there because they resisted the Word of God by His servant, Moses, and He swore in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest. If they escaped not who refused him who spoke on earth, how shall we escape if we refuse Him who speaks to us from Heaven?

I might multiply instances and give you proof of how God avenged the refusal to listen to His servant, Moses, but how much more will He avenge it if we listen not to Jesus Christ the Lord! "Oh," says one, "you preach the terrors of the Lord." The terrors of the Lord? I scarcely think of them—they are too dreadful for human language! But if I speak severely, even for a moment, it is in love. I dare not play with you, Sinner. I dare not tell you sin is a trifle. I dare not tell you that the world to come is a matter of no great account. I dare not come and tell you that you need not be in earnest. I shall have to answer for it to my Master! I have these words ringing in my ears, "If the watchman warns them not, they shall perish, but their blood will I require at the watchman's hands." I cannot bear that I should have the blood of souls upon my skirts and, therefore, do I again say to you—refuse what I say as much as you will, cast anything that is mine to the dogs, have nothing to do with it—but wherein I have spoken to you Christ's Word and I have told you His Gospel, "Believe and live." "He that believes on Him is not condemned," "He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved." Wherein it is Christ's Gospel, it is Christ that speaks! And I again say to you, for your soul's sake, "Refuse not Him who speaks from Heaven to *you*." May His Spirit sweetly incline you to listen to Christ's Word and may you be saved tonight!

If you don't have Christ, tonight, some of you never will have Him. If you are not saved tonight, some of you never will be. 'Tis now or never with you. God's Spirit strives with you, conscience is a little awakened. Catch every breeze, catch every breeze! Do not let this pass by! Oh, that tonight you might seek, and that tonight you might find the Savior! Otherwise remember if you refuse Him who speaks from Heaven, He lifts His hands and swears that you shall not enter into His rest! Then are you lost, lost, lost, beyond all recall! God bless every one of you and may we meet in Heaven.

I do not know. I sometimes am afraid that there are not so many conversions as there used to be. If I thought there were no more souls to be saved by me in this place, under God, I would break away from every comfort and go and find out a place where I could find some that God would bless. Are they all saved that will be? You seat-holders, have I

fished in this pond till there is no more to come? Is it to be so, that in all the ground where wheat will ever grow, wheat has grown, and there can be no more? My Brothers and Sisters in Christ, pray God to send His Spirit that there may be more brought to Jesus! If not, it is hard, hard work to preach in vain. Perhaps I grow stale and dull to you—I would not if I could help it. If I could learn how to preach, I would go to school. If I could find the best way to reach you, I am sure I would spare no pains. I do not know what more to say, but if Christ, Himself, shall be refused, how shall I speak for Him? Of His dear wounds, if His precious blood, if His dying groans, if His love to the souls of men all go for nothing, then my words cannot be anything—they may well go to the wind! But do, do turn to Him! Cast not away your souls. Come to Him! He will receive you! He waits to be gracious! Whoever is heavy laden, let him come tonight. One tear, one sigh, one cry—send it up to Him—He will hear you! Come and trust Him! He will save you! God bless you, for Christ's love's sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
HEBREWS 12.**

Verses 1, 2. *Therefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus—* The Apostle seems to say, since so many look on from Heaven, and earth, and Hell, and we are runners in the great life race, let us strip to it—let us throw aside everything that would make our running difficult, every weight, however golden, every garment, however richly embroidered, lest it should entangle us in our course. And then when we have set out, let us not conclude that we have won the victory, but “run with patience,” on, on, on, till at last we reach the goal!

2, 3. *The Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand at the Throne of God. For consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds.* What a runner in the race He was! And what a race He ran! While we see Him at the end of the course, holding out the crown, let us remember that He knows all the trials of the way, knows what pressure must be put upon ourselves before we can reach the mark.

4. *You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.* Your battles have been nothing yet—you think yourselves martyrs? What have you done? What have you suffered? What have you endured, compared with your Lord, compared with the saints of old?

5, 6. *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks unto you as unto children, My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked by Him: For whom the Lord loves, He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives.* Here is another noble reason for

patience. That same trial which, on the one hand, comes from man, viewed in another way comes from God—and is a chastening. Let us accept it at His hands, regarding it as a token of sonship.

7, 8. *If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chastens not? But if you are without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons. You have not your Father's love—you are not recognized as an honorable member of His family.*

9-13. *Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of Spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby. Therefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.* The Apostle cheers up those who are tried, with the reflection that the good which will come out of their trouble will abundantly recompense them. They are not to expect to see that good at once. It will come afterwards—not yet. No reasonable man expects the harvest at the same time that he sows. You must wait a while—bear with patience—have confidence in God—and all your trials will end well.

14. *Follow peace with all men.* You will not always get it, but follow it—run after it.

14-17. *And holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the Grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For you know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.* He sold his birthright. He could not have the pottage and the birthright, too, and, therefore, he chose the pottage. He must stand to it. And if here, today, we deliberately choose the pleasures of this world, we must not marvel if we have to stand to them forever.

18-24. *For you are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest. And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. (For they could not endure that which was commanded. And if so much as a beast touched the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart. And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake). But you are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.*

To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of All, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. And to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel. The center around which we gather in these days is not Sinai with its thunder and its fire—it is the Cross—no it is Heaven! It is the enthroned Savior! It is the great Mediator of a better Covenant than that of which Moses came to speak! We gather there and we make up a part of that vast throng that now surrounds that center. Oh, that we, while we hear the sweet voice of the Gospel, may lend it a willing ear and may we not be among the number of those who reject the voice that speaks from Heaven to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

25-28. *See that you refuse not Him who speaks. For if they escaped not who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from Heaven, Whose voice then shook the earth: but now He has promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also Heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore we, receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have Grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For let us not think that we are not to be reverent because we gather at the Gospel's call. Let us not dream that God who is a consuming fire on the top of Sinai, is less terrible under the Gospel than under the Law, for it is not so.*

29. *For our God is a consuming fire.*

—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.**

END OF VOLUME 61

A LESSON FROM THE GREAT PANIC

NO. 690

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 13, 1866,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“The removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”
Hebrews 12:27.*

IT is a most popular error that the world stands still and is fixed and immovable. This has been touted as an astronomical theory, but as a matter of practical principle it still reigns in men's minds. Galileo said, “No, the world is not a fixed body, it moves.” Peter had long before declared that all these things should be dissolved. At last men believed the astronomer—but they still doubt the Apostle, or at least forget *his* doctrine. Though it is clear as noonday in Scripture and in experience that stability is not to be found beneath the moon, yet men are forever building upon earth's quicksand as if it were substantial rock, and heaping up its dust as though it would not all be blown away.

“This is the substance,” cries the miser, as he clutches his bags of gold. “Heaven and Hell are myths to me.” “This is the main chance,” whispers the merchant as he pushes vigorously his commercial speculations. “As for *spiritual* things they are for mere dreamers and sentimentalists. Cash is the true treasure.” Ah, Sirs, you base your statements upon a foundation of falsehood! This world is as certainly a mere revolving ball as to human life as it is astronomically! And hopes founded on it will as surely come to nothing as will card houses in a storm. Here we have no abiding city and it is in vain to attempt to build one. This world is not the rock beneath our feet which it seems to be—it is no better than those green, but treacherously soft and bottomless bogs which swallow up unwary travelers!

We talk of terra firma as if there could be such a thing as solid earth! Never was an adjective more thoroughly misused, for the world passes away and the fashion thereof. Every now and then, in order to enforce this distasteful truth upon us, the God of Providence gives the world, in some way or other, a warning shake. The Lord has only to lay one finger upon the world and the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea, while the waters of the ocean roar and are troubled until the mountains shake with their swelling.

The most solid fabrics of human skill and industry are dissolved at the voice of the Most High. Though they appear to possess the firmness of earth and claim the sublimity of Heaven, yet one Divine word shakes earth and Heaven in a moment. Looking back through history you will observe many periods of very tremendous shakings—the records of which are indelibly engraved upon human memory. An empire has been piled up by conquest and cemented by policy and power. Monarchs of gigantic mind have been sustained by armies of indomitable valor and great dynasties have been established whose reign promised to be as enduring as

the sun. But God has shaken, and the diadem has fallen, and the kingdom become desolate.

Babylon sat as a Queen and said, "I shall see no sorrow," but she became desolate and her palaces crumbled into a heap of ruins. The power of Persia wore the aspect of permanence and proudly claimed universal dominion, but the iron rod of Alexander broke it in pieces as a potter's vessel. Nor could the Macedonian empire long continue but soon gave place to the mightier power of Rome, which, with all its valiant legions, lasted but its time and then, like a bowing wall, fell headlong to the ground. Even as a moment's foam dissolves into the wave that bears it and is lost forever, so dynasties, republics, empires all pass away. As a dream, when one awakes, their image is gone forever.

Between the intervals of these great revolutions there have been changes less extensive but still of the same warning character. Every now and then in our commerce God gives a serious shake to our affairs. Men usually have a degree of confidence in their fellow men, and on the strength of this legitimate confidence, business flourishes. But, all of a sudden, as though seized with madness, they say in their haste with David, "All men are liars," and clamor for their gold. The boat is quite able to ferry them all across the stream if they will have patience—but they are carried away with the notion that it will soon be swamped.

And therefore they push and fight to get on board all at once and bring to pass the very evil which they feared! Had they but a little patience and a little forbearance—were they much less greedy and much more considerate of others—things might still go well enough. But selfishness takes fire at the least suspicion, blazes into mistrust, and setting its neighbor's house on fire to save its own candle, soon finds its own dwelling in flames, too. Greed is so afraid lest one brick of its house should be stolen that it pulls out the cornerstone to keep it safe under the bed—and the whole building tumbles about its ears.

Few of us ever dreamed of seeing such a panic as that of the last two days, and now, pausing in the midst of it, it may be well to look around. What about these commercial shakings? How can we account for them? Are they not results of the law of change and instability which is stamped upon every created thing? Instead of wondering at panics, we may well wonder that they do not come more often! In considering the body of the commonwealth, we may say of it as Dr. Watts does of our natural body—

***"Strange that a harp of thousand strings
Should keep in tune so long."***

No wonder that the machine of commerce sometimes gets out of order! The wonder is that with so much dirt of trickery, deceit and covetousness, it goes on at all! Considering the depravity of the heart of man, it is perfectly marvelous that human governments are so stable and that mortal affairs run so smoothly. We can only attribute it to the presiding Providence of God that there are not many more crashes and disasters. But still what of these shakings? If they must come, what must we say of them? Why, this much—that ultimately they are among the greatest blessings which God sends us—for with all their attendant calamities they shake only the things which *may be shaken*. While the things which cannot be shaken remain, and remain in a healthier state because the unsound and rotten things have been discovered and removed.

We shall regard our text as declaring a great general principle, that God shakes in order that the things which can be shaken, may fall. And that

the things which cannot be shaken, may remain. We will try to carry out that principle to practical purpose this morning.

I. First the original drift of the statement refers to THE OLD JEWISH DISPENSATION. The ceremonial law was a very wonderful system of types and figures. To the spiritually-minded Israelite it was an illustrated book full of precious teaching. Prophets and kings delighted to study it. Such men as David and the like perused its sacred pages both day and night with ever fresh delight. But, after all, the Jewish dispensation, with all its outward splendor and inward meaning, was still a thing that could be shaken—and therefore when its time of shaking came, all the created part of it passed away—and only its eternal truths remained.

Today we find the Jew, but we do not find the Mosaic economy. Israel has neither priest, nor sacrifice, nor altar, nor temple. Jerusalem is trod under foot by the Gentiles and Zion's hill no longer echoes to the voice of Psalms. Judah's sons are banished far away and her daughters dwell in exile. The outward economy was shaken at the coming of our Lord and as an external thing has ceased to be. How was it that it could be shaken? One reason was that it had so much to do with materialism. It needed an altar of earth or stone and such altars the hand of the spoiler can overturn. It required a bullock that has horns and hoofs, and such sacrifices the plague may slay. It demanded a priest of the house of Aaron and a race of men may be cut off from the families of the nations. It needed a tabernacle or a temple, and a building made with hands is readily demolished—it could be shaken.

The veil of the temple has been rent. The great stones of the temple are thrown down. A priest with Urim and Thummim no more appears and a consecrated altar no longer smokes. Where is the ark with its mystic cherubim? Where the table of showbread, and the golden candlestick, and the tables of stone? These were but things which are *made*, and they have been shaken and removed. But the things which cannot be shaken still remain. Our *spiritual* altar still endures. Our great High Priest still lives. Our house not made with hands is still eternal in the heavens. Our spiritual faith depends not upon materialism.

We have no altar of brass or stone—our Lord Jesus sanctifies our offerings. We have no incense of frankincense and onycha—the merits of our Savior are sweeter by far. We need no temple nor holy of holies within the veil, for we worship God in spirit, and—

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

We have given up all that which binds unseen realities to the shadows, which are seen. And now we are no more as to our faith in bondage to the beggarly elements of matter, time, and space. The Jewish religion could be shaken because it could be combated by material forces. Antiochus could profane its altars. Titus could burn its temple and cast down the walls of the sacred city.

But no invader can pollute the heavenly altar of our spiritual faith by brute force, or destroy the celestial bulwarks of our hope by fire and sword. Material forces are not available in our warfare, for we wrestle not with flesh and blood. The tyrant may burn our martyrs and cast our confessors into prison, but the pure Truth of Jesus is neither consumed by fire nor bound with chains! It has within itself essential immortality and liberty. The doctrine that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners

is no more to be wounded by the sword of persecution than is the ocean to be scarred by the keels of navies.

When winds may be manacled, when waves are fettered, and when clouds may be shut up in dungeons—then, no not even then—may the Word of God be bound. The free spirit of the Cross of Christ cannot be vanquished by armies, nor can legions tread it down. If our devotion hovered around an earthly shrine and could only be presented by a certain order of men robed in a peculiar garb and chanting a peculiar ritual, then the Truth of Christ might be put down for awhile, if not extinguished. But we depend on none of these things! We can as well worship God in barns as in basilicas, in catacombs as in cathedrals! Farmers and paupers are as much priests to God as presbyters or prelates—and solemn silence may yield as true praise as the voices of the sons of music with all their pipes and organs. Our religion is so spiritual that Death itself, in ridding us of these material bodies, shall rather *assist* than injure our devotions! We laugh to scorn both spear, and sword, and buckler! Our holy faith is beyond the reach of carnal weapons.

Moreover, the Mosaic economy passed away because it could be affected by *time*. The ark was made of long-enduring gopher wood, but it has yielded to time. The veil was one of the most costly and durable fabrics, but it yielded to the strain and was rent from top to bottom. The temple itself, if it had not been destroyed by the enemy, would have grown gray with age, for age strikes with impartial hand buildings both holy and profane. “Now that which decays and waxes old is ready to vanish away.”

But see the doctrine of the Cross of Christ! No time affects it. The message of salvation by Divine Grace is as fresh today as when Peter preached it at Pentecost! The great command, “Believe and live,” has as much life-giving power about it as when it was first applied by the Holy Spirit. No time affects the promise of the Father, the merit of the blood of Jesus, or the energy of the Divine Spirit—therefore our faith remains.

Beloved Friends, many more shakings may come. Romanism, which is a spurious reproduction of the materialism of Judaism, needs a shake to destroy it. Puseyism, an equally gross and carnal combination of the outward and visible with the inward and unseen, will also pass away when its hour comes. But the faith once delivered to the saints will outlive every change! The symbol is transient, the spiritual Truth of God is eternal! Over every form of material worship there shall be pronounced the sentence, “Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes”—but the pure spiritual faith of Jesus Christ can never die—the blessed doctrine that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and all those glorious doctrines which cluster around the Cross of Christ shall survive “the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds.”

They shall not only remain, but remain in greater clearness and in fuller power because the things that could be shaken are taken away—created things only dim the luster of the Cross—and art made by human sin is a veil to hide the Redeemer’s glory! The more completely they are removed the more plainly shall we see the Cross of Christ in open vision. “They shall perish, but you remain. And they all shall wax old as does a garment, and as a vesture shall you fold them up, and they shall be changed: but you are the same, and your years shall not fail.”

II. We now turn the light of our text upon another subject. ALL THAT IS TRUE IN OUR PROFESSED CREEDS AND STANDARDS WILL STAND

WHEN MERE OPINIONS ARE SHAKEN. Some of us, though young, are old enough to recollect a great many theological panics—panics very nearly as foolish as that in Lombard Street—for there are other old ladies besides those who rush to the bank to draw out their deposits.

It is not so very long ago that we had a certain “Rivulet” controversy. Then came the noisier battle of the “Essays and Reviews.” By-and-by a live bishop fired off an arithmetical cannon at Moses and now all sorts of writers are hammering away at the “Life of Christ.” What may be next we cannot tell. When these attacks occur there is generally a very great alarm among timid Believers. They say, “What will happen now? People do not respect authority. They used to receive sound teaching because they were taught it. Now they want to know the reason of everything. Alas, Master, what shall we do?”

It is true that men are beginning to raise very serious questions, and some which will not be answered today nor tomorrow. They want us to *prove* that the Bible is the Word of God instead of accepting it as such. The skepticism which questions everything is very rife and cannot be stifled, for it persists in putting its questions again and again, and saying, “No, I will never be quiet until I get an answer.” Is there any real cause for fear in all this? Will the Truth of God, as it is in Jesus, suffer damage from these attacks? My Brethren, I believe that it has not suffered and will not sustain an injury, but, on the contrary, will be made the more triumphant!

I cannot excuse or even make an apology for those who make these attacks upon the Word of God—to their own Master they stand or fall. Above all I cannot say a word in the defense of certain professed ministers of Christ who only exercise their calling to undermine that which they profess to have been called to defend. But, Brethren, whoever may be the instruments—whether they are professed men of God or overt servants of the devil—I do not believe that controversial shakings can lead to the destruction of a single Truth, but to the bringing out of that which is true and separating it from falsehood.

During the Reformation period the pulpits resounded with the doctrine of justification by faith and little else, and many heresies arose until attention was directed to other Truths equally necessary to edification—so that a more complete Gospel testimony was promoted. Just now the tug of war seems to gather around the doctrine of future punishment which I believe to be as certain as the existence of God and the inspiration of Holy Scripture! Struggle against it will only bring out that Truth of God more and more clearly, and will make the ministers of Christ thunder it out with greater certainty, and so, by God’s Grace, sinners will be alarmed and driven to the Cross of Christ for comfort. Never be afraid, my Brethren—the Truth of God will bear threshing and lose nothing but the husk which surrounded it!

Fear not for the Truth of God because of the ability and education of its foes! The wisest man living is a fool when he fights against the Truth as it is in Jesus, and you will be a match for him when he is on the side of wrong. Do not give infidelity credit for a vast amount of sense and learning—it is only folly masking itself under the garb of philosophy, metaphysics, and outlandish jargon. If I cannot defend what I believe, I am afraid I shall begin to doubt it myself—and therefore, for my own sake, I will make myself master of the point, if possible. And if in the study of it I do not

meet with an answer which may satisfy my opponent, if I meet with one which satisfies my own conscience, I shall be all the better and stronger a Christian for it, and so good will come out of evil.

Shake away, Sir! Sift away! Not one grain of wheat will fall to the ground! I stood this week by the side of a church which once was a considerable distance inland but now it stands just by the ocean side. Almost every year a great mass of the clay cliff falls into the sea, and in a year or two this parish church must fall. It stands now in quietude and peace, but on a certain day it will all be swallowed up into the sea, as certainly as the elements still work according to their ordinary laws. I could not help thinking that the edifice was a type of certain ecclesiastical bodies which stand upon the clay cliff of State-craft, or superstition.

The tide of public enlightenment, and above all the ocean tide of God's Spirit is advancing and wearing away their foundation till, at last, the whole fabric must go down. What then? Will you hold up your hands and cry, "The Church of God is gone?" Forbear the foolish utterance! God's Church is safe enough. Look yonder—there stands the Church of God upon a stormy ridge where the sea always dashes and perpetually rages on all sides—and yet she fears no undermining because she is built on no *clay* cliff, but on a Rock against which the waves of Hell shall not prevail! Then let your earth-born, State-propped churches go! Swallow them up, O sea of time! Swallow them *all* up and leave no wreck behind!

But the Church of the living God shall stand all the more glorious because of the ruin which has overtaken her rivals and discovered their human origin. I need not, however, enlarge, because you can all see it is so, if you look back in history. And you may rest assured that what was true a hundred years ago will be true now, and that the more there is of strife against the Gospel, the more the Gospel will prevail! Therefore let us not fear, but rejoice confidently in our God.

III. The principle may be applied in a third direction: THE REAL IN OUTWARD PROFESSION STANDS, NOTWITHSTANDING TIMES OF SHAKING. There are seasons when the professing Church undergoes fearful trials. She suffered in olden times the ordeal of persecution. Edicts and writs were issued forbidding all worship in the name of Jesus. Cruel penalties were the reward of those who were faithful to the doctrine of the Cross. The rough wind howled dreadfully, and the result was that the Church, which had been overgrown with hypocrisy, was speedily freed from pretenders and only those remained whose faith could bear the fire.

The Church was thus refined by *persecution* and might have thanked her persecutors for having put her through the blessed process. Nowadays we are not so much subject to this test, but the world still hates us. It now fawns upon the Christian—it invites him to share her joys and bids him be no longer rigid and strict. It offers him rich rewards and soft speeches if he will but compromise a *little* and not be too sternly pure and upright.

What of this? Is it not the same purifying process? By all means let those who love the world go to it! And let those who value the world's pleasures have them! If it were possible for me to put a hedge all round this church so that none of you should be tempted to enter the theater or enter into giddy company—if I could put a wall all round so that none of you should ever be tempted into the gin-palace or the playhouse—I should not dare to do it! For what would you then be? You would only cease from

these things because you could not get at them—the taste for such vanities, if it is in your hearts—would be uncured.

If you were hypocrites you would not be so likely to be found out, if never tried. And those of you who are genuine would never grow into strong men, but remain Christian babies—nursed and dressed by others—but not at all able to run alone. The blandishments of the world are only another form of that fan which is in Christ's hand, with which He purges the great visible heap lying upon the threshing-floor of His Church. When some of you fall into temptation, though we cannot but weep over you, yet we do not know but what your outwardly falling into temptation may only have discovered the rottenness and wickedness of your heart—and so we may be well rid of you! And you yourself, in the long run, may have your eyes opened to much secret evil which otherwise you would never have detected.

At certain times discord has marred our churches. Blessed be God we have not felt it here, but when it does come I am not certain that that is altogether a matter of regret. There are parties and strife—and all this is sin—but when the Church is shaken, those that can be shaken will be shaken. And they will slide off, some this way and some that. But those who *cannot* be shaken will stand fast in their integrity and defend the faith once committed to the saints. There may also happen great fallings into sin. Some who have been prominent in the Church may make shipwreck. When this occurs, woe, indeed, is it to the whole community, and sorrow to every member.

But still I am not certain but what there may be a gain even in the loss, for then those are discovered whose faith may have stood in the wisdom of man—who have been depending on human countenance and not following holiness for its own sake—and others who have merely been led by associations and not by principle, are led to great searching of heart. I would sorrow in all cases of failure, but not as though I had no consolation, for, my Brethren, those only are shaken that *may be* shaken. But those who are rooted and grounded in Christ and are truly what they profess to be will stand fast unto the end.

That old oak in the forest is one of the noblest works of God. Look at it just now bursting into full leaf, bearing well its verdant honors and making a picture worthy of the artist's rarest skill. What are these dry pieces of wood which strew the ground beneath it? What are these large branches which rot under its shade? It is needless to ask, for we all know that they fell from the tree during winter's storms. Is it a cause of regret for the sake of the tree that those rotten branches were broken off? It may be a lamentation as far as concerns the broken boughs, but the tree itself would never have been so healthy, and never looked so complete if the rotten branches had been suffered to abide. When the hurricane came howling through the woods, the old tree shivered in the gale and mourned as it heard the cracking of its boughs. Yet now it is thankful because the sound healthy branches with sap and life in them are all there, and the withered ones no longer encumber the trunk.

Summing this matter up in a word or two, I do not think times of storm to a Church are in the long run to be regretted—a calm is much more dangerous. The plague-bearing mist settles and festers in the vale till the atmosphere becomes deadly, even to the casual passenger. But the storm fiend, as men call him, leaps from the mountains into the sunny glades of

the valley and with terrific vigor hurls down the habitations of men and tears up the trees by the roots. But meanwhile all is superabundantly compensated by the effectual purging which the atmosphere receives. Men breathe more freely and Heaven smiles more serenely now that the heaviness of the death-damp is gone, and the poisonous vapor clings no longer to the river's bank and the valley's side.

IV. We will further apply the principle to OUR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. Beloved Friends, this principle, which is true without, is equally sure within. There will come to every sincere Christian a time of inward shaking, testing and convulsion. We have included much in our experience which is not real. We think we know a great deal which is nothing better than boastful ignorance. How many times we have imbibed the conceit that we were becoming very humble when we were never more proud than when we thought so! We have felt as if we were conquering all our besetting sins and at that very moment Satan was laughing at us because we mistook a sleeping sin for a dead sin!

We are puffed up with the fancy that we are rich and increased in goods, whereas all that we have put in at the front door has been stolen at the back door, and more. We have put our spiritual money into a bag that is full of holes. We have been heaping up that which is not bread and spending our labor for that which profits not. The soul's conflict comes and we are troubled because we do not care to be disturbed in our false peace! But ah, how much we need disturbing! I know some of you do not relish soul-searching sermons. When I give you one which acts like the refiner's fire you can scarcely endure it. You want to have the soft pillows of the promises laid under your head, and savory meat placed by your side.

Searching sermons you wish to be few and far between. But these times of self-examination are fully as necessary as times of nourishing and comfort. And when they visit your inner man they are loaded with blessings and are to be received with gratitude and thanksgiving. Dear Friends, let me mention a few methods of soul-shaking. *Affliction* is one of them. The man thought that he had resigned everything to God—death came and took away his child. Where was his resignation then? Perhaps it stood that trial. But lo, the Lord removes another—how now, good Sir? A second time—do you still bear it?

Alas, the third shaft smites another beloved one! Can you still, in all things, own His hand? Do you still stand to the surrender? You say, "Yes." May it prove so when the trials come! You said the other day, dear Friend, "I do not think I am worldly-minded. I hope my affection is set upon things above, and not on things on the earth." How have you found it during the last two or three feverish days? You sang the other day, as we sang this morning—

***"Let mountains from their seats be hurled
Down to the deep, and buried there.
Convulsions shake the solid world—
Our faith shall never yield to fear."***

How stood your faith on Friday when the banks suspended payment? Did you play the man or play the fool? When the great waters were let loose was your ark seaworthy, or did it prove a poor leaky hulk?

We have, I fear, much more resignation in name than in fact, and more faith in fancy than in reality. You think sometimes that now you really do love God with all your heart and soul, and strength—and that nothing can come in to make you think harshly of Him. But will not a sharp blow from

the rod alter your tune? Do you kiss the rod, or do you begin to kick like a willful child? Can you say with Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord"? Tribulations, losses, crosses, sicknesses and bereavements are very stern trials—and the things within us which may be shaken will be shaken by them.

But if we can bear them well and trustingly, and yet praise and bless God for all—we have evidence of possessing gracious qualities which cannot be shaken and therefore will remain. What a shake temptation gives us! We spoke of that last Sunday morning. How commonly is it the lot of God's people! Temptations will assail us of a sort that we never dreamed of. We are tempted to deny God, to doubt the Deity of Christ, to mistrust the Truth of Scripture. We are tempted to presumption, to every form of sin—and there are times when temptations follow each other so quickly that we do not know which way to look nor where to turn!

We use the great shield of faith as best we can, but it seems to us if it could not avail us to ward off the innumerable darts. Ah, what shall we do then? Why, Brethren, we shall then know whether our grace is the Divine Grace of God or the grace of man! We shall now see whether we have the faith of God's elect or not! The faith of God's elect can write, "Invicta," upon its shield! It is unconquered and unconquerable! But the faith which springs from mere human reason will speedily give way like a pasteboard helmet, or a wooden sword. O sharp Temptation! Terrible as you are to me, yet I thank God for you because the trial of my faith, which is much more precious than that of gold which perishes, though it is tried by fire, shall redound to the glory of God and to my own comfort!

There is a time of shaking coming which none of us shall be able to avoid. If we could live without affliction and without temptation, which I think is impossible, yet we cannot enter into the Promised Land without passing through the river of death, unless the Lord shall come. What a test will the hour of death be! Beloved Friends, certain professors cannot endure to have a suspicion raised concerning the sincerity, vitality, and power of their godliness. They say, "Why should the minister set me questioning myself as to whether I am saved or not? Is it not best for me to believe that I am saved and so go on cheerfully till I die?"

Beloved, may this tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth before I shall knowingly assist any of you in being comfortable in *presumption*. True faith can bear *examination*, and even courts it! The preaching which says to its hearer, "You are not to examine yourself. Take it for granted that it is all well with you," is a preaching that comes from the bottomless pit and does the devil's work—it is not a ministry which God has sent! If my faith will not bear human examination it will never bear God's examination. And if when I am in health I dare not sit down by the hour together to look over my soul's estate, what shall I do in the swellings of Jordan?

If even now I am half afraid, what shall I be *then*? And if I dare not now look certain texts of Scripture in the face, but am obliged to forget that they are in the Bible in order to be at peace in my own heart, oh, what shall I do when those texts will force themselves upon me, and will not take my indifference for an answer, but will demand of my conscience that it should feel their power? Let me beseech you while you rest simply and alone upon Christ—be sure that you rest sincerely and with your whole heart upon Him. Do not make mistakes about your soul's eternal matters,

for mistakes here will be fatal! Be built upon the Rock, and be surely built on it!

Do not be afraid of being shaken now, because you must be shaken before long. That silent chamber must be inhabited by you and on that bed you must be stretched. You will hear the warning voice of Death in the silent tread of those who expect your departure, and in the faint whisper of the physician as he warns your friends that there is no hope. You will be compelled to gaze into worlds unknown. You will hear the booming of the deep sea of eternity. And oh, if a fear should molest you, then how dark will your descent be into the valley!

But oh, Beloved, if you can be confident then, with what joy will you face your last hour! And with what triumph enter into eternity! How can you expect to be confident then if you are self-indulgent now, and will not dare to try your estate? Come, have a friendly suit, as it were, in the heavenly chancery between your soul and your hopes today, lest there should be a fatal suit against you—a suit brought on by Divine Justice—which shall end in your total bankruptcy throughout eternity!

God grant that we may not be afraid of being shaken. For if we cannot bear shaking now, what shall we do at the last? What has been the result of all the shaking through which we have passed up to now? I think it has been this—we have had a great deal removed from us which was of no use to us. We could boast once rather more loudly than we dare to do now. I must confess that the longer I live the more of a fool I feel myself to be. I am in myself weaker, more distrustful, more conscious of sin—more hopeless of self-assistance than ever. The more strength I get from God the weaker I discover myself to be in and of myself.

There were a few things that I thought I knew once, but except those things which God has taught me, I now find that I know nothing. I suppose that the further we proceed in the way to Heaven the more we shall be dissatisfied with ourselves because our daily trials and troubles have the effect of bursting many of those bubbles in which we once put our confidence. All the wooden centers must be taken away from our masonry, for God builds His arches so that they will stand without supporting frameworks. The dog-shores must all be knocked away from our ship, for it is not meant to be high and dry on the shore—it is to be launched upon a sea of everlasting glory.

The dross is consuming! Blessed be God for that, for the precious metal gains by the loss. Our outward man decays, but the inward man is renewed day by day. Go on, Great Shaker of Heaven and earth, and shake from me my mere pretensions, my presumptions and empty professions, for the genuine work of Grace will be helped!

V. I must now bring before you ALL THAT YOU HAVE IN POSSESSION. The things, which can be shaken, will be removed, but things that cannot be shaken will remain. We have many things in our possession at the present moment which can be shaken, and it ill becomes a Christian man to set much store by them. The poorest man among us has many providential blessings for which to be grateful this morning, but the richest among us has nothing earthly upon which he can depend.

Wife and children make glad our hearth. We have a little place which may be very homely, but it is our home and we love it. Some of you are prospering and thriving traders. Others are merchants who have almost accumulated a competency—be grateful for all this—but do not forget that

these are things which may be shaken. The cheek of the wife may grow pale. The lustrous eyes of the little ones may soon become dim. The house may be left a heap of ashes. The property may take to itself wings and fly away—there is nothing stable beneath these rolling skies—change is written upon all things.

Yet, my Brethren, some of us have certain “things which cannot be shaken,” and I invite you, this morning, to read over the catalogue of them, that if the things which can be shaken should all be taken away you may derive real comfort from the things that cannot be shaken and will remain. In the first place, whatever your losses may have been you enjoy present salvation. You are, this morning, standing at the foot of His Cross, trusting alone in the merit of Jesus’ precious blood—and no rise or fall of the markets can interfere with your salvation in Him—no breaking of banks, no run upon your credit can touch that! A sinner saved!

I remember the time when I thought that if I had to live on bread and water all my life, and to be chained in a dungeon all my days, I would cheerfully submit to that if I might but get rid of my sins. When sin haunted and burdened my spirit, I am sure I would have counted the martyr’s death to be preferable to a life under the lash of a guilty conscience. Now, your sins are all gone! There is not one left in God’s book! Through Jesus’ blood you are clean, and that is a comfort which cannot be removed—

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

In the next place, you are a child of God today. God is your Father. No change of circumstances can ever rob you of that. If you were a peer of the realm you might be degraded. If you have walked among the rich you might be thrust out from their society. Father and mother might forsake you but you can *never* lose this joyous fact—you are an heir of God, joint-heir with Jesus Christ! Coming out of losses and poverty, stripped bare, you can say, “He is my Father still. Naked I came out of my mother’s womb and naked shall I return—but to my *Father* shall I return, and in my Father’s house are many mansions—therefore I will not be troubled.”

You have, this day, another permanent blessing, namely, the love of Jesus Christ. He who is God and Man loves you with all the strength of His affectionate Nature. Now, nothing can rob you of that! You can look to the Cross and know that He who died on it died for you! And He who reigns in Heaven reigns for you and pleads for you. No catastrophes can deprive you of that. Austria and Prussia may go to war, if they please, and Italy or France may join in the turmoil. Blood may flow like water. Established rule may be shaken by revolution and a fierce mob may ride roughshod over the world. But these things shake not the fact that Jesus loves you: “My beloved is mine, and I am His.”

Cattle plagues may come and mildews may blast the rising corn, but though the fig tree may not blossom, and the flocks may cease from the field, and the herds from the stall, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, for Jesus loves me still! Jesus is still faithful! Jesus is still true! Beloved, you have another thing, namely this Truth of God that whatever may happen to you, you have God’s faithful promise, which holds true, that all things shall work for your good. Do you believe this? You need it just now and therefore let me recall it to your recollection. It is true that you cannot see the good in the *trouble* itself, but it works for good. Sometimes deadly poi-

sons may be antidotes against other poisons, and the worst afflictions may be antidotes against far worse ones.

The ship rocks! What a wave was that! What a sea the vessel shipped! She rocks again, the sails fly to ribbons. How the yards are snapping! The masts will go by the board! The frail ship will be wrecked! The danger is imminent, she must be wrecked! The rocks are ahead and she must be dashed upon them! Not so, you passenger in the ship of Providence, not so! Do you see who it is that is at the helm, and do you not know that He who steers the ship also wings the winds and gives force to the waves? God is not the God of the vessel only, but also of the stormy sea! Therefore go where you may be quiet. Take yourself to the hind part of the ship near to the Steersman, and go to sleep in peace. It is the best thing you can do, for the ship is safe—

***“Though winds and waves assault her keel,
He does preserve it, He does steer.
Even when the boat seems most to reel,
Storms are the triumph of His art.
He will not close His eyes, nor yet His heart.”***

Once more. If everything should melt away, yet you have “a city that has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.” Sometimes foreign princes, when they have been afraid of a revolution, have invested all their money in the English funds, and then they have said, “Now come what may, my prosperity is safe.” Ah, well, it is a blessed thing to invest all your wealth in the *heavenly* funds and then let the earth go to ruin—our treasure is safe. Let the world, like an old water-logged hulk, go down if she will—it is a wonder that she keeps afloat so long—let her go, I am in the lifeboat which can never sink! And I shall soon be on shore where tempests cannot blow.

Oh, to rest in assured hope, the hope that makes not ashamed! The hope that shall never be confounded! The hope that when days and years are passed, we shall see the face of Jesus and dwell with Him forever! Courage, Brothers and Sisters—our best portion and richest heritage remains—and cannot be moved. Rejoice in this, and be of good cheer this day!

Ah, but there are some of you who have only what may be moved, and you are, therefore, sure to lose your all! Go away and mourn and lament. Better still, go to the Cross, stand under the foot of it, and you cannot be shaken there. Look up to the flowing of the Savior’s blood and trust Him, for nothing can ever shake you then! As for those of us who possess the things which cannot be shaken, let us stand fast and be of good courage. Whatever may happen during this week, let us play the man. Let us show that we are not such little children as to be cast down by what may happen in this poor fleeting state of time. Our country is Immanuel’s land! Our hope is above the sky and therefore calm as the summer’s ocean! We will see the wreck of everything and yet rejoice in the God of our salvation. The Lord fill us with His peace for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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ACCEPTABLE SERVICE

NO. 1639

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 15, 1882,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have Grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.”
Hebrews 12:28, 29.***

As a congregation you have of late been diligently engaged in the service of God by endeavoring to provide a home for fatherless children. I have been astonished and delighted at the liberality which has been shown by all sorts of persons in this good and gracious work. I felt, sometimes, like the king of old, who said, “Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?” I am sure you have well earned all the commendation that your fellow Christians can give to you, for the work has been so well and so heartily done that we all rejoice together! But, now that it is all over, careful thoughts arise in my mind. It is but a small thing that you and I should be accepted of one another—the great matter is that we should be accepted of the Lord. I, who am but as the doorkeeper of my Master’s house, not only approve, but abundantly commend my fellow servants, but what of that? The great point is that the King, Himself, should say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

We do but see the fair externals of things, but the great Father of Spirits searches the hearts and tries the reins of the children of men—and judges after a higher standard. Therefore, with holy anxiety have I looked at this text and turned it over, hoping that the Holy Spirit may cause each one who has engaged in our benevolent work to examine himself and to judge his part in this labor of love, that he may amend any fault which may hinder his work from being a sacrifice of sweet savor unto the Most High. What if we should bring our sacrifice and the Lord should have no respect to it? That would be a repetition of the sad story of Cain, of whom it is written, “Unto Cain and to his offering the Lord had not respect.” Then, indeed, would our countenances be fallen—but I trust it would be with *repentance* rather than rebellion!

If unaccepted of the Lord, we would weep bitterly and ask Him that the sin-offering which lies at the door might be available for us. The chief thing is that our labor should be acceptable unto God and upon that subject I shall speak this morning, as the Spirit of God shall enable me. Many things are absolutely necessary for the acceptance of any service rendered unto God—of these, some are not stated in the text, but they are so important that I commence with mentioning them. The first is that the person who attempts to serve God should, himself, be accepted. The offerer must, himself, be accepted in the Beloved or his offering will be tainted by his condition and be inevitably unacceptable. The uncleanness of the per-

son pollutes his sacrifice! He that has an impenitent heart, an unrenewed will, a disobedient mind, an unholy life, may perform outward acts of devotion, but the Lord says, to such—"Who has required this at your hand, to tread My courts? Bring no more vain oblations unto Me."

The heart, itself, must be given to God, for the offering which comes from a heartless worshipper is a mere pretense of homage to the Most High. See well to that, my dear Hearers. God says "My son, give Me your heart." Give whatever you please afterwards, but the heart must lead the way—that is essential. Let a traitor in actual rebellion bring tribute to a king—it will be but a mockery! He must first submit *himself* unto his prince and then he may come with his token of loyalty. The next essential is that the act being performed by a person accepted, should be distinctly done as unto God. Our text speaks of serving God. Alas, much is done which is, in itself, externally commendable, but it is not acceptable to God because it is not rendered unto Him and with a view to His Glory.

Some, like the Pharisees of old, give alms out of ostentation—they sound a trumpet before them that they may have praise of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward and a poor reward it is! Some are energetic in holy work out of emulation—that they may surpass others and may have credit for superior ability and goodness. Like Jehu they cry, "Come, see my zeal for the Lord of Hosts!" Now, inasmuch as in this they seek their own honor and not the Glory of God, they cannot be accepted of Him. Better, far, the two mites dropped into the treasury unobserved of all but the great Master, Himself, than all the wealth that we could possibly bring if we made the offering with divided intent!

If we would serve God, we must forget self. There must be the distinct desire to obey and honor the Lord and we must not act as men-pleasers, or as laboring for our own exaltation, otherwise the Lord will abhor our offering. And we must take care that all this is done with faith in Christ Jesus, for it is a law of universal observation in the Kingdom of Heaven that, "without faith it is impossible to please God." "Though I give my body to be burned and have not charity," says Paul, "it profits me nothing." And the same may be said concerning faith! He who does not believe in God and yet pretends to be religious, is manifestly either a deceiver or deceived! As the unbeliever is condemned already, his service can only be that of a condemned man—how can it give pleasure to the Lord? We must bring our offering to Jesus, our great High Priest, and He must present it *for* us, for it can only be acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

These things being mentioned, I now confine myself to the text, itself, which has in it a world of solemn, heart-searching thought with regard to the acceptable service of God.

I. And first, according to the Apostle, it we are to serve God acceptably it must be UNDER A SENSE OF OUR IMMEASURABLE OBLIGATION TO HIM. Look—"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have Grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." See, Brothers and Sisters, whatever service we may render to God we must begin by being *receivers*. Our first dealing with the Most High must not lie in our bringing anything to Him, but our

accepting everything from Him! We receive—that is our first stage and I think it is our last, for if we are ever able to serve the Lord by our gifts, we shall have to confess, “Of Your own have we given to You.”

When we are privileged to cast our crowns before Emmanuel’s Throne, they will be crowns which He, Himself, bestowed upon us of His own Sovereign Grace. Every hymn that comes up from saints made perfect is but an echo of almighty love! They love Him because He first loved them. They are first receivers and then, like pipes that are well-filled from the fountainhead, they pour out their contents. First we receive Grace and then we return service—*holy* service is a gift from beginning to end! We must, then, in approaching God, remember what we have received from Him. And is it not wonderful that it should be written, “We are receiving a *kingdom*”? What a gift to receive! This is a Divine gift we have received, not a pauper’s pension, but a kingdom—“a kingdom which cannot be moved.”

The old dispensation or kingdom has passed away. Its ceremonial laws are abrogated and its very spirit is superseded by a higher spirit! We have entered upon another kingdom in which the ruling principle is not law, but love. We are not under the yoke of Moses, but we are the subjects of King Jesus whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light! The kingdom of Jesus will never end while time shall last, for He is the King eternal and immortal—neither will His laws be changed, nor shall His subjects die. Till that day when He shall deliver up the kingdom unto God, even the Father, and God shall be All-in-All, Jesus must reign! And even when the earthly mediatorial reign is consummated, the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven shall be continued unto us and we shall still be members and citizens of it! We have received an eternal kingdom and for this we ought to be eternally grateful.

The shadows have vanished, but the substance abides—we have risen out of the types of Judaism into His Kingdom by whom Grace and truth have come unto us. This Gospel state abides. Above the wreck of all things it remains and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. Ours is the kingdom of Jesus Christ in which the Gospel is the Law, Believers are the privileged subjects and Grace and Glory are the revenue—a kingdom daily growing in brightness—a kingdom which shall consummate its glory in the eternal world when Christ shall have put all enemies under His feet and His people shall reign with Him forever and ever!

“But,” you say, “we have not received this kingdom yet.” I answer that we have received it in a certain sense. We have received it, first, in the *promise*. Our Lord said, “I appoint unto you a kingdom as My Father has appointed unto Me.” “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Now, with a *man’s* word, if he is a man of honor, we are content. We count his promissory note as the equivalent of the gold which he promises to pay. Let him set his hand to a promise and we pass it from hand to hand, regarding it as the thing, itself, which it promises. Shall we not think as much of the Word of God? The promise of God is so firm, so sure, so true, that inasmuch as He has promised a kingdom unto all them that wait for the appearing of His Son, that kingdom is ours—and by faith we grasp it this morning. Bless the Lord, we

have received a kingdom! Let us worship Him in that spirit of thankfulness which such a gift should excite!

More than this, we have received it in the principles of it, for it is written, "The kingdom of God is within you." As the fairest flower lies packed away within the little shriveled seed and needs but time and sun to develop all its beauty, so perfection, glory, immortality and unspeakable bliss lie slumbering and hidden away within the Grace which God has given to all His people. "He that believes in Him has everlasting life." The life of Heaven is begun within the Believer; it is germinating; it is daily developing—it shall, in God's good time, come to its absolute perfection! We have the kingdom within us—it is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit! The Spirit of God within a man is the earnest of Heaven and an earnest is of the same nature as that which it guarantees. We who are born unto God have the first fruits of the Kingdom of God in possessing the indwelling Spirit—and in the first fruits we see the entire harvest. Rise to this, my Brothers and Sisters, and under a sense of your immeasurable indebtedness go forth and serve your God with joyful thankfulness! This is the spirit in which to worship the Lord who has given us the kingdom!

Moreover, in a measure we have received this kingdom in the power of it. Notice the text does not say we have received a little lordship, a small estate, a scanty portion, but we have received a *kingdom*. No gift less than this could content the great heart of our heavenly Father. He never stops half way in His march of mercy. He made us first His subjects, then His children, then His heirs and here He makes us *kings*, for every heir of God is heir-apparent to a throne! "He has made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign with Him." Brethren, in the Grace which God has given you, you received a measure of kingly power—you who have believed in Jesus have power over yourselves, power over your passions, power over the powers of evil—power, in measure, over your fellow men for their good!

You also have power in prayer and what a real power is that, when a man can ask what he wills and it shall be done unto him! God has endowed you with power from on high by giving you the indwelling of the Holy Spirit! Thus you have received a kingdom in promise, in principle and in power! Moreover, you have received much of the provision and protection of that kingdom. You that are children of God are not left in the power of the enemy, but being redeemed, the Lord is a wall of fire round about you. You are garrisoned by angelic strength! You are led by unfailing wisdom! The all-sufficiency of God is your treasure house! The Lord has said, "No good thing will I withhold from them that walk uprightly." This is a royal charter of boundless liberality. "For all things are yours. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's." What royal provision is thus set apart for you! "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose."

Everything is arranged for our benefit. There were two brothers, one of whom had been diligently attentive to his worldly business, to the neglect

of true religion. He succeeded in accumulating considerable wealth. The other brother was diligent in the service of the Master and had learned both to distribute to the poor and, for conscience's sake, to forego many an opportunity of gain. When he lay sick and dying, he was in straitened circumstances. His brother somewhat upbraided him, remarking that if it had not been for his religion, he would not have been dependent upon others. With great calmness the saintly man replied, "Quiet! Quiet! O Tom, I have a kingdom not begun upon and an inheritance I have not yet seen."

Speak of laying up for a rainy day—we have infinite goodness laid up for them that fear the Lord and none can rob us of it! Every child of God is as David when Samuel anointed him to a throne—he has a kingdom in reserve, secured by a Covenant of Salt! This kingdom which we have received has come to us by Grace alone. We could not have earned it, or merited it, or won it by our own strength. The Lord has *given* it to us in Christ Jesus. He has taken the beggar from the dunghill and set him among princes! He has lifted us up from the ruin of the Fall and redeemed us from the misery of our ungodly days! And He has enriched us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus! Shall we not serve Him out of gratitude for such inestimable benefits? No crack of the whip shall drive us to His service, for we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.

No fear of Hell, no hope of *deserving* Heaven shall urge us on to please our Lord. No, rather this shall be our song—

***"Loved of my God, for Him again
With love intense I burn!
Chosen of Him before time began,
I choose Him in return."***

Gratitude is the only fountain of acceptable service! Without it the streams are far too defiled to flow in the Paradise of God. A large measure of the splendor of our kingdom lies in this, that it is a "kingdom that cannot be moved." Other kingdoms go to pieces sooner or later. You and I, who are in middle life, can remember kingdoms that have been blown down by the wind, or toppled over at the blow of one brave man's sword. Empires that have rivaled Caesar's in apparent strength have been swept down like cobwebs! As houses made of a pack of cards, so have dynasties fallen, never to rise again.

There was one year in which our great caricaturist pictured kings and princes out at sea in little rowboats, tossed up and down by the wild waves of revolution, so frail was their tenure of power at that moment. Even today, I guarantee you, the last office I would choose would be that of an emperor in any country! A man might wisely prefer to take the post of a common crossing-sweeper rather than be a king, or even a president! As for the Empire of Russia, who would court its deadly honors? If those who deserve the most severe imaginable punishment for horrible crimes were compelled to be autocrats, it would be a punishment too heavy! What must be the strain upon the mind, the constant fear, the awful unrest of a man who has the sole control of millions and has deadly foes upon his track?

Glory be to God, our kingdom cannot be moved! Not even dynamite can touch our dominion! No power in the world and no power in Hell can

shake the kingdom which the Lord has given to His saints. With Jesus as our Monarch, we fear no revolution and no anarchy, for the Lord has established this kingdom upon a rock and it cannot be moved or removed! When the sun and moon are blown out in darkness and when the stars fall like the withered leaves of autumn, the kingdom in which we rejoice shall enjoy perpetual prosperity, as it is written, "Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and your dominion endures throughout all generations." Receiving such a kingdom, what are we bound to do? I would cast silver chains about you to hold you fast to your Lord! I would fasten anew these silken chains upon you to bind you to your God! You have received a *kingdom*! You can never pay back the millionth part of what you owe!

Today, however, let the sweet love of Christ constrain you to judge that if He made you kings, it is for you to crown Him King with all your hearts! And if He has given you a kingdom that cannot be moved by you, it is for you to be "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Is it not a splendid thought that when we do anything for God, though it is but the simple offering of a prayer, or the helping of a fatherless child, we may do it with all the holy dignity of princely priests? A certain set of men arrogate to themselves exclusively the title of priests and so deny the priesthood of every Believer. In this they act like Korah, Dathan and Abiram, thrusting themselves into an office which does not belong to them, and intruding out the true priests of the living God. Has not the Lord said to all His people, "You are a royal priesthood"?

As for any who receive a supposed priesthood by laying on of hands of bishops, we know nothing of them except that they err, not knowing the true dignity of every Believer—they intrude into this priesthood so far as they pretend to possess priestly power beyond the lowest child of God, for they that believe in Jesus are, this day, made priests unto Him! With what sacred orderliness and saintly carefulness ought we to serve God because we serve Him not as common persons, if we are, indeed in Christ, but we worship Him as *priests* and *kings*! One of our early Saxon kings was rowed down the river Dee by Kenneth, of Scotland, and seven other vassal kings who, each one, tugged an oar while their lord reclined in state. The King of kings this day is served by kings—each man, each woman among us is made royal by the very fact of holy service! Let us labor for God not as slaves, but as kings!

Alas, I confess that sometimes I have not served the Lord as a king. I have put on the ragged robes of my unbelief and I have come up here mourning and groaning when I ought to have arrayed myself in royal apparel and served my Lord with joy and gladness! Some of God's own saints forget *what* they are and *where* they are, and they go to His service as if it were a toil and a drudgery—laboring as if they were galley slaves—and not rejoicing as princes who wait upon a great King! Brethren, your high dignity should make you joyful and you should perform the Lord's service with intense delight because of what He has done for you! It should be Heaven upon earth to be allowed to do *anything* for Jesus! "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have Grace, by which we may serve God acceptably."

II. There is much to dwell upon in the first clause, but I must now turn to my second point. Acceptable service must be rendered to God IN THE POWER OF DIVINE GRACE. What says the Apostle? “Let us have Grace, by which we may serve God acceptably.” Note, then, that acceptable service to God is not offered in the power of *nature*—not even of nature at its best when we call it good nature and philanthropy—but in the service of God everything must be the fruit of Grace! You are to serve the Lord, not in the strength of your own wit or experience, or talent, but in the energy of the new life which God has given you and in the power of the Grace which is continually bestowed upon you, moment by moment, as you seek it of the Lord. “Let us have Grace,” says the Apostle.

I know sometimes you say, and say truly, “What a poor creature I am. How can I serve God? I have not this and that gift.” Just so, do not attempt to serve Him in the power of *gifts*. Ask for Grace and then worship Him in the power of Grace! It is wonderful how Grace can make use of very slender gifts and turn them to abundant account! It is great Grace that greatly honors God—and great Grace is always to be had by the least among us. You may never be an orator but you may have great Grace! You may never be an organizer and take the lead among your fellow Christians—but you may have much Grace. You may never attain to ample wealth so as to be able to distribute largely of your substance to the poor—but you may have great Grace. Therefore, let us have Grace that we may serve God acceptably!

I should like to take these words out of their context and hang them up for our slogan as a Church—“LET US HAVE GRACE.” Be this our prayer! Whatever else we do *not* have, Lord, let us have Grace! If this or that means of usefulness shall be denied us, yet let us have Grace. Grace in our hearts, Grace in our speech, Grace in our lives, Grace in our every breath! A true Christian should be like Aaron who had the holy oil not only on his head, but upon the skirts of his garments. Even in our little things, in our kitchen life, in our parlor life—something of the holy oil should be upon us! Abundance of Grace is our need.

Now, dear Friends, have you been trying to serve God in the power of Grace, or in the power of nature? Look well to it. Only Grace can God accept—can He accept your labor? In the margin of our Testaments—I mean those of the authorized version which will never be parted with for the so-called revised version—in the margin of the authorized version we read, “Let us hold fast to Grace.” That is another slogan I would like to give to this Church—“LET US HOLD FAST TO GRACE.” To find Grace is an act. To have Grace is a state. To hold it fast is to make the act perpetual and the state continual! “Let us hold fast to Grace.” There is such a thing as serving God and losing Grace while you are so doing. You may become like Martha, worried about your serving, and you may be cross with Mary because she does not work as you do, but preserves her heavenly communion.

It is easy to have so much to do for Jesus that you lose Him amid your cares. It is possible to be busy, here and there, and to miss the essence of service by not holding fast to Grace. O to dip our feet in oil so that every

step shall have unction with it and in every movement we shall hold fast to Grace! Now you may look at the new version if you like and in the margin you will find another reading which is allowable, though it has no great certainty about it. There we read—"Let us have thankfulness." That grand word, *Charis* or "Grace," may be rendered, "thankfulness," and it is in a thankful spirit that we should serve God. You have received a kingdom, therefore serve God in the spirit of gratitude. Do everything because you feel you *must* do it since such an infinite amount of love has been lavished upon you.

No one suggested to the holy woman in the Gospels to break her alabaster box over Jesus' head. It was her own thought and her own deed. Nobody even *encouraged* her to do it. Some rather looked askance upon her as she poured out the precious perfume, but she did it all for Jesus! She loved much, for much had been forgiven her. This is the true spirit of service! God keep us always filled with it! Let us have Grace! Let us hold fast to Grace! And in the power of these three sentences we shall be helped to "serve God acceptably, with reverence, and godly fear."

III. But now, thirdly, we must advance another step. To "serve God acceptably" WE MUST DO IT WITH REVERENCE. These two words in the text are much mixed up in the various readings and it is almost impossible to divide the sense between them with accuracy. But yet I think I shall give the whole sense even if I do not allot a due proportion of meaning to each separate word. Acceptable serving or worshipping of God must be done with "reverence." The word, according to Bishop Hopkins, signifies a holy shamefacedness. The angels veil their faces with their wings when they worship the Most High and we must veil ours with humility! The angels feel their own littleness when they stand before the Presence of the dread Supreme.

You and I who are much less than angels and have sinned—we, I say, should, when we come before God, be covered with blushes. Our heart should be filled with wonder that we are called to this high privilege though we are so unworthy of it. Let each one feel, "the Lord has made me a king; but what a marvel that this deed should be worked on me! Oh that I should be called to such a noble estate as this!" If some poor girl were suddenly called away from the milk pail and lifted from poverty and hard servitude to be the bride of a prince, the very thought of it would bring crimson to her cheeks! "Can it be?" she would ask. And I can imagine that when she was brought to court, there would be a noticeable bashfulness and shamefacedness about her.

Such holy shame ought to be upon us whenever we stand before the Lord to minister unto Him. Is it not said, "You shall be ashamed and confounded and never open your mouth any more"? Not because of a servile dread of God, but out of an overwhelming sense of His unutterable love we blush to be so highly favored! This reverence, this shamefacedness, should come upon us when we remember what we were. When you stand up in a Prayer Meeting and pray, dear Friends, some of you cannot help remembering the time when you could swear or sing a questionable song. You are accepted among your Brethren and honored by them, but the

time was when you kept very different company—do you not blush as you think of it? You may not only think of what you *were*, but of what you *are*, because even *now*, though God favors you by allowing you to do Him service, yet you know what evil lurks within you! A very Hell of corruption lies within the best saint and if the Grace of God did not restrain it, he would soon be found among the chief of sinners!

Moreover, bashfulness should be created not only by the thought of what you might be, but by a sight of your service, itself. Perhaps your fellow creatures are saying, “That is well done,” but you will go home and lament to yourself, saying, “Ah, they do not know my faults. They little know what mean motives cropped up even when I was trying to glorify my God.” “That was a fine sermon,” said one to Mr. Bunyan. The good man answered, “You are too late, the devil told me that before I left the pulpit.” Satan soon suggests to God’s servants some lofty notion and they are tempted to appropriate to themselves the honor which belongs only to God! Ah, what a fool I am that even when I seek to be lowest at the feet of my Lord, I find myself satisfied with my humility!

Do we not too often rather mimic humility than actually attain to it? Besides, it should always make us blush to think of the dignity of the service to which we are called, for who are we and what is our father’s house that the Lord should have brought us to this? Servants of God! You Knights of the Garter! You princes of the blood royal! What are all your earthly honors when compared with the holy dignity of servants of the Most High? Oh, that in the spirit of lowly gratitude we may always serve the thrice-holy One!

IV. The other word is, “and godly fear.” And this suggests that we should serve God IN THE SPIRIT OF HOLY CHEERFULNESS. What sort of fear is this? For, “perfect love casts out fear, because fear has torment.” Observe that it is the fear that has torment which perfect love casts out—but not this godly fear which is quite consistent with our joy in receiving a kingdom! The more we have of this godly fear, the better for us. We ought to fear lest we should offend the Lord even while we are serving Him—fear lest the sacrifice should be a blemished one and so be rejected at the altar—fear lest there should be something about our spirit and temper which would grieve the Lord. He is a jealous God and must be served with holy carefulness. O for more of it!

I do not know how my Brethren feel who say they are perfect, but I am obliged to confess that when I would do good, evil is present with me, and that though I would serve God like a seraph, without one stray thought, or one selfish desire, yet I have by no means reached this attainment! I press forward towards the mark and hope to reach it, but it is, at present, far beyond me! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, much of holy fear should be upon us because we may so easily offend the Lord when we think we are pleasing Him! Beware of presumptuous boldness before God! Let us not be rash with our speech, much less rude and coarse. I know that modes of worship which offend my taste may, nevertheless, be accepted with God, because He sees through the rough shell and judges according to the sweet kernel. Yet I fear that thoughtless, bragging, noisy services must of-

fend the Lord, for it is so unlike that which was offered by His gentle, tender, well-beloved Son.

If Christ is the Model which He sets before us, some are far away from the mark! At any rate, let us never wantonly go into a wild, boisterous mannerism, for though we are the Lord's children and very near to Him, yet He is in Heaven and we are upon the earth. He is the thrice holy and we are sinners. The Psalmist says, "Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling." There is another form of godly fear which comes over every genuine Christian at times—the fear lest, after all, he should *not* be serving God at all. What if I have preached to others and should be, after all, merely preaching because it is my vocation? What if you should be teaching in the Sunday school and should be doing it only because it is customary for professing people of your station to have some good work to do? My dear Brothers and Sisters, it is not for me to doubt you and I do not doubt you half as much as I doubt myself, but it is necessary that we question ourselves as to whether we are, indeed, the servants of God, or are living for ourselves.

Knowing that God is to be served in His own way and in that, alone, there ought to be a godly fear as to whether we are walking in His ordinances or are following the traditions of men. God does not care for worship which He has never required at our hands. If a man invents a ceremony, he may think it helpful and instructive, but he has no right to practice it if God has not appointed it. If any of you are practicing rites and ceremonies which are not according to God's Word, I charge you cease from such will-worship, for the spirit which leads you to practice these things is the spirit of Rome and of antichrist! If God has not commanded it, God cannot accept it!

Not only are we to worship the true God, only, which is the Law of the First Commandment, but we must worship the true God in His own way, which is the spirit of the Second Commandment. The Second Commandment, as it forbids all worshipping of God through images, does, in the spirit of it, forbid all worshipping of God in any other way than He has prescribed. Therefore when you stand before the Lord, ask yourself, "Did He require this service of me? Is this the way in which He would be worshipped?" For if not, it is no better than idolatry and cannot be accepted by the living God! Oh, what fear and trembling, what solemn awe, what sacred carefulness should fall upon the man who draws near to serve and worship the Lord our God!

V. Now, lastly, there is another thing to be remembered in acceptable services. We must cultivate A PROFOUND SENSE OF THE DIVINE HOLINESS and of the wrath of God against sin, "For our God is a consuming fire." Observe, then, from this most solemn sentence, that the God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament! Read Deuteronomy 4:24 and you will find these words, "For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." The same words describe the God of the New Testament! I know the boasted wisdom of the age tells us that we have made a great advance upon Old Testament Revelation. It is not so. We may understand the Book somewhat better, but the Revelation is the same. God

wears the same Character as in the days of Moses, David and the Prophets.

The Lord God who is to be served by us, even as our Covenant God, is a “consuming fire.” In love He is severely holy, sternly just. We hear people say—“God out of Christ is a consuming fire.” That is an unwarrantable alteration of the text. The text is, “*Our God*,” that is God *in Christ* is a consuming fire! “Our God” means God in Covenant with us. It means our Father God, our God to whom we are reconciled—even our God is still a “consuming fire.” A large proportion of nominal Christians do not believe in this God. They profess reverence to a *merciful* God. But the moment you preach His justice, they are indignant! The God who is a consuming fire is not accepted by this proud “19th Century.” I do this day most solemnly declare my faith in the God of the Hebrews who will, by no means, spare the guilty! The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the one and only God and I declare Him, this day, to be my God!

Jehovah is the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall He be called! He that smote Pharaoh at the Red Sea. He that smote kings and slew mighty kings is my God and I believe in Him as the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I know no God but Abraham’s God, Jehovah, the I AM! Under the New Testament, God is not an atom less severe than under the Old. And under the Covenant of Grace the Lord is not a particle less righteous than under the Law. We are so saved by mercy that no sin goes unpunished—the Law is as much honored under the Gospel as under the Law! The substitution of Jesus as much displays the wrath of God against sin as even the flames of Hell would do!

While the Lord is merciful, infinitely so, and His name is Love, yet still our God is a consuming fire and sin shall not live in His sight. If your offering and mine is evil, it will be an abomination unto Him. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity! If our worship and service are mingled with hypocrisy and pride, He will not endure them. You will be rather surprised when I say that this dreadful sentence is my *hope*—it is a joy to me that our God is a consuming fire! Behold two altars upon Carmel. The Baalites have laid their victim upon one of them. Do you see them as they prance about the altar and even leap upon it? Do you hear them as they cry and cut themselves with knives and lancets? “O Baal, hear us! O Baal, hear us!” There lies the sacrifice—there is no trace of Baal’s hearing them, for their god is *not* a consuming fire!

Now comes Elijah. “Pour water,” he says, “on the bullock. Do it a second time! Do it a third time.” And they fetch up, from the sea, huge buckets and pour the water over everything until the trenches are filled with it. And now the Prophet lifts up his prayer to Heaven! Down comes the *fire*! It is God’s sacrifice and God accepts it! He is a *consuming fire* and the token of His Presence is so manifest that the people cry, “Jehovah, He is the God, He is the God!” Turn your eyes, again, to Solomon’s Temple gorgeous with gold and precious stones. The king pleads with the Lord of the whole earth to accept the shrine.

Lo, the priests are present in their robes of office and the sacrifice is waiting on the altar. If no fire descends, there is no acceptance. But we

read, "The fire came down from Heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the Glory of the Lord filled the house." If I am a true and sincere man. If I am believing in Jesus and I have brought my humble sacrifice with fear and reverence before God, then it will be accepted—for He is a consuming fire—and my sacrifice will be consumed and go up to Him! It may be some of you who have been working this week will think to yourselves, "We did very well, we hope to be honored for it." So you shall be—but if you take credit to yourselves, you will be robbing the altar of God! If God accepts your sacrifice, it will all be consumed by His fire. Look, the accepted sacrifice is all gone, it is utterly consumed!

When God enables us to serve Him and takes away from us all self-congratulation, we ought to be very thankful. This proves that it is all burned with fire. If God had not accepted it, then we might have reserved portions of it for ourselves, to feed our vanity—and that would be to feed ourselves *without* fear. But if the Lord has taken every morsel from the mouth of self, we have great cause for rejoicing! If the Lord accepts us, His fire will consume us! The zeal of His House will eat us up! When we go home to the Lord above, we dread not His Presence, though He is a consuming fire. Those whom He has purified and made white are not afraid of the flames of His holiness!

Remember that blessed text, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burning? He that walks righteously and speaks uprightly. He that despises the gain of oppressions, that shakes his hands from the holding of bribes, that stops his ears from the hearing of blood and shuts his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high." It shall be the glory of the gracious and the true that God is their element! It shall be their bliss to live in the full splendor of His perfect holiness! They shall be like their Lord, for they shall see Him as He is. Everything that is holy will endure Your fire and as for all within us that is impure, let it be consumed speedily!

So let us serve the Lord with fear, but not with terror. And let this service be continued all our days. Let us bring the sacrifices of the last week to Him, with repentance for every fault, humbly pleading that by His Grace He will accept it, and earnestly desiring that all we have done may redound to His Glory through Jesus Christ, His Son, to whom be honor, world without end! Amen.

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A LESSON AND A FORTUNE FOR CHRISTIAN MEN OF BUSINESS NO. 1880

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, JANUARY 24, 1886.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 12, 1885.**

***“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content
with such things as you have: for He has said, I will
never leave you, nor forsake you.”
Hebrews 13:5.***

THE Apostle warns us against a tendency very natural to our race. “Let your conversation be without covetousness.” I am afraid that the precept is even more needed, now, than in the days of the Apostle. We are still more sharp and keen in competition and men in trade are even more anxious to accumulate money than they were in Apostolic times. It is not easy for a man to keep his heart clear of covetousness, or his hands clean from moral bribes. There is a singular stickiness about gold and silver. They have a great tendency to birdlime our souls and hold them fast, so that they cannot rise superior to their influence. The Revised Version reads our text, “Be you free from the love of money” and it puts in the margin, “Let your turn of mind be free from the love of money.” May we all enjoy that freedom and may our turn of mind lead us to seek better things than the miser is able to hoard!

There is a laudable pursuit of gain, without which business would not be properly carried on, but there is a line, scarcely as broad as a razor's edge, between diligence in business and greediness for gain. We can so easily pass from the one into the other that we may hardly be aware of it. When a man is increasing his investments, when he is extending his agencies, when he is enlarging his warehouse, when he is employing a larger number of persons than formerly, or even when he is bemoaning the depression of his trade and his heart is aching because he has only half as much business as before, covetousness may insinuate itself into his conversation. It is a snake which can enter at the smallest opening. It lurks in the grass where it is long, but it glides, also, where the pasture is bare. It may come in either in prosperity or in adversity and it is necessary to whisper in the ear of each Believer, whether going up or down in

the world, "Let your conversation—*your daily conduct*—be without covetousness."

Any Brother here—and it is to the Brothers, mainly, that the temptation comes, I think—any Brother here may have present need of such a warning as this. And if he does not need it just now, he may lay it by till he does, for it will keep. But let me not restrict the text or the sermon to the male side of the house. The Sisters may fall into a like temptation, in the saving, as their husbands in the getting. You godly matrons, you industrious Marthas, "Let your conversation be without covetousness."

The Apostle here hints at what is the real cure for covetousness, namely, *contentment*. This is a rare drug in the market. The words of the Apostle make up a golden sentence—"Be content with such things as you have."

It is supposed by most persons that they could be content if they were not exactly what they are and where they are. But the precept exhorts them to be content with their *present* circumstances. If they had a little more, they would be satisfied—but that is not the contentment to which we are exhorted! It is written, "Be content with such things as you have." If God has multiplied your possessions, you ought the more readily to be content with such things as you have, though I am not sure you will be, for there is a saltiness in the water which comes out of wells dug by the Philistines, so that he who drinks from them shall thirst again. I once thought that a million would satisfy any mortal man, but I have been assured by one who has considerable experience in that direction, that he who has one million is unable to see any reason why he should not have two or ten!

However, I may let that pass, for millions or thousands are not likely to tempt the most of us who are here assembled. If you have little possessions, yet still listen to the voice of Wisdom, which says, "Be content with such things as you have." You now have a measure of trouble by reason of the straitness of your means. You might have more trouble with the breadth of your means if you had all you would like to have! It may not be quite easy to travel when your garments are too short, but it is much harder to keep them from dragging in the mire when they are too long. Though a single staff is such a convenience that a traveler without one may sigh for it, yet a dozen canes would be a load which would make the burdened man prefer, rather, to have no staff at all than to have so many to carry. I believe that it is an advantage to have wealth when wealth is kept in its right place, but the difficulty is that the horse often runs away with the rider and he who has wealth too often loses his liberty and falls into sore bondage by becoming the slave of his own possessions! "Be content with such things as you have." After all, contentment drinks the cream of life. So far as earthly things are concerned, he is the happiest, no—he is the *richest* man who is content with such things as he has!

The ripest apple in the garden grows on the tree of contentment. The garments which fit us best are the most fit for us and are the most comfortable to wear. He who is where he *should* be and where he *would* be

has no cause to envy Solomon in all his glory. He that lives in the Valley of Humiliation among the fragrant flowers and the sweet-voiced birds—and looks up to Heaven for his treasure and to God for his home—*he* is the happiest of mortal men! God teach us how to shun the vice of covetousness by cultivating the virtue of contentment! May the sweet flower choke the ill weed! “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have.”

I asked a question, some years ago, of a person whom I believed to be one of the most covetous individuals in my acquaintance, and I received from him a singular reply. I said, “How was it that St. Francis de Sales, who was an eminent confessor, to whom persons went in the Romish church to confess their sins, found that persons confessed to him, in private, all sorts of horrible sins, such as adultery, drunkenness and murder, but never had one person confessed the sin of covetousness?” I asked this friend whether he could tell me why it was and he gave me this answer which certainly did take me rather aback. He said, “I suppose it is because the sin is so extremely rare.” Blind soul! I told him that, on the other hand, I feared the sin was so very common that people did not know when they were covetous and that the man who was most covetous of all was the last person to suspect himself of it! I feel persuaded that it is so. Covetousness breeds an insensibility in the heart, a mortification in the conscience, a blindness in the mind! It is as hard to convict a man of it as to make a deaf ear hear of its own deficiencies. You cannot make a horse-leech see the impropriety of desiring to suck—to all your expostulations it renders the one answer, “Give, give.”

Covetousness goes about in disguise. In the “Holy War,” we read that when Diabolus sent traitors to lurk about the town of Mansoul, he sent among the rest a young fellow named Covetousness. But when he entered into the town of Mansoul, he took the name of Mr. Prudent Thrifty and he was engaged at once as a servant. I think it was in the house of Mr. Conscience, the Recorder. He seemed such a likely young man, this youth of the name of Prudent Thrifty. Now, mind you, Friends, when you are taking a servant, that you do not engage one with the name of Prudent Thrifty, for I have information that he comes of the family of the Greedies and that his true name is, “Covetousness,” though it may be long before you find it out! His near relations are the Screws, the Skinflints, and the Grab-Alls, but he will not admit them, but always mentions his great-uncle, Squire Prudence and his mother’s brother, Professor Economy, of the University of Accumulation. You will have need to carry your eyes in your head if you mean to practice the precept, “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have.”

I am exceedingly glad that the Apostle Paul had met with certain covetous Hebrews. This Epistle was written by a Hebrew of the Hebrews, to the Hebrews! And Hebrews, from Jacob, downwards, were never quite free from this sin. They are not so today. I am glad he met with some of them because, in giving an exhortation to them, he let drop one of the choicest pearls in all the treasury of God’s Word—a pearl which Gentiles will prize

as much as their brethren, the Jews. Here it is—"For He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you." This is the reason why we must not be covetous! There is no room to be covetous, no *excuse* for being covetous, for God has said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." We ought to be content! If we are not content, we are acting insanely, seeing the Lord has said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." If we have God's *Presence*, God's help, God's Covenant favor, God's gracious Providence, God's Covenant engagements for our good—what more can we need?

I. The first observation I am going to make upon this most weighty text is this—THAT A WORD OF THE LORD IS OF GREAT WEIGHT TO A BELIEVER. Paul said, "Let your conversation be without covetousness." And there was weight in that. He added, "Be content with such things as you have." And there was weight in that, also, for there was Inspiration at the back of each sentence. But when he went on to say, "FOR HE HAS SAID," and to bring in the Person of God as distinctly speaking to each one of us, saying, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you," then he felt that he had brought the weightiest argument that he, himself, as an Inspired man, could think of! When Jehovah Himself speaks, there is no excuse for doubting, questioning, or, answering back! When God Himself deals with our souls, we are like wax under the seal—at least we desire to be so.

I want you, my Hearer, to discern whose child you are by this. I observe, growing up everywhere, a trifling with the Word of God, a questioning of this and a questioning of that. I am not half so much concerned about the false doctrine that is being taught when the teacher of it thinks he gets it from the Bible, as I am when I find men treating the Bible as though it were just nothing at all, or, at least, an exceedingly small matter! If the Scripture stands in their way, our modern divines drive a tunnel through it as readily as men make a railroad through a hill! They toss the sacred Book on one side, as if it were quite a common document which might be treated with indifference, since the age has outgrown its Bible. Now, mark this—by this shall you know whether you are a child of God, or not—by the respect that you have to your Father's Word. If you have small respect for that Word, the evidences of a bastard are upon you!

If you tremble at God's Word. If you stand in awe of it. If you can read the 119th Psalm through and can join with David in intense delight in the Law of God, you have the traits of a true-born child of God—and the Book is yours—with all that it contains! But if not, you are one of the children of that Evil One who questioned the Word of the Lord in the beginning and continues to deny it to this day! If you pick and choose in the teachings of Inspiration. If you believe this and slight that, you make yourself a judge of that which is your Judge—and you have not the tokens of a child of God! See well to this, for there is more in this test than quibblers will allow. That which they lightly esteem is precious in the sight of the Lord! If you are a child of God, you may find it necessary to protest against what I say on my own authority, for what am I but a poor creature like yourself? If you are a child of God, you may have to stand out against even that

which is a settled doctrine among renowned divines, for we know no human authority in the Church of God!

But if you are a child of God, a single text will be enough for you. I set a solitary passage of God's Word against a Sanhedrim of philosophers! They may argue and dogmatize as they will, but one Word from the mouth of the Lord has more weight than all their counsels! If God's Light and God's Word are not in them, we need not pay any attention to them. Even the babe in Grace shall triumph, by the aid of God's Word, over the most learned and mighty of those who despise the Book! The day is coming when all this "modern thought" will pass away like the leaves in autumn. How soon shall the white frost of scientific infidelity pass from off the face of the Lord's green pastures! O Jerusalem, those who invade you shall be as the foam upon the waters! Where is the scribe? Where are the counters of the towers? God has made *nothing* of the great ones and made foolishness of the wisdom of this world! By this shall you know the children of God—one Word of God has weight and authority with them—but the seed of the serpent still say, "Yes, has God said?"

See then the argument—"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for *He has said.*" That "*He has said*" is the hammer which drives the nail home and clinches it with every true child of God!

II. My second observation is this—THE WORD OF THE LORD MAY HAVE A THOUSAND FULFILMENTS.

When man makes a promise and he keeps it, that promise is done with. You cannot expect a banker to pay a check a second time. The merchant who duly meets his bill, once, has met it once and for all, and the document is, from that time, of no value. But when God makes a promise He fulfils it, fulfils it and fulfils it, again, and again, and again, to the same man and to hundreds of other men! The Lord's promise once given is never recalled! He does as good as give forth each Inspired promise every moment anew—He is forever promising that which is once promised in His Word! He has made a promise for all time when He has once made it. So long as there shall be need of such a promise, God will never speak in secret, in a dark place of the earth and revoke what He has said—

***"Engraved as in eternal brass
The mighty promise shines!
Nor can the powers of darkness erase
Those everlasting lines"***

Now, I do not think this particular promise is recorded anywhere in the Old Testament in these exact words. There are great differences between the Hebrew and the Septuagint and, this particular Greek text, "He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you," is not to be found with exact accuracy in either. I suspect that this is, in fact, a household Word of the Lord our God, which, though you find the line of it in Scripture, need not to have been expressly recorded there, because, essentially, and from the very nature of things, it must be true of Jehovah our God. He who is the God of Grace and of Immutable Love, has virtually said, by His very Na-

ture, to those that seek His face, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” All that we *know* about God, says, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” All that we have ever *experienced* about God, all that our fathers have experienced, goes to show that Jehovah does not forsake His people, nor cast away those whom He did foreknow.

Still, this promise is in the Word of God—if not in the letter of it, exactly—yet in the full meaning and spirit of it, which is more. For instance, we meet with this promise, probably, first of all, when Jacob fell asleep, after he had left his father’s house, a lone man, to go off to a land which he had never seen. You will remember, in the 28th chapter of Genesis, how it was recorded that Jacob lay down in a certain place which would seem to have been a lonely, rugged den. And as he lay and slept, he dreamed a dream and beheld a wondrous ladder set upon the earth, the top of which reached to Heaven and, behold, the angels of God ascended and descended on it! Then it was that the Lord said to him, “I am with you and will keep you in all places where you go and will bring you, again, into this land, for I will not leave you until I have done that which I have spoken to you of.”

That is a blessed shape of the promise, is it not?—“I will not leave you until I have done that which I have spoken to you of.” That assurance meant—“I will bless you and I will bless your future seed. I will give you all the blessedness which you are able to receive at My hands and I will not leave you till I have fulfilled with you the Covenant of which you are the heir.” So the Lord, in effect, says to each Believer at this hour, “I will not leave you till I have done that which I have spoken to you of.” All the processes of Grace shall be carried out in each humble, trustful soul! Our heavenly Father may be heard to say to each one of us by the Holy Spirit—“I have washed you from your sin in the precious blood of Christ. I will also deliver you from the stain, the power and the indwelling of sin. I will perfect you. I will lead every thought captive to My love. I have already made you to be a partaker of My Grace and you shall surely be a partaker of My Glory.”

Come, child of God, is not that a blessed promise as Jacob received it? “Alas,” you say, “I do not know how to get a similar hold upon the promise.” Ah, that is the point! But there is a Word of the Lord in that vision which I should greatly like you to notice. The Lord said to Jacob, “I am the Lord God of Abraham, your father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon you lie, to you will I give it, and to your seed.” Brothers and Sisters, if you can lie down on a promise, the Lord has given it to you! There Jacob lies. He stretches himself out at full length and with all his weight, in all his weariness, he lies down and goes to sleep. And by that act he takes possession of the land where he lies! What a sweet and sure mode of inheriting promises, namely, by *resting* on them! Behold the promise and just say, “I believe this to be the sure and true Word of the Lord. I will gladly lie down on it.” Let your faith be serenely confident and then the promise rested on is yours! If you can lie down upon a promise, it is yours. Oh, for faith, then, to stretch ourselves upon the blessed Word of our text at this

moment! He has said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Let us each one say, O my God, I do believe this to be true and I hereby venture my body, soul and spirit upon this promise! For time and for eternity I trust my all with You!

Furthermore, our text occurs in the Book of Deuteronomy. We find Moses delivering this same Word of God, or one even more nearly like it than the Genesis edition, to the whole house of Israel just before they were about to cross into the land of Canaan to take possession of their inheritance. In the 31st of Deuteronomy, at the 6th verse, Moses said to the people, "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord your God, He it is that does go with you; He will not fail you, nor forsake you." When God's people are beginning a long and fierce warfare and when their enemies seem like giants in their sight, let them sharpen their swords upon this assurance, "He has said, I will not fail you, nor forsake you." Go on, then, though you seem as grasshoppers in the sight of your foes and in your own sight! Though there is very much land to be possessed, yet plunge into the war without fear, for, "He has said, I will not fail you, nor forsake you." We are able to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, since the Lord our God will be with us as our strength and our song, our sword and our shield!

In this same chapter of Deuteronomy you get the same text given to *Joshua*, who was the leader of the host, as also in the first chapter of the Book of Joshua, at the fifth verse, where the Lord expressly tells him, "I will not fail you, nor forsake you." If you, my Brother, are called to be a leader among God's people, your heart, I know, will sometimes grow very heavy. In the midst of my own band of worthies I am often sore put to it and you will be the same. You may meet defeats where you hoped for victories and faint hearts where you looked for heroes. But the Lord, who calls you to play the part of a Joshua among His people, will be Jesus to you, if you are Joshua for Him! He will stand at your side as the Captain of the Lord's host and you shall surely win the victory.

This is the same Word which was afterwards spoken to David in his gray old age when he was about to resign the scepter to his son, Solomon. Solomon had to build a great and exceedingly magnificent house for the Lord—and it was no small enterprise for so young a man. Therefore David, in the first Book of the Chronicles, at the 28th chapter, and the 20th verse, says to him, "Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord, even my God, will be with you; He will not fail you, nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord." Beloved, God was with Solomon in his colossal enterprise! He did build the Temple. Whatever treasure was needed came in due time. Whatever art and skill were required—and the Temple needed skill of a very unusual order for that early age of the world—yet everything was forthcoming! Tyre and Sidon yielded themselves as the servants of the God of the Hebrews for the building of the Temple! To the astonishment of the age, the great Temple was built and became the Glory of all lands, for the Lord did not fail His servant!

You see, then, we have found four cases in which this promise was fulfilled. It held good after it had been already carried out! Are you, my Brother, leaving your father's house as a young man? Are you about to enter upon a very perilous course of life that will be set thick with trials, like the life of Jacob with Laban? "Fear not, for God will not fail you, nor forsake you." On the other hand, are you as a child of God fighting with inward sin, because the Canaanite is still in the land? Is the inward spiritual battle very severe just now? Yet, "He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Or, are you responsible for others? Are you called to watch for souls and to lead others to the conflict? Be not cast down nor disquieted, as you will be very apt to be if you look to *yourself*, for this is an office involving sore travail! Find your strength in this Word of God—"He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Is it that God has put into your hands some great work to do for His name? Is your whole life to be as a temple, adorned with the riches of faith and the glories of hope and love? Fear not, you shall finish your design! You shall make a temple for God to dwell in. Go boldly on in the matter to which God has called you! Go to the quarries, or to the gold mines and do as God bids you, for, "He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

So you see the promise is, in many ways, fulfilled. I have seen a check for a million pounds. I have seen only one in my life. I handled it. It is now on the wall of a friend's house, framed and glazed, but it is worth nothing as money. I suppose the million pounds were paid—the check is so marked. It is of no use to anyone. If a thief were to get in and steal it, it would be of no use to him. But God's promises are *always* useful—you may receive them and still receive them—over and over again! They stand forever true and they are true this night to you and to me! If the world shall last 10,000 years, as I hope it may *not*, yet the promise will remain as a nail fastened in a sure place—"I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

Thus have we had two observations. And I will now make a third with great brevity.

III. The WORD OF THE LORD IS TO BE APPROPRIATED BY EACH CHILD OF GOD AND ACTED ON. "He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

I like this singularity of the person. You see, Paul had been saying in general, "Let *your* conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as *you* have." And then he changes from the plural and writes, "for He has said, I will never leave *you*, nor forsake *you*." When the Lord speaks in this instance, His promise is in the *singular*. He speaks to us with that—I do not know what to call it unless I use a French word—sweet *tu-toiage*, which is the language of endearment, the chosen speech of love. When one man speaks to another and means him to know that his promise is assuredly and altogether for him and that he is most lovingly his friend, he cannot do better than use the singular and personal pronoun. "I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

Take the “you,” plural, out of all God’s promises, and put the singular “you” in its place, for you are permitted to do so! We make fearful failures with God’s promises through not appropriating them. I have heard of a Sunday school teacher who performed an experiment which I do not think I shall ever try with Sunday school children, for it might turn out exactly as it did in his case. He had been trying to illustrate what faith was and, as he could not get it into the minds of his children, he took his watch, and he said, “Now, I will give you this watch, John. Will you have it?” John fell thinking what the teacher could mean and did not seize the treasure. He said to the next, “Henry, there is the watch. Will you have it?” The boy replied, “No, thank you, Sir,” with a very proper modesty. He went by several boys, till, at last a youngster who was not so wise or thoughtful as the others, but rather more believing, said, “Thank you, Sir,” and put the watch into his pocket! Then the other boys woke up to a startling fact—their companion had received a watch and they had not! One of the boys enquired of the teacher, “Is he to keep it?” “Of course he is,” said the teacher, “I put the watch before you and said that I gave it to you, but none of you accepted it.” “Oh,” said the boy, “if I had known you meant it, I would have taken it.” And all the boys were in a dreadful state of mind to think that they had lost the watch. Each one cried, “I did not think you meant it, *but I thought.*” Each one said, “Please, teacher, I thought.” Each one had his theory except the simple little boy who believed what he was told and got the watch!

Now, I wish that I could always be such a simple child as literally to believe what the Lord says and live by that belief. The Apostle drives us to such practical faith when he says, “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

You smiled just now. I do not think that there was any harm in your doing so, but I will tell you what we must not smile at, and that is, I believe that nine out of 10 of you do not believe that God has said to you, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” You think you do, but you do not! You also have got some most powerful reason why you dare not take the watch—I mean the *promise*. You are so wise that you feel that you cannot expect the Lord to interfere in any way for you. No, no, no—either you are not worthy of it (which is quite correct)—or else you do not like to take things quite so literally, or there is some other reason why you cannot literally accept the Divine assurance! There are, perhaps, one or two fools among us who have got a hold of God’s Word and actually believe it to be a matter of fact. But I do not think that many are so simple. Those who do so are generally poor obscure persons, but I should greatly envy them if I were not one of their number. With all my heart I do believe, “He will never leave me, nor forsake me.”

When the service is over, I know who will go away with dancing feet and sparkling eyes, to sleep sweetly through the night and wake tomorrow morning fresh as the lark with a song on his tongue. It is that poor simpleton of a Christian who really believes his God and says, “Yes, He will

never leave me, nor forsake me!" Though he has scarcely a shoe to his foot; though he has scarcely a copper in his pocket; and though he is brought very low and has to live from hand to mouth, yet if he has grasped the promise, he has such a wellspring of delight within him that his soul shall be satisfied in time of drought and in the days of famine he shall be filled to the fullest! Oh, to be full of that blessed folly which treats God as He ought to be treated and believes what He says and acts accordingly—and finds it to be true! If you have a sham god, a sham faith, sham troubles and sham experiences, why, you are, yourself, altogether a sham! But he that believes in a real God and has such a real faith in God as a child has in its mother shall find God's promises to be the verity of verities!

IV. A further observation is this—EACH WORD OF GOD HAS ITS OWN USEFULNESS. This particular Word, that we have before us, is an illustration of this fact.

This particular text is an extraordinarily useful one, for, first, if you notice, *it covers all time*. "I will *never* leave you, nor forsake you." Well, if God will *never* leave me, He will not leave me *now*. If He will never leave me, no time is excluded from the word, "never." However dark or however bright, it says, "never." Suppose I am going to live till I am 90 or a 100—what then? You will call me a poor old soul, but He has said, "I will never leave you." Suppose I should be very sick, indeed, and my reason should begin to fail? Even then, "He has said, I will never leave you." Might there not occur a few minutes in which the Lord may forget me? Certainly not, "for He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Is not this a blessed cover for the whole of life and all the exigencies of it? It matters not how long we live! We cannot outlive—"I will never leave you." You that are familiar with the Greek text know that there are five negatives here. We cannot manage five negatives in English, but the Greeks find them not too large a handful. Here the negatives have a fivefold force. It is as though it said, "I will not, not leave you; I will never, no never, forsake you." Perhaps a verse of one of our hymns hits it off as nearly as can be—

***"The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes.
That soul, though all Hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."***

Our text covers all space, as well as all time. Suppose we emigrate. Suppose we are compelled to go to a backwoods settlement of America or Canada, or away to Australia or New Zealand? This promise will go with us all the way—"I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Suppose we have to take to sea and lead the risky life of a sailor? We will sail with this at the masthead—"I will never leave you." But suppose we should get into prison? Does not Jesus visit those who are prisoners for His name's sake? Has He not said, "I will never leave you?" Suppose we go up in the world and fall under great responsibilities? This goes up with us, "I will never leave you." Suppose, more likely, we go down in the world—this goes down with us, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

And then *it covers all circumstances*. “I will never leave you.” I may get to be a very childish old body. “I will never leave you.” But my dear children may all be dead and I may be quite a solitary person. “I will never leave you.” But every friend may turn tail and desert me. “I will never leave you.” But I may be in such a state that nobody will acknowledge me. “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

I find the first Greek word has something of this meaning, “I will never sit loose by you,” or, “I will never relax.” That is the root of the word. I will never let you slip. I will never let you go, as it were, from Me though holding you loosely.

The other word has in it something of the idea of a person remaining in a spot and another person going away from him and so forsaking him. The Lord seems to say, “I will never leave you where I cannot be with you. I will never let you stand alone. I will always be with you.”

This is a blessed, blessed promise! You see it takes in *all contingencies*, however serious. It takes in *all anticipations*, however doleful. It takes in *all suppositions*, and it includes *all actualities*. “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” Oh, dear! We sometimes sit down and imagine all manner of dreadful, dolorous things. I will not repeat what things I have said to myself, for I do not want you to know how foolish I sometimes am! But I have heard persons bemoaning themselves like this—“Perhaps I may lose my job. I may not get another. I may starve.” What comes of, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you?” Another says, “I fear I shall live to be very old. I do not know how I shall be supported. I shall get into the workhouse and have to be buried by the parish! I cannot bear to think of it.” Friend, do you not, after all, believe the Word, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you”?

I will tell you this morsel of my own faults. Sometimes I have said, “I suffer so much. I become so ill. I shall be so long away from the Tabernacle. The congregation will be greatly injured. Perhaps I shall never be able to preach again.” I have struggled to this pulpit when I could hardly stand. And when the service was over and I have been weary, the wicked whisper has come, “Yes, I shall soon be useless. I shall have to stay in my bed, or be wheeled about in a chair, and be a burden instead of a help.” This has seemed a dreadful prospect, but, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” has come in and I have shaken off my fears and, by His Grace, have rejoiced in the Lord my God!

Suppose we were to lose our eyes? We would still see God and God would see us! Suppose we were to lose our hearing? We would still hear our Father’s voice! Suppose we should gradually fail in every faculty? The Holy Spirit would still comfort us and be with us! Many children of God have been very happy in the most deplorable circumstances. And suppose we should die? Ah, well, that is the best thing that can be, for then we shall go Home to be with our heavenly Father forever!

I cannot, under the influence of this grand text, find room for doubt or fear! I cannot stand here and be miserable to-night! I am not going to attempt such a thing, but I cannot be despondent with such a text as this,

“I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” I defy the devil, himself, to mention circumstances under which I ought to be miserable if this text is true! Child of God, *nothing* ought to make you unhappy when you can realize this precious text!

Some of you cannot bask in this sunshiny promise. It is not yours! The words are “I will never *leave* you.” This implies that God must be with us—and if He is *not* with us, the promise is not ours. You cannot take home to yourself the promise, “I will never leave you,” if you have nothing to do with God! “I will not forsake you”—does not this, also, take something for granted? If the Lord has never been with you; if He has never forgiven you; if you have never sought His face; if you have never accepted His mercy in Christ Jesus, why, then, the promise is not yours and you have cause for trembling rather than for rejoicing! God is against you! He fits His arrow to the string. He prepares His bolts against you! Tremble, and submit yourself to Him! Oh, that you would do so at once—and trust in Jesus and live!

If the Lord is with you and if you are with Him, the promise stands forever, “I will never leave you.” If you have trusted in Him—if you *are* trusting in Him—He has said, “I will never forsake you.” Go away and rejoice, O child of God! You must have troubles. Where could we go to have no cares? Unless a man could leap over the edge of the universe, or fly from under this cloudy sky, how could he escape from care? If you were to dive to the bottom of the sea, this crooked serpent would bite you. If you could fly above the clouds, this eagle would pursue you. If you were to hide in the heart of the earth, the death damp would overpower you. But with all *actual* trouble, with all *possible* trouble, with all *impossible* trouble, if you bear this promise with you, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” you may sing hallelujahs both in life and in death! And with such music you may wing your way to the world of bliss!

Let us begin the music right now by singing right heartily—

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!
Praise Him all Creatures here below!
Praise Him above, you heavenly host!
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!”

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“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have, for He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”
Hebrews 13:5.

OBSERVE the way in which the Apostles were accustomed to incite Believers in Christ to the performance of their duties. They did not tell them, “You must do this or that, or you will be punished. You must do this and then you shall obtain a reward for it.” They never cracked the whip of the Law in the ears of the child of God. They knew the difference between the man who was actuated by sordid motives and the fear of punishment—and the newborn man who is moved by more sublime motives, namely, motives that touch his heart, that move his regenerated nature and that compel him, out of affection, to do the will of Him that sent him. Hence the address, here, is not, “Be content, or else God will take away what you have,” but, “Be content and have nothing to do with covetousness, for He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

The promise is made the argument for the precept! Obedience is enforced by a Covenant blessing. He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” What then? Shall I be discontented and covetous? No! But for the very reason that He has made, by His promise, my very safety absolute and unconditional, assuring me, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you”—for that reason I will keep covetousness and every other evil thing out of my conversation and will seek to walk contentedly and happy in the Presence of my God! See, Brothers and Sisters, this Gospel motive. It is a Free Grace argument. It is not a weapon taken from the arsenal of Mount Sinai, but taken from the region of the Cross and from the council chamber of the Covenant of Love!

Another thing in the text to which I would call your notice is this—that an Inspired Apostle who might very well have used his own original words, nevertheless, in this case, as indeed in many others, quotes the Old Testament. “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” Behold, then, the value of Holy Scripture! If an Inspired man quotes the text as of Divine authority, much more should we so regard it, who are with-

out such inspiration. We should be much in searching the Scriptures and when we want to clench an argument, or answer an opponent, it would always be well for us to take our weapon from the grand old Book and come down with, "He has said." Oh, there is nothing like this for force and power! *We* may think a thing, but what of that? Our opinions are but of little worth. General authority and universal opinion may sustain it, but what of that? The world has been more frequently wrong than right and public opinion is a fickle thing. But "*He* has said," that is to say, God has said—Immutable Truth and eternal fidelity have said God, who made Heaven and earth, and who changes not, though nations melt like the hoar frost of the morning—God who always lives when hills, mountains and this round world and everything upon it shall have passed away—"He has said!" Oh, the power there is in this, "He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you"! So, then, let us be much in searching the Scriptures, much in feeding upon them, much in diving into their innermost depths—and then afterwards much in the habit of quoting them, using them as arguments for the defense of the Truths of God, as weapons against error and as reasons to call us to the path of duty and to pursue it!

But now to come to the promise, itself, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." I shall call your attention, first of all, to—

I. THE REMARKABLE CHARACTER OF THIS PROMISE.

Is it not an amazing fact that while *others leave us and forsake us, that God never does?* It is to each one of His own redeemed people that He says, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." How often do men play false and forsake those whom they call their friends when those friends fall into *poverty*? Ah, the tragedies of some of these cruel forsakings! May you never know them! These so-called friends knew their friends when that suit of black was new, but how sadly their eyesight fails them, now it is turned to a rusty brown! They knew them extremely well when once a week they sat with their legs under their table and shared their generous hospitality—but they know them not, now that they knock at their door and crave help in a time of need!

Matters have changed altogether and friends that once were cherished are now forgotten. In fact, the man almost pities himself to think that he should have been so unfortunate to have a friend who has come down so and he has no pity for his friend because he is so much occupied in pitying himself! In hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands of cases, as soon as the gold has gone, the pretended love has gone! And when the dwelling has been changed from the mansion to the cottage, the friendship, which once promised to last forever, has suddenly disappeared!

But, Brothers and Sisters, God will never leave us on account of poverty! However low we may be brought, there it always stands—"I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Scant may be your board. You may

have hard work to provide things honest in the sight of all men. You may sometimes have to look and look again—and wonder by what straits you will be enabled to escape out of your present difficulty. But when all friends have turned their backs and when acquaintances have fallen from you like leaves in autumn, He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” Then beneath His bounty you shall find a shelter! And when these other hands are shut, His hands shall still be outstretched in loving kindness and tender mercy to help and deliver the soul of the needy!

Sometimes, and very often, too, men lose all their friends if they fall into any *temporary disgrace*. They may really have done no wrong—they may even have done right—but public opinion may condemn the course they took, or slander may be propagated which casts them into the shade! And then men suddenly grow forgetful. They do not know the man—how should they? He is not the same man—to them at any rate—and as the world gives him the cold shoulder, his friends serve him the same. The old proverb, “The devil take the hindmost,” seems to be generally the custom with our friends when we get into seeming disgrace! They are all off, seeing who can run away first, for they fear that they shall be left to share in our dishonor. But it is never so with our God. “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” You may be put into the dungeon, like Paul and Silas, but God will make you sing there, even at midnight! You may be set in the stocks, but even there God will cause you to greatly rejoice! You may be cast into the fiery furnace, but He will tread the flames with you! You may be so dishonored that men shall treat you as they did God’s only Son—and lift you up upon the cross of shame and put you to death—but you shall never ask, “Why have You forsaken me?” Your Lord said it when He bore your guilt, but *you* shall never need to say it, for your guilt is put away forever and Jehovah will stand by you in all your dishonor! And let me say here that there is never a child in the family that is dearer to the great Father than the child that is suffering shame and contempt from others! He loves them dearest when they suffer reproach for His sake! These are nearer to His heart than any other and He bids them rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great shall be their reward in Heaven if thus they bear and endure for His name! “I will never leave you, My persecuted one! I will pour such joy into your heart that you shall forget all the dishonor. I will send an angel to minister to you. Yes, I will, Myself, be with you and you shall rejoice in My salvation while your heart is glad and calm in the midst of the tumult and the strife around.”

Blessed be God, all the shame and spitting that men can put upon us can never put our God away, for, “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” Alas, sad is it for human nature that we must say it—how many have been forsaken when they have been no longer able to *minister*

to the pleasure and comfort of those who admired them while they profited by them! Some are thus thrown aside just as men throw away household stuff that is worn out and is of no further use. Depend upon it, men will not forsake us while they can get anything out of us! But when there is no longer anything to profit by, when the poor woman becomes so decrepit that she can scarcely move from her bed to her chair, when the man becomes so laid aside by accident or is so weak that he cannot take his place in the great march of life—then he is like the soldiers in Napoleon's march—he drops out of the line to die and thousands either march over him, or if they are a little more merciful, march by and around him! But few are those who will stop to care for such and attend to them. How often are the incurable forsaken and left! But He has said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." If we should get so old that we cannot serve the Church of God, even by a single word. If we should become so sick that we are only a burden to those of our house who have to nurse us. If we should grow so feeble that we could not lift our hand to our lip, yet the eternal love of Jehovah would not have diminished, no, not so much as by a single jot towards the souls whom He had loved from before the foundation of the world! However low your condition, you shall find God's love is always underneath for your uplifting! However weak you are, His strength shall be revealed in the everlasting arms that will not permit you to sink into disaster and your soul into Hell. This, then, is a very precious text! Others may forsake us for different reasons—too many to be mentioned now—but He has said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Well, then, let the rest go! If the Lord Jehovah stands at our right hand, we can well afford to see the backs of all our friends, for we shall find Friends enough in the Triune God whom we delight to serve!

Again, this is a very remarkable promise if we *think of our own conduct towards God*. "He has said, I will never leave *you*, nor forsake *you*." And have not we often said the same to Him? We were like Peter—we felt we did love our Savior—we were sure we did and we did not, could not believe that *we* could ever be so false or so faithless as to forsake *Him*. We almost longed for some temptation to prove how true we would be! We felt very vexed with other professors, that they should prove so untrue! We felt in our heart that we could not do like that and that we would stand firm under any imaginable pressure! But what became of us, my Brothers and Sisters? Charge your memories a moment. Did the rooster that accused Peter never accuse you? Did you never deny your Lord and Master and, at last, hearing the warning voice, go out and weep bitterly because you had forgotten Him—He whom you had declared so solemnly you would never forsake? Oh, yes, I fear we, many and many a time, have said, "I will never leave You, nor forsake You," and yet under some sarcasm, some ridicule, or some pressing trial, we have been like the

children of Ephraim and, though armed and carrying bows, we have turned our back in the day of battle! If your voice has never denied Christ, has your heart ever done so? If your tongue has remained silent, has not your soul sometimes gone back to the old flesh-pots of Egypt and said, "I would gladly find comfort once again where I did find it with my old companions and in the old ways"? Ah, well, as you think of this—how unkindly and ungenerously you have treated your Lord—let this text stand out in bold relief, "He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Although you have often forgotten Him, yet, His loving kindness changes not! Though you have been fickle, He has been firm! Though you have sometimes believed Him not, yet He has remained faithful—glory be to His name!

Again, this promise is a very remarkable one if we notice how *it overrides all the suggestions that might arise from a mere view of strict and severe justice*. It might be said, "Surely a child of God might justly be forsaken. He might so sin against God that it would only be just to leave him utterly to himself." Now, I am free to grant that a child of God might do so, no, that *all* the children of God do do so and that God would be just if He acted upon the stern principle of His Law to forsake His children as soon as ever they were converted, for it is not long after their conversion that they sin! And that sin is a special kind of treason against God. He would be just even if He cast them away! But what I desire to enforce is this—that the promise is remarkable because it makes no kind of provision for this in any sort of degree and under no imaginable circumstances! It does not say, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you if"—as certain brethren are prone to put it—"if—you do not forsake Me." Nor does it say, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you if you do such-and-such and such-and-such." It is an absolute promise without any perhappes, ifs, buts, conditions, or promises! "I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

He that believes in Jesus shall never be so left of God as to fall finally from Grace! He shall never be so deserted as to give up his God, for his God will never give him up so far as to let him give up his confidence, or his hope, or his love, or his trust! The Lord, even our God, holds us with His strong right hand and we shall not be moved! And even if we sin—sweet thought!—"If any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." Over the heads of all our sins and iniquities, this promise sounds like a sweet silver bell, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

Now, there are some that would make licentiousness out of this and go into sin, but in doing so they prove themselves not to be the children of God! They show at once that they know nothing of the matter, for the genuine child of God, when he has a promise which is unconditional,

finds holiness in it. Being moved by gratitude, he needs no buts, ifs, conditions, racks and scourges in order to do right. He is ruled by love, not by fear! He is governed by a holy gratitude which becomes a stronger bond to sacred obedience than any other bond that could be invented! Hence to the child of God, the knowledge that God will not leave nor forsake him, never suggests the thought of plunging into sin! He were an awful monster, indeed, if he did any such thing, but he hates it and he says—

***“Loved of my God, for Him again
With love intense I burn—
Chosen of Him ere time began
I choose Him in return.”***

Observe, then, how remarkable is the promise—so contrary to the manner of men, so contrary to our own conduct and so absolute and unconditional, that it is, indeed, marvelous that such a word should be on record. “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

I cannot leave this part of the subject without remarking that such a promise as this seems to me that *it makes a clean sweep of every suggestion to the child of God to be depressed in mind*. You tell me you do not feel, just now, as you did some time ago—you are not anything like so earnest and lively in the Divine ways.

When a Believer is in this state, it is sometimes suggested to him that doubtless he is not a Christian at all—and that he must go back altogether to Egypt in order to get Gospel liberty. This is foolishness! But this promise comes in and says to him, “God has not left you, nor forsaken you.” Whatever may be your present state of thought and feeling, however low you may have fallen, the Eternal God is still faithful! He has not forgotten you! Go to Him now—ask for reviving and refreshing, for He will surely give them to you. Conscience will, perhaps, say to some child of God tonight—indeed, I hope it will—“There has been much today in business that has not been what it should have been, and as you look back upon the day, you will see much to mourn over.” And then, perhaps, conscience will add, “Therefore God will leave you.” Now, if you come to believe that, you will live worse tomorrow than today! And the next day still worse! But if you can answer, “No, He has said, ‘I will never leave you, nor forsake you,’” and can go with child-like confidence to your God and confess the sins of the day and begin again washing once more in the precious Fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel’s veins, tomorrow there will be a better day! The joy of the Lord will be your strength against the sin and your confidence in your Father’s Immutable Affection will inspire you with zeal to trample down your temptations! Perhaps the devil may be injecting into your soul tonight all sorts of strange things—that God has quite forsaken you and that He will be gracious no more to you and other lies of that kind. But He has said, “I

will never leave you, nor forsake you,” and if you can get hold of this, it will be a sufficient refutation of all the suggestions of your own fear and of the infernal power! No, Satan! I will cast myself upon the precious blood of Jesus! And if God should take all my property away, yet He has not left me, nor forsaken me! I am sure of that! And if my spirit sinks so low that I dare not look up, yet still He has said He has not left me, and He never will! If my sins should roll over me like a big billow and my conscience should cry out against me—and I should feel no rest and no peace—yet still I will hold on to Jesus, sink or swim, for He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” And let God be true and every man and every devil—and even my own conscience—prove a liar sooner than God’s Word should for a moment be placed in doubt!

We now pass on to ponder upon—

II. THE REMARKABLE COMFORT CONTAINED IN THIS PROMISE.

See how it abounds! I note, first, *its constancy*. “I will *never* leave you, nor forsake you.” That is, not for a day, not for an hour, not for a minute! There are no breaks in the Divine Love. God does not depart from His people to return to them, by-and-by, but He assures, “I will never, no never, leave you.” Perhaps that dear child of yours that is sick is soon to die. Well, God will not leave you in the moment when she is taken from you. Possibly that dear one who is now your comfort and delight, your husband, may get sick and it will be a terrible stroke for you to be visited with, but, “I will never leave you, not even for an instant! Then in that trying time you shall prove the power and solace of My Presence.”

Perhaps, businessman, that great commercial project, that great transaction of yours may prove to be a losing one—that bill may be dishonored, you may come to bankruptcy without any fault on your part but—“I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Yes, you may have to go to Australia and you may greatly dread the leaving your native land, but even then, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” It may be you may be so misrepresented as to become suspected by those whom you love best and you may be even put out of the Church of God without any fault but entirely through error. Well, but then, even then, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you ” not even for a minute! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, what would be the consequences if the Lord left us for one quarter of an hour? I solemnly believe that if God were to leave His people even on their knees for twenty minutes, they would be brought to the deepest Hell! But He will not leave them, even there! And if it were dangerous to leave them on their knees alone, how much more so in the market or in business amidst enemies—seeking to catch them in their speech and deed! But He will never for a moment leave His people nor forsake them! He will be at all times, at all hours, at all seasons, in all days of emergency at their right hand and they shall not be moved!

I notice in the promise, next to constancy, *endurance*. As there shall be no breaks in God's love for His own, so there shall be no end to it. "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Yes it may not be desirable to live to extreme old age when infirmities may abound and all strength may decay, but if you should reach it, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." It certainly is a painful thing—that last stroke to pass to the Throne of God—but, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." There shall never be a time when the Lord will cast away one of His people! He shall never grow weary of them. He has espoused them unto Himself—married them—taken them into eternal union with Himself! And let the ages revolve as they may and time change as it will, God will never leave or forsake His people! Comfort yourselves, therefore, with the confidence of the endurance as well as the constancy of this love!

We are most pleased, however, with *the fullness of the promise*. The text means, manifestly means, from its connection, a great deal more than it says. We are told not to be covetous. Why? Why should we be covetous? God has said He will never leave us and if we have Him, we possess all things! Who has need to be covetous when all things are his and God is his? We are told to be contented—not to seek to hoard up so much for the future—because God has provided for the future in the very promise, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." God guarantees to His servants that they shall have enough! Well, let that guarantee prevent both covetousness and discontent! How shall this promise apply to temporal things? "I will never leave you, nor forsake you" does not look, at first sight, as if it had anything to do with our ordinary expenses. But according to the text it has, for we are told not to be covetous, but to be content with such things as we have. So then, the text applies to the ordinary workingman, to the merchant, to every Christian even in his money matters as well as in his soul matters! "I will not leave you, even in these." He that does not let a sparrow fall to the ground without His permission, will not let His children want! If they should, for a little time, be in need, that shall work their lasting good—they shall dwell in the land and verily they shall be fed! The fullness that lies in the promise is perfectly unbounded. When God says He will be with His servants, He means this, "My wisdom shall be with them to guide them. My love shall be with them to cheer them. My Spirit shall be with them to sanctify them. My power shall be with them to defend them. My everlasting might shall be put forth on their behalf so that they may not fail nor be discouraged." To have God with you were better than to have an army of ten thousand men! And a host of friends were not equal to that one name—the name of Jehovah—for He is a host in Himself! When God is with a man, He is not there asleep, negligent, indifferent—regardless in his time of suffering—but He is there intensely sympathizing, bearing the trouble, helping and sustaining the sufferer and, in due time—His own good

time—delivering him in triumph! Oh, precious word of heartening promise! Plunge into it, for it is a sea without a bottom! “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

Better still, perhaps, in the promise is *the certain truth of it*. “I will never leave you, nor forsake you ” has been proven by God’s saints in all the ages that are past. Turn to the pages of your Bibles and see if ever a man was ashamed that put his trust in Christ! See if he that wrestled with the invisible God was ever confounded. Has not the Lord stayed with His people at all hazards—broken the necks of kings and scattered empires like chaff before the wind sooner than that one of His faithful ones should come to ruin?

It has been so even in your own experience. You, too, have found the text to be true. You have gone through fire and through water, but He has never left you nor forsaken you! Your vessel scarcely had enough water to stay off the bottom, but though she had almost grated on the gravel, yet she has kept afloat and though, perhaps, you have been wrecked, yet you have come safely to shore. You have lost much, you say, but you have been a gainer by your loss and where you are today you are by eternal mercy and Covenant Grace—and you could not well be in a better position than God has put you Goodness and mercy have followed you all the days of your life up till now and you are obliged to confess it and to say—

**“Streams of mercy never ceasing
Call for songs of loudest praise.”**

So fear not, now that at this particular season God is about to alter His previous dispensation! Out with them, poor Little-Faith! Away with your doubts! Put away those black suspicions! He is a God that changes not and, having helped you until now, He will help you even to the end! Why how true this must be! “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” How can God forsake that which has cost Him so much already? He has given His Son’s blood to redeem us and His Spirit’s power to renew us—and if He were to leave undone the work which He has begun—why a tower has been commenced and He has not been able to finish it! A man who has spent much money upon one enterprise will spend yet more to finish it because of what he has already spent. Now God will not lose the work of Christ and the precious blood of His Son—having begun, He will certainly carry on even to the end! Besides this—God cannot leave His people because He calls them His children—and how could He leave His child? “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, she may forget, yet will I not forget you.” Even when the son has dishonored his father’s name and lost his own character, that father’s love still holds on and still follows that child with tears of sorrow, but still with faithfulness and truth. And God will not cast away His own begotten sons whom He has begotten again unto

a living hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! Beloved, Christ is married to His people and, therefore, how can He leave them? He says, "As a young man rejoices over his bride, so shall your God rejoice over you." And will He leave them to whom He is knit by so near and dear, so tender and affectionate a union? It cannot be! "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Now, if He did leave His people, what would it be? It would be giving up the whole quarrel between Himself and Satan! It is in His people's hearts that the great battle is being fought out between good and evil. To give them up would be to give up the battleground to His great enemy—and what laughter there would be in the vaults of Hell! What mockery in the halls of Pandemonium if it could be said, "God has forsaken His people! Given up His elect! Suffered His redeemed to perish! Cast away His regenerate and forsaken the souls that trusted Him!" The very thought of it is blasphemy! Far, far from us, let us put it away. "I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

I cannot enlarge further upon the promise and need not do so because it opens up itself, or rather God the Holy Spirit will open it up to you if you sit awhile in your chamber and meditate upon it. I do not know of a richer text or one more full of consolation. It is a long skein of the Truth of God—unwind it. It is a precious granary as full as Joseph crammed the granaries of Egypt! Open the door and feed to the fullest—there will be no fear of your ever exhausting it! "For He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

Now the third thing to be noticed concerning this promise is—

III. THE REMARKABLE EFFECTS THAT SUCH A PROMISE SHOULD PRODUCE.

Surely the first blessed fruit of such a glorious promise should be *perfect contentment*. It is said to be hard to be content. I have the pleasure of knowing some Brothers and Sisters who I am sure are perfectly content. They even say so and I think without the slightest mental reservation that they have not an unfulfilled wish or desire so far as this world goes. They have all that heart could wish. And yet these are not the richest people in the world and they are not persons who are much to be envied for their mere external circumstances—yet they are perfectly content. The fact is that the Grace of God makes the people of God to sing sweetly where other people would murmur! They are satisfied where others would find easy ground for discontent. But how easy it is—how easy it must be for a man to be content when he knows that God has promised to be with him in all circumstances and at all times! Surely if anything could be a kind of conservatory—a hot-house in which to grow the delicate plant of contentment to perfection—it must be this full belief that high or low, rich or poor, well or sick, God has said, "I will never leave, nor forsake you." Surely it was this that made Bunyan's Pilgrim sing in the Valley of Humiliation—

***“He that is down need fear no fall.
He that is low no pride—
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.”***

Christian did thereby say that he was content whether he had little or much, and that he left everything in his lot to his God. Oh, get then, my Friends, my text fully into your souls and keep it there as marrow and fatness—and you will be content!

Well, then, in the next place, *it will cure your covetousness*. A man does not need to go on scraping and to use that muck-rake forever when he knows, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” It was not a bad argument which one used with Alexander when he said to him, “When are you going to enjoy yourself fully?” Alexander did not answer the question but the philosopher said, “What are you going to do next?” “First we shall conquer Greece.” “Yes, and then will you rest?” “No, we shall then attack Asia Minor.” “And when you have conquered that, I suppose you will rest?” “No, we shall then take Persia.” “And when you have overcome Persia, what then?” “We shall march to India.” “And when you have taken India, what then?” “Why, then we shall sit down and make ourselves merry.” “Well ” said the philosopher, “I think we had better begin before we go to Greece, or Persia, or Asia Minor, or any of them.” And truly so it were as well for us to be content with that moderate income which God gives us. Let us enjoy what God bestows upon us now in gratitude to Him and give ourselves up to His service lest, perhaps, in seeking more, we become spiritually poorer while literally richer—and become less content with the great load on our back than we have today, when we have enough and no more. It is a sweet quietus to covetousness when God says, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

And, Beloved, what a promise this is *to make a man confident in his God*. In his works, in his sufferings, in his enterprises—what a stay of soul is here!

I know what it is to fall back upon this promise, sometimes, to keep from depression of spirit and to find reviving in it. Perhaps you may suppose that those of us who are always before the public and are speaking concerning the blessed promises of God, never have any moments of downcasting and never any times of heart-breaking, but you are quite mistaken! We may have passed through all this, perhaps, that we may know how to say a word in season to any who are now passing through similar experiences. With many enterprises upon my hands, far too great for my own unaided strength, I am often driven to fall flat upon the promise of my God, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” If I feel that any scheme has been of my own devising and that I seek my own honor in it, I know it must come to the ground and rightly so! But when I can prove that God has thrust it upon me and that I am moved by a Divine

impulse and not by my own monitions and wishes, then how can my God forsake me? How can He lie, however weak I may be? How is it possible for Him to send His servant out to battle and not succor him with reinforcements in the day when the battle goes bad? God is not David when he put Uriah in the front and then left him that he might die. He will never put any of His servants forward and then desert them! Dear Brothers and Sisters, if the Lord shall call some of you even to things you cannot do, He will give you strength enough to do them! And if He should push you still forward till your difficulties increase and your burdens become heavy as your days, your strength shall be and you shall go on with the tramp of soldiers with the indomitable spirit of men who have tried and trusted the naked arm of the Eternal God! "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Then what does it matter? Though all the world were against you, you could shake all the world as Samson shook the lion and tore him as a kid! If God is for you, who can be against you? Though earth and Hell and all their crew come against you and should combine together, yet if the God of Jacob stood at your back, you would thresh them as though they were but wheat and winnow them as though they were but chaff—and the wind would carry them away! Oh, roll this promise under your tongue as a sweet morsel!

How I wish that it belonged to you all! Oh, that everyone of you had a share in it! But some of you, alas, have never fled to Jesus. Oh that you would do so! Whoever trusts Him for pardon by His atoning Sacrifice is saved! To look to the Great Substitute and depend upon Him for salvation—this gives salvation—and then come the promises that belong to the saved!

The Lord in His infinite mercy bless you for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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

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

NEVER! NEVER! NEVER! NEVER! NEVER! NO. 477

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 26, 1862,
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”
Hebrews 13:5.*

Power resides in “Thus says the Lord!” The man who can grasp by faith, “He has said,” has an all-conquering weapon in his hand. What doubt will not be slain by this two-edged sword? What fear is that which shall not fall smitten with a deadly wound before this arrow from the bow of God’s Covenant? Will not the distresses of life and the pangs of death, will not the corruptions within, and the temptations without, will not the trials from above, and the temptations from beneath all seem but light afflictions when we can hide ourselves behind the bulwark of, “He has said”? Whether for delight in our quietude, or for strength in our conflict, “He has said” must be our daily resort.

Therefore, let us learn, my Brethren, the extreme value of *searching the Scriptures*. There may be a promise in the Word which would exactly fit your case but you may not know of it, and therefore miss its comfort. You are like prisoners in a dungeon and there may be one key in the bunch which would unlock the door so that you might be free. But if you will not look for it, you may remain a prisoner still, though liberty is near at hand. There may be a potent medicine in the great pharmacopoeia of Scripture, and you may still remain sick, though there is the precise remedy that would meet your disease if you will but examine and search the Scriptures to discover what “He has said.”

Should we not, beside reading Scripture, *store our memories richly with the promises of God*? We can remember the sayings of great men. We treasure up the verses of renowned poets—ought we not to be profound in our knowledge of the Word of God? The Scriptures should be the classics of a Christian, and as our orators quote Homer, or Virgil, or Horace, when they would clinch a point, so we should be able to quote the promises of God when we would solve a difficulty or overthrow a doubt. “He has said,” is the foundation of all riches, and the fountain of all comfort. Let it dwell in you richly as “a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life.”

And, oh, my Brothers and Sisters, *how diligently should we test the Scriptures!* Besides searching them by reading, and treasuring them by memory, we should test them by *experience*. As often as a promise is proven to be true, we should mark it, and note that we also can say, as did one of old, “This is my comfort in my affliction: for Your Word has quickened me.” “Wait on the Lord,” said Isaiah, and then he added, “Wait, *I say*, on the Lord,” as if his own experience led him to echo the voice of God to his hearers. Test the promise, take God’s banknote to the counter and mark if it is cashed. Grasp the lever, which He ordains to lift your trials, and see if it possesses real power.

Cast this Divine Tree into the bitter waters of your Marah and learn how it will sweeten them. Take this salt and throw it into the turbid wa-

ters, and witness if they are not made sweet, as were the waters of old by the Prophet Elisha. Taste and see that the Lord is good, for there is no want to them that fear Him.

The Apostles, you will notice, like their Master, were always very ready at quotations. Though they were inspired men, and could have used fresh words, yet they preferred, as an example to us, to quote, "He has said." Let us do the same, for, though the words of ministers may be sweet, the words of God are sweeter. And though original thoughts may have the novelty of freshness, yet the ancient words of God have the ring, and the weight, and the *value* of old and precious coins—and they shall not be found wanting in the day when we shall use them.

It seems from our text that, "He has said," is not only useful to chase away doubts, fears, difficulties, and devils, but that it also yields nourishment to all our Divine Graces. You perceive that when the Apostle would make us contented, he says, "Be content with such things as you have, for *He has said*." And when he would make us bold and courageous, he puts it, "*He has said*, therefore *we* may boldly say, God is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me." When the Apostle would nourish faith, he does it by quoting from Scripture the examples of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, of Moses, of Gideon, of Barak, and of Jephthah.

When he would nourish our patience, he says, "You remember the patience of Job." Or if it is our prayerfulness, he says, "Elijah was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed and prevailed." "*He has said*" is food for every Grace as well as death for every sin. Here you have nourishment for that which is good, and poison for that which is evil. Search, then, the Scriptures, for so shall you grow healthy, strong and vigorous in the Divine life.

We turn at once, with great pleasure, to the wonderful words of our text, "He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you." I have no doubt you are aware that our translation does not convey the whole force of the original, and that it would hardly be possible in English to give the full weight of the Greek. We might render it, "He has said, I will never, never leave you. I will never, never, never forsake you." For though that would be not a literal, but rather a free rendering, yet, as there are five negatives in the Greek, we do not know how to give their force in any other way.

Two negatives nullify each other in our language. But here, in the Greek, they intensify the meaning following one after another, as I suppose David's five stones out of the brook would have done if the first had not been enough to make the giant reel. The verse we sung just now is a very good rendering of the original—

***"The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes.
That soul, though all Hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."***

Here you have the five negatives very well placed, and the force of the Greek, as nearly as possible, given.

In trying to expound this five-fold assurance, this quintessence of consolation, we shall have to draw your attention, first of all, to an *awful condition*, or what is negative. Secondly, to a *gracious promise*, or what is positively guaranteed. Next, we shall observe *notable occasions* or times when this promise was uttered. Then a few words upon certain *sweet con-*

firmations which prove the text to be true. And then, in the fifth place, *necessary conclusions* which flow from the words of the promise.

I. First of all, then, AN AWFUL CONDITION—LOST AND FORSAKEN OF GOD! I am quite certain I shall fail in attempting to describe this state of mind. I have thought of it, dreamed of it, and felt it in such feeble measure as a child of God can feel it, but how to describe it, I know not.

1. *Forsaking* implies *an utter loneliness*. Put a traveler in a vast howling wilderness, where for many a league there is no trace of man—no footsteps of travelers. The solitary wretch cries for help—the hollow echo of the rocks is his only reply. No bird in the air. Not even a prowling jackal in the waste. Not an insect in the sunbeam to keep him company. Not even a solitary blade of grass to remind him of God! Yet, even there he is not alone—for yonder bare rocks prove a God, and the hot sand beneath his feet, and the blazing sun above his head—all witness to a present Deity.

But what would be the loneliness of a man forsaken of God? No migration could be so awful as this, for he says, “If I take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, *You are there.*” Such a state were worse than Hell, for David says, “If I make my bed in Hell *You are there.*” Loneliness is a feeling which none of us delight in. Solitude may have some charms, but they who are *forced* to be her captives have not discovered them. A transient solitude may give pleasure. To be alone, utterly alone, is terrible! To be alone, *without God*, is such an emphasis of loneliness, that I defy the lips, even of a damned spirit, to express the horror and anguish that must be concentrated in it.

There is far more than you and I dream of in the language of our Lord Jesus, when He says, “I have trod the winepress *alone.*” *Alone!* You remember He once said, “You shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.” There is no agony in *that* sentence but what must be His grief when He says—“I have trod the winepress *alone!*” “My God, why have You forsaken Me?” is the cry of human nature in its uttermost dismay. Thank God, you and I, by this promise are taught that we never shall know the desperate loneliness of being forsaken of God. Yet, this is what it would be if He should forsake us!

2. Mingling with this mournful solitude is a sense of *utter helplessness*. Power belongs unto God. Withdraw the Lord and the strong man must utterly fail. The archangel without God passes away and is not. The everlasting hills bow, and the solid pillars of the earth are dissolved. Without God our dust returns to the earth. Without God our spirit mourns like David, “I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind. I am like a broken vessel.” Christ knew what this was when He said, “I am a worm, and no man.”

He was so utterly broken, so emptied of all power, that as He hung with dislocated limbs upon the Cross, He cried, “My strength is dried up like a potsherd. You have brought Me into the dust of death.” No broken reed or smoking flax can be so feeble as a soul forsaken of God. Our state would be as deplorably destitute as that of Ezekiel’s infant—deserted and cast into the open field with none to swaddle, and none to care for it—left utterly to perish and to die. Such should we be if we could be forsaken of God! Glorious are those negatives which shut us in from all fear of this calamity.

3. To be forsaken of God implies *utter friendlessness*. A thousand times let Jehovah be blessed that very few of us have ever known what it is to be friendless! There have been times, in the experience of some of us, when we felt that we stood without a friend in the particular spot which we then occupied, for we had a grief which we could not entrust to any other heart. Every man who is eminently useful in the Church will know seasons when, as the champion of Israel, he must go forth alone. This, however, is compensated by stronger faith, and the moral grandeur of solitary heroism.

But what must it be to be some poor wretch whose parents have long since been buried? Who has lost his most distant relatives? Who, passing along the street, remembers the name of one who was once his father's friend, knocks at the door, and is repulsed? Recollects another—and this is his last hope—he stands at that door asking for charity from one he played with in his infancy. And he is bid to go his way! He paces the cold November streets while the rain is pouring down, feeling to his utter dismay that no friend breathes for him. Should he return to his own parish it would be like going to his own dungeon, and if he enters the workhouse no eye there will flash sympathy upon him! He is utterly friendless and alone!

I believe that many a suicide has been produced by the want of a friend. As long as a man feels he has someone loving him, he has something worth living for. But when the last friend is gone, and we feel that we are floating on a raft far out at sea, with not a sail in sight—it is then, we cry, “Welcome death!” Our Lord and Master was brought to this state, and knew what it was to be forsaken, for He had no friends left. “He that eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.” “All the disciples forsook Him and fled.” Brethren, many saints have lost all their friends, but have bravely borne the trial—for turning their eyes to Heaven—they have felt that though without friends, they were still befriended.

They have heard the voice of Jesus say, “I will not leave you orphans. I will come unto you.” And, made strong by Divine friendship, they have felt that they were not utterly bereaved. But to be forsaken of God! Oh, may you and I never know it! To be without a friend in Heaven—to look to that Throne of Glory and to see the blackness of darkness there—to turn to mercy, and receive a frown. To fly to love, and receive a rebuke. To turn to God, and find that His ear is heavy, that He will not hear, and His hands restrained that He will not help—oh, this is *terror*, terror heaped on terror, to be thus forsaken!

4. Loneliness, helplessness, friendlessness—add these together, and then put the next—*hopelessness*. A man forsaken of men may still entertain some hope. But let him be forsaken of God, and then hope has failed. The last window is shut. Not a ray of light now streams into the thick Egyptian darkness of his mind. Life is death. Death is damnation—damnation in its lowest depths. Let him look to men, and they are broken reeds. Let him turn to angels, and they are avengers. Let him look to death, and even the tomb affords no refuge. Look where he will—blank, black despair seizes hold upon him.

Our blessed Lord knew this when lover and friend had been put far from Him. It was only His transcendent faith which enabled Him, after all, to say, “You will not leave My soul in Hell: neither will You suffer Your

Holy One to see corruption.” The black shadow of this utter hopelessness went over Him when He said, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,” and He, “sweat as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground.”

5. To make up this five-fold forsaking, against which we have the five negatives, let us add to all this loneliness, helplessness, friendlessness, and hopelessness, a sense of *unutterable agony*. We speak of agony, but to *feel* it is a very different thing. Misery and despair—the *wrestling* of these with the spirit, till the spirit is trod down, and crushed, and broken, and chooses strangling rather than life! A horrible sense of every evil having made one’s heart its den! A consciousness that we are the target for all God’s arrows.

To feel that *all* God’s waves and billows have gone over us. That He has forgotten to be gracious. That He will be merciful to us no more. That He has, in anger, shut up the heart of His compassion—all this is a *part* of being forsaken of God which only lost spirits in Hell can know! Our unbelief sometimes lets us get a glimpse of what this would be, but it is only a glimpse, only a glimpse. Let us thank God that we are delivered from all fear of this tremendous evil. By five wounds does our Redeemer slay our unbelief.

Brethren, if God should leave us, mark the result—I picture to myself the very best state of one forsaken of God—it is uncertainty and chance. I would rather be an atom, which has God with it, predestinating its track and forcing it onward according to His own will, than I would be an archangel left to my own choice, to do as I would and to act at I please, without the control of God. For an archangel, left without God, would soon miss his way and fall to Hell. Or he would melt away and drop and die. But the tiny atom, having God with it, would fulfill its predestinated course. It would be ever in a sure track, and throughout eternity would have as much potency in it as at its first creation.

I cannot think why some people are so fond of free will. I believe free will is the delight of sinners, but that God’s will is the glory of saints. There is nothing I desire more to get rid of than my own will, and to be absorbed into the will and purpose of my Lord. To do according to the will of Him who is most good, most true, most wise, most mighty, seems to me to be Heaven. Let others choose the dignity of independence! I crave the glory of being wholly dead in, and only alive in Him. Oh, dear Friends, if the Lord should forsake us, to say the best of it, our course would be uncertain and, before long, it would end in nothingness.

We know, further, that if God should forsake the best saint alive, that man would immediately fall into sin. He now stands securely on yonder lofty pinnacle, but his brain would reel, and he would fall, if secret hands did not uphold him. He now picks his steps carefully. Take away Divine Grace from him, and he would roll in the mire, and wallow in it like other men. Let the godly be forsaken of his God, and he would go from bad to worse, till his conscience, now so tender, would be seared as with a hot iron.

Next he would ripen into an atheist or a blasphemer, and he would come to his dying bed foaming at the mouth with rage. He would come before the bar of his Maker with a curse upon his lips. And in eternity, left

and forsaken of God, he would sink to Hell with the condemned. Yes, and among the damned he would have the worst place, lower than the lowest, finding in the lowest depths a lower depth—finding in the wrath of God something more dreadful than the ordinary wrath which falls upon common sinners!

When we thus describe being forsaken of God, is it not satisfactory to the highest degree to remember that we have God's Word for it five times over, "I will never, never leave you. I will never, never, never forsake you"? I know those who caricature Calvinism say we teach that a man may live as he likes, yet if God is with him, he will be safe at the last. We teach no such thing! And our adversaries know better. They know that our doctrines are invulnerable if they will state them correctly, and that the only way in which they can attack us is to slander us, and to misrepresent what we teach.

No, verily, we say not so—we say that where God begins the good work, the man will never live as he likes, or if he does, he will like to live as God would have him live. That where God begins a good work, He carries it on. That man is never forsaken of God, nor does he forsake God, but is kept even to the end.

II. We have before us now, in the second place, A GRACIOUS PROMISE, or what is positively guaranteed.

What is guaranteed in this promise? Beloved, herein does God give to His people everything. "I will never leave you." Then no attribute of God can cease to be engaged for us. Is He mighty? He will show Himself strong on behalf of them that trust Him. Is He love? Then with everlasting loving kindness will He have mercy upon us. Whatever attributes may compose the character of Deity, every one of them to its fullest extent shall be engaged on our side.

Moreover, whatever God has, whether it is in the lowest Hades, or in the highest Heaven—whatever can be contained in infinity or can be held within the circumference of eternity—whatever can be in Him who fills all things and yet is greater than all things—shall be with His people forever. "He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you." How one might enlarge here but I forbear. You yourselves know that to sum up "all things" is a task beyond all human might.

III. More fully, however, to expound this promise, I would remind you of the five OCCASIONS in which it occurs in Scripture. The number five runs all through our subject. The sense and spirit of the text are to be found in innumerable places, and possibly there may be some other passages which approximate so very nearly to our text that you might say they are repetitions, but I think there are five which may clearly take the priority.

1. One of the first instances is to be found in Genesis 28:15. "Behold, I am with you and will keep you in all places where you go and will bring you again into this land. For I will not leave you, until I have done that which I have spoken to you." Here we have this promise in the case of a *man of trials*. More than either Abraham or Isaac, Jacob was the son of tribulation. He was now flying away from his father's house, leaving the over-fondness of a mother's attachment, abhorred by his elder brother, who sought his blood. He lies down to sleep, with a stone for his pillow,

with the hedges for his curtains, with the earth for his bed, and the heavens for his canopy.

And as he sleeps thus friendless, solitary, and alone, God says to him, "I will never, never leave you." Mark his after career. He is guided to Padanaram. God, his Guide, leaves him not. At Padanaram Laban cheats him, wickedly and wrongfully cheats him in many ways. But God does not leave him, and he is more than a match for the thievish Laban. He leaves, at last, with his wives and children. Laban, in hot haste, pursues him, but the Lord does not leave him. Mizpah's Mount bears witness that God can stop the pursuer and change the foe into a friend.

Esau comes against him. Let Jabbok testify to Jacob's wrestling, and through the power of Him who never did forsake His servant, Esau kisses his brother, whom once he thought to slay. Soon Jacob dwells in tents and booths at Succoth. He journeys up and down throughout the land, and his sons treacherously slay the Shechemites. Then the nations round about seek to avenge their death, but the Lord again interposes and Jacob is delivered. Poor Jacob is bereaved of his sons. He cries—"Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and now you will take Benjamin away? All these things are against me." But they are not against him. God has not left him, for He has not yet done everything that He had spoken to him.

The old man goes into Egypt. His lips are refreshed while he kisses the cheeks of his favorite, Joseph. And until the last, when he gathers up his feet in the bed, and sings of that coming Shiloh and the scepter that should not depart from Judah, good old Jacob proves that in six troubles God is with His people, and in seven He does not forsake them. That even to hoar hairs he is the same, and until old age He does carry them. You Jacobs, full of affliction, you tried and troubled heirs of Heaven, He has said to you, each one of you—oh, believe Him!—"I will never leave you. I will never forsake you."

2. The next instance in which we find this same promise is in Deuteronomy 31:6. Here we find it spoken, not so much to individuals as to the whole body collectively. Moses said unto the people of Judah, by the Word of God, "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord your God, He it is that does go with you. He will not fail you, nor forsake you." Beloved, we may take this promise as being spoken to God's Church, *as a Church*. These people were to fight the accursed nations of Canaan, to drive out the giants, and the men who had chariots of iron. And the Lord said He would never leave them, nor did He, till from Dan to Beersheba the favored race possessed the promised land, and the tribes went up to Jerusalem with the voice of joyful song.

Now, as the Church of God, let us remember that the land lies before us, and we are called of God to go up and possess it. I would it were my lot yet more and more, like Joshua, to lead you from one place to another, smiting the enemies of the Lord and extending the kingdom of Messiah! Let us undertake what we may, we shall never fail. Let us, by faith, *dare* great things and we shall *do* great things. Let us venture upon notable exploits which shall seem fanatical to reason, and absurd to men of prudence, for He has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

If the Church of God would but know that her Lord cannot leave her, she might attempt greater things than she has ever done—and the suc-

cess of her attempts would be most certain and sure. God never can forsake a praying people, nor cast off a laboring Church. He must bless us even to the end.

3. The third occasion upon which this promise was made is in Joshua 1:5, where the Lord says to Joshua, "There shall not any man be able to stand before you all the days of your life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with you: I will not fail you, nor forsake you." Now this is *a minister's text*. If we are called to lead the people, to bear the brunt of the fight, the burden and heat of the day, let us treasure up this as our precious consolation—He will not fail us nor forsake us. It needs not that I should tell you that it is not every man who can stand first in the ranks, and that, albeit there is no small share of honor given by God to such a man, yet there is a bitterness in his lot which no other men can know.

There are times when, if it were not for faith, we would give up the ghost and, were not the Master with us, we would turn our backs and fly, like Jonah, unto Nineveh. But if any of you are called to occupy prominent positions in God's Church, bind this about your arms and it shall make you strong. He has said to you, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Go in this, your might, the Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!

4. On the next occasion, this same promise was given by David in his last moments to his son, Solomon, 1 Chronicles 28:20. David was speaking of what he himself, by experience had proved to be true. He declares—"Be strong, and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, even my God, will be with you. He will not fail you, nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord."

Some Christians are placed where they need much *prudence, discretion, and wisdom*. You may take this for your promise. The Queen of Sheba came to see Solomon. She put to him many difficult questions, but God did not leave him, nor forsake him, and he was able to answer them all. As judge over Israel, many knotty points were brought before him. You remember the child and the harlots, and how wisely he decided the case. The building of the temple was a very mighty work—the like of which the earth had never seen. But, by wisdom given to him, the stones were fashioned and laid one upon another, till at last the top stone was brought out with shouts.

You shall do the same, O man of business, though yours is a very responsible situation. You shall finish your course, O careful worker, though there are many eyes that watch for your stumbling. You shall do the same, sister, though you need to have seven eyes rather than two—you shall hear the voice of God saying, "This is the way, walk in it." You shall never be ashamed nor confounded, world without end.

5. Once more and perhaps this fifth occasion may be the most comforting to the most of you, Isaiah 41:17, "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue fails for thirst, I, the Lord, will hear them. I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them." You may be brought to this state today. Your soul may *need Christ* but you may not be able to find Him. You may feel that without the mercy which comes from the atoning blood you are lost. You may have gone to works and ceremonies, to prayers and doings, to alms giving and to experiences, and have found them all dried wells.

And now you can hardly pray, for your tongue cleaves to the roof of your mouth for thirst. Now in your worst condition, brought to the lowest state into which a creature ever can be cast, Christ will *not* forsake you, He will appear for your help.

Surely, one of these five occasions must suit you! And let me here remind you that whatever God has said to any *one* saint, He has said to *all*. When He opens a well for one man it is that *all* may drink. When the manna falls, it is not only for those in the wilderness, but we, by faith, eat the manna still. No promise is of private interpretation. When God opens a granary door to give out food, there may be some starving man who is the occasion of its being opened—but all the hungry may come and feed, too.

Whether He gave the Word to Abraham or to Moses matters not. He has given it to *you* as one of the covenanted seed. There is not a high blessing too lofty for you. Nor a wide mercy too extensive for you. Lift up your eyes now to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west, for all this is yours. Climb to Pisgah's top and view the utmost limit of the Divine promise, for the land is all your own! There is not a brook of living water of which you may not drink. If the land flows with milk and honey, eat the honey and drink the milk.

The fattest of the cattle, yes, and the sweetest of the wines, let all be yours, for there is no denial of any one of them to any saint. Be bold to believe, for He has said, "I will never leave *you*, nor forsake *you*." To put everything in one, there is nothing you can want, there is nothing you can ask for, there is nothing you can need in time, or in eternity. There is nothing living, nothing dying, there is nothing in this world, nothing in the next world. There is nothing now, nothing at the resurrection morning, nothing in Heaven that is not contained in this text—"I will never leave you. I will never forsake you."

IV. I shall give five blows to drive home the nail while I speak upon THE SWEET CONFIRMATIONS of this most precious promise.

1. Let me remind you that the Lord will not and cannot leave His people, because of *His relationship to them*. He is your *Father*. Will your Father leave you? Has He not said—"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget you"? Would you, being evil, leave your child to perish? Never, never! Remember, Christ is your *husband*. Would you, a husband, neglect your wife? Is it not a shame to a man, unless he nourishes and cherishes her even as his own body? And will Christ become one of these ill husbands?

Has He not said—"I hate putting away," and will He ever put you away? Remember, you are *part of His body*. No man yet ever hated his own flesh. You may be but as a little finger, but will He leave His finger to rot, to perish, to starve? You may be the least honorable of all the members, but is it not written that upon these He bestows abundant honor, and so our uncomely parts have abundant comeliness? If He is Father, if He is Husband, if He is Head, if he is All in All, how can He leave you? Think not so harshly of your God.

2. Then, next, *His honor* binds Him never to forsake you. When we see a house half-built and left in ruins, we say, "This man began to build, and was not able to finish." Shall this be said of your God, that He began to

save you and could not bring you to perfection? Is it possible that He will break His Word and so stain His Truth? Shall men be able to cast a slur upon His power, His wisdom, His love, His faithfulness? No! Thank God, no! "I give," says He "unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."

If you should perish, Believer, Hell would ring with diabolical laughter against the Character of God. And if ever one whom Jesus undertook to save should perish, then the demons of the pit would point the finger of scorn forever against a defeated Christ, against a God that undertook but did not finish—

***"His honor is engaged to save
The mean of His sheep.
All that His heavenly Father gave
His hands securely keep."***

3. And if that is not enough, will you remember, besides this, that *the past* all goes to prove that He will not forsake you? You have been in deep waters, have you drowned? You have walked through the fires, have you been burned? You have had six troubles, has He forsaken you? You have gone down to the roots of the mountains, and the weeds have been wrapped about your head. Has He not brought you up again? You have borne great and sore troubles. But has He not delivered you?

Say, Brothers and Sisters, when did He leave you? Testify against Him. If you have found Him forgetful, then doubt Him. If you have found Him unworthy of your confidence, then disown Him—but not till then. The past is vocal with a thousand songs of gratitude, and every note therein proves by an indisputable logic that He will not forsake His people.

4. And if that is not enough, ask your father, and *the saints that have gone before*. Did ever any perish trusting in Christ? I have heard that some whom Jehovah loved have fallen from Grace and have been lost. I have heard lips of ministers thus prostitute themselves to falsehood—but I know that such never was the case. He keeps *ALL* His saints. Not one of them has perished! They are in His hands, and have up to now been preserved.

David mourns, "All your waves and your billows have gone over me." Yet, he cries, "Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him." Jonah laments, "The earth with her bars was about me forever." And yet, before long he says, "Salvation is of the Lord." You glorified ones above, through much tribulation you have inherited the kingdom, and wearing your white robes, you smile from your thrones of Glory and say to us, "Doubt not the Lord, neither distrust Him. He has not forsaken His people nor cast off His chosen."

5. Beloved Friends, there is *no reason why He should* cast us off. Can you come up with any reason why He should cast you away? Is it your poverty, your nakedness, your peril, the danger of your life? In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that has loved us. Do you say it is your sin? Then I answer sin can never be a cause why God should cast away His people, for they were full of sin when He at first embraced their persons, and espoused their cause. That would have been a reason why He never should have loved them at all! But having loved them when they were dead in trespasses and sins, their sin can never be a reason for leaving them.

Besides, the Apostle says, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come"—and sin is one of the things present and I fear it is one of the things to come—"nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." O Child of God, there is no fear of your misusing this precious Truth of God! The base-born *professor* of godliness may say, "I will sin, for God will not cast me away," but *you* will not, you heirs of Heaven!

Rather you will bind this about your heart and say, "Now will I love Him, who having loved His own, loves them even unto the end." Glory be to God—

***"Midst all my sin and care and woe,
His Spirit will not let me go."***

Go, you slaves that fear the curse of God, and sweat and toil. We are His Sons, and we know He cannot expel us from His heart. May God deliver us from the infamous bondage of the doctrine which makes men fear that God may be unfaithful, that Christ may divorce His own spouse, may let the members of His own body perish. That He may die for them, and yet not save them. If there is any truth taught us in Scripture, it is that the children of God *cannot* perish.

If this Book teaches anything whatever, if it is not all a fiction from beginning to end, it teaches in a hundred places that, "The righteous shall hold on his way and he that has clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger." "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but the covenant of His love cannot depart from us, says the Lord that has mercy upon us."

V. And now, fifthly, the SUIABLE CONCLUSIONS to be drawn from this doctrine:

1. One of the first is *contentment*. The Apostle says, "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content, for He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Ishmael, the son of Hagar, had his water in a bottle. And he might have laughed at Isaac because Isaac had no bottle—but here was the difference between them—Isaac lived by the well. Now some of us have little enough in this world. We have no bottle of water, no stock in hand. But then we live by the well, and that is better, still. To depend upon the daily Providence of a faithful God is better than to be worth twenty thousand pounds a year.

2. *Courage* is the next lesson. Let us boldly say, "God is my helper, why should I fear what man can do unto me?" A child of God, afraid? Why, there is nothing more contrary to his nature. If any would persecute you, look them in the face and bear it cheerfully. If they laugh at you, let them laugh—you can laugh when they shall howl. If any despise you, be content to be despised by fools, and to be misunderstood by madmen. It were hard if the world loved us. It is an easy thing if the world hates us. We are so used to be spoken of as altogether vile in our motives and selfish in our objects—so used to hear our adversaries misconstrue our best words and pull our sentences to pieces—that if they were to do anything else but howl, we should think ourselves unworthy.

"Who are you, that you should be afraid of a man that shall die and of the son of man which shall be made as grass, and forget the Lord your

Maker, that has stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth?"

3. Then next, *we ought to cast off our despondency*. Some of you came here, this morning, as black as the weather. Just now we saw some gleams of sunshine peering through those side windows, until our friends hastened to draw the blinds, to shut out the dazzling brightness from their eyes. I hope, however, you will not shut out the rays of holy joy which break in upon you now. No, since He has said, "I will never leave nor forsake you," leave your troubles in your pews and bear away a song.

4. And then, my Brothers and Sisters, here is argument for *the greatest possible delight*. How we ought to rejoice with joy unspeakable if He will never leave us! Mere songs are not enough! Shout for joy all you that are upright in heart!

5. And, lastly, what ground there is here *for faith!* Let us lean upon our God with all our weight. Let us throw ourselves upon His faithfulness as we do upon our beds, bringing all our weariness to His dear rest. Now, right on our God let us cast the burdens of our bodies, and our souls, for He has said, "I will never leave you. I will never forsake you."

Oh, I wish this promise belonged to you all! I would give my right hand if it could! But some of you must not touch it. It does not belong to some of you, for it is the exclusive property of the man who trusts in Christ. "Oh," says one, "then I will trust in Christ." Do it, Soul, do it! And if you trust in Him He will never leave you. Black with sin as you are, He will wash you. He will never leave you. Wicked as you are, He will make you holy, He will never leave you.

Though you have nothing that should win His love, He will press you to His bosom. He will never leave you. Living or dying, in time, or in eternity, He will never forsake you, but will surely bring you to His right hand, and say to His Father, "Here am I, and the children whom You have given Me." May God seal these five negatives upon our memories and hearts for Christ's sake. Amen.

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A VILE WEED AND A FAIR FLOWER NO. 1449

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

***“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do to me.”
Hebrews 13:5, 6.***

IS it not deeply humiliating, beloved Friends, that the best of Christians should need to be cautioned against the worst of sins? May the consecrated become *covetous*? Is it possible that the regenerate may drift into misers? Alas, what perils surround us, what tendencies are within us! Although a man may be a sincere Believer in the self-sacrificing Jesus, yet it is necessary to say to him, “Let your conversation be without covetousness.” Covetousness is a vice of a very degrading kind and it is, therefore the more surprising that those who have a renewed nature and in whom the Spirit of God dwells should require to be warned against bowing down their souls before it. But such is the necessity that once and again the saints are warned against “covetousness, which is idolatry.”

As long as Israel is in the wilderness, she is not out of danger from the golden calf. There would be no superfluous text in the Bible had there been no peril; there would have been no precept but, alas, the best of saints may be betrayed into the most base sins. Moreover, the common talk of the people with whom we daily mingle in business is so much about buying and selling and getting gain that we are apt to be entangled in their nets and find ourselves in the meshes of their craft before we are aware of it. It is hard to live where greed grasps all and not to try to save a little for ourselves out of the wreck. “Take heed and beware of covetousness,” is a necessary caution for these latitudes.

It appears from our text that the children of God need, also, to be exhorted to cherish that most simple and natural of virtues—contentment. One would think that at least, in some instances, they would have this good thing as a matter of course. Among our villagers we have met with persons so well satisfied with their lowly lot that they would not cross the sea to gain an empire! Yet their contentment has sprung up wild as the daisies and buttercups of their own meadows, for they have not been acquainted with the Truth of God as it is in Jesus, or the blessed hope which makes trials light to bear! Do Christians, then, need to be admonished with precepts and stimulated with promises to make them yield the commonplace virtues of life? Do their fields refuse to grow “the herb called heartsease,” which simple folk have gathered unsown from their little garden plots?

Must Believers be exhorted with earnestness if you would have them content? It is even so! Against the worst of vices they need to be warned and towards the humblest of virtues they need to be exhorted. O Lord, You know us better than we know ourselves, for You understand what poor, faulty things even Your own children are! The best of men are men at best. Unless the Grace of God had engaged to keep them every moment and to defend them from the temptations of their many foes, they would long ago have utterly perished from the way! Great need have they to say, "The Lord is my helper," for if He is not, they will fall prey to covetousness and discontent!

At this time I have to address you, not upon some high and lofty theme, but upon a simple matter of every-day life. Here in this sublime Epistle which tells us of the Person of Christ—the glory of His Sonship and the grandeur of His Priesthood—here in this storehouse of interpretation which opens up the most cherished statutes and ordinances of the Old Testament only to show how they fade and vanish before the excellence of the New Covenant, here, I say, in this Epistle to the Hebrews, we find ourselves charged to avoid a vice which reason, itself, should cause us to abhor! And it challenges us to exhibit a virtue which Nature, itself, should commend to us!

Plain is the sailing; the rock is conspicuous—shun covetousness! The haven is open—anchor in content! Yet we need, even here, the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that we may shun covetousness and cultivate contentment. Plain and pointed are the words, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have." May our lives as plainly show these commands written out in act and deed by the Holy Spirit. Our discourse, therefore, like the text which dictates it, must run out in three distinct branches. There is a covetousness to be eschewed, a contentment to be entertained and a confidence to be established—this last is referred to in the words—"So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do to me."

I. First, I shall have to say a little about COVETOUSNESS. We are told that our conversation is to be "without covetousness." The term, "conversation," includes, as you know, the whole of our lives. It is true that we are not to *talk* covetously, but conversation means far more than speech. It includes thoughts, words and actions—in fact, the whole of life. Taking the first meaning of conversation, namely, *talk*, we ought not in our words to be on the side of those who grip for wealth or growl for wage—who grasp for power or grind the poor. We ought not, in our talk, to take part with the churl and the bigoted.

If we hear of a mean transaction and it is called a sharp stroke of business and commended as something clever, we are not to sanction it even with a smile, but make our looks and our language, alike, discountenance over-reaching and oppression. The skinning of flints and driving of screws are practiced by many people as if they were positively meritorious and there are those who, while they would shrink from doing anything so questionable, themselves, will smile at the crooked policy of others, per-

haps feebly blaming the fraud, but all the while admiring the cuteness which carried it out and pocketed the result.

With satiric praise, instead of severe censure, they will say, “Wonderful man that! Nobody can ever get on the blind side of his head. He can get blood out of turnips and profit out of losses.” Those who praise sharpers are the patrons of thieves! Never think that dexterity will condone deceit, or cleverness excuse a lie. Let your conversation savor of Grace and generosity and of kindness altogether unselfish. And never let it flatter the successful trickster or the greedy grinder of the needy. Never let your language be such as might help to sharpen the cunning of a Laban or sanction the churlishness of a Nabal. May this be far from you! “Let your conversation be without covetousness.”

But our conversation has to do with our *actions* as well as our words. The sugar of words is sickening if it is not attended with the honey of *deeds*. Let our whole life, in our dealings with our fellow men, be moved by liberal principles and enriched with a generous spirit. Let us be full of kindness, full of thoughtfulness, full of a desire that others may live as well as ourselves—that our coming into a country may not be like the coming of the Tartar’s horse of which it is said that no grass will grow where once it sets its foot. The miser is a creature too hungry, too greedy, too ravenous to allow any other cattle to feed after him. He makes the land barren by gnawing the very roots out of the ground. There are some whose whole life is the use of the rake to scrape everything to themselves and these men leave nothing for others, however honest and industrious they may be. This is not Christ-like, nor will Christ acknowledge one who thus lives to himself. Let your actions, then, in trade and labor, as well as your words, be without covetousness.

But this will not do unless the word, “conversation,” takes in our desires, our projects, our plans, our thoughts. We must be without covetousness within, for if that vice reigns in the soul, it is sure to rule in the life. Our prayer should be that of David, “Incline my heart unto Your testimonies, and not to covetousness.” Why is a man miserly in his actions? Why, because he is miserable in his *thoughts*. If the inner man were right, the outer man could not be wrong. Beloved, may God cleanse our ways, both in private and in public, from anything like greed, that we may be obedient to the text, “Let your conversation be without covetousness.”

It is so very easy a thing to be covetous that no class of society is free from it. A man may be very poor and still covetous and a man may be exceedingly rich and still may think that he is not half rich enough. It is not possible to satisfy the greedy. If God gave them one whole world to themselves, they would cry for another and, if it were possible for them to possess Heaven as they now are, they would feel themselves in Hell, because others were in Heaven, too—for their greed is such that they must have everything or else they have nothing! Unless they can call all things *theirs*, they are as miserable as Haman, who, although all Shushan bowed before him, was not content—because one poor Jew who sat at the gate would not pay him homage.

A covetous spirit can enter anywhere and can live anywhere. It is necessary that we search ourselves, lest the wretched lust of greed should fix itself upon us, for, remember, it can live in one room in a back street, but it can also live in the most sumptuous mansion of Belgravia. It can starve itself to save a shilling and it can indulge itself in all manner of extravagance to grasp a fortune. Covetousness has many ways of manifesting itself and the text does not warn us against *one* of those ways, but against them *all*. “Let your conversation be without covetousness.” I have said that covetousness has many ways of showing itself. Let me mention some of them.

In some it is most seen in repining and complaining against their lot. God has so circumstanced them that they scarcely ever have more than barely enough. They have struggled to rise, but they have never succeeded, probably because they have not the capacity for doing so. There must be people in the world to take the rough side of it and these men are evidently of the number, for although they are anxious to make headway in the world, they never rise an inch. Now, if we know our lot, it is idle to refuse it. If we do so, our conversation is not without covetousness—we are not satisfied with the things that we have. We are not satisfied with our heavenly Father’s will, nor willing that He should be Father and that we should be children. We have not learned to say, “Not as I will, but as You will.”

Here is the neglected part of our education and we must go to the school, again, of the Holy Spirit. There are some complaining ones who would be no happier if their lot were changed. If they were lifted from a cottage to a palace they would still repine, for repining is far more a matter of the *heart* than of the condition. And a mind that has not bowed to the will of God in one place would be rebellious in another, also. There are some who have all that heart could wish who still murmur and still think that God deals harshly with them. This disease is born and bred in our very bones and it needs the Grace of God to get it out of us!

It is ill when it shows itself in a perpetual fault-finding with all that Providence appoints—in always grumbling that we are left out in the cold as if in every distribution of Divine love we came in for the last portion and the least share and were doomed to be the forgotten ones of the family. Shake off that spirit, Beloved! God help us all to get rid of every particle of it, for it savors not of Grace, but it is earthly, sensual, devilish. In some others this covetous principle shows itself in envying others. If others are better off, or more esteemed, they straightway seem to regard them as enemies, cannot think well of them, cannot wish them well, would almost rejoice to see them dragged down! I have known some rich persons that were very proud. I have known some poor people who were still prouder and their envying of those who were better off has developed in them a pride of an almost ferocious character akin to the fury of savages! Wrath is cruel and anger is outrageous, but who is able to stand before envy?

Now, if I envy a man, I am clearly guilty of covetousness, for I wish that something which he has were not his but mine. And that may happen to you when you do not think about his property. You may be covetous of his gifts. Somebody in the little school to which you belong can address the children better than you—do you ever catch yourself feeling jealous of him? Go before God and weep over it and *pray* the feeling down! Possibly you are a minister and alas, even with us this wretched feeling will come in. Some star outshines ours and we are likely to be eclipsed and straightway we are covetous of our honor. We do not like it, Brothers, but if we were right at heart with God as we ought to be, we would glory in being excelled by our fellow servants! We would be glad for our heavenly Father to be better served than we can serve Him and for the Church of God to have more valued servants in it than we are ever likely to be.

This is not easy, because envy—that compound of meanness and malice—that vilest reptile of the old serpent’s brood preys upon us! This ill-natured vice shows itself generally in finding fault. Of course our Brothers are not perfect, but why should we take delight in pointing out their peculiarities, their eccentricities, or their shortcomings? If they win a great many to Christ, the question is skeptically mooted, “But how will their converts wear?” What makes us raise the question? Is it brotherly love? If throngs gather around them, we say, “Ah, they are a nine days’ wonder—that little excitement will soon pass off.” Is it Grace or *envy* which makes us hope so?

Perhaps we complain that they are very young. This, I suppose, they cannot help—we were once young, ourselves—and would like to be so still! Or else we say, on the other hand, they have passed their meridian and if they flourish for a little while, their sun is setting and it is not much they will ever achieve. Ah, greed of honor, what is there which you will *not* say? Would God that Christians would cease from tearing one another! Let your conversation be without that covetousness which shows itself in envy. If the Lord has given you one talent, use it! But do not waste your time in finding fault with him who has five talents. If your Master makes you a hewer of wood, throw your strength into your felling and cleaving—do not throw the axe at your fellow servant! And if He makes you a drawer of water, do not empty your buckets on your neighbor, but do your own service well and bring what you have done and lay it at your Master’s feet. This will be thankworthy. This will be Christ like. You will then be obeying the injunction, “Let your conversation be without covetousness.”

And covetousness may show itself in another way, namely, by perpetually craving and desiring that which we have not. The old moralists used to say that the man who would be truly rich had better retrench his appetites than increase his fortune. Some men seem as if they never could fix their thoughts on what they have, but they are always in the other tense and mood—thinking of what they could, would, or should have! They have swallowed the two daughters of Solomon’s horseleech and these continually cry, “Give! Give!” They must have something more—their desires are boundless—the sea is not more ready to swallow up all that it can come

at. A little more, they told us some years ago, would content them—and a great deal more has been added to their stores—but still, they need a little more. Let your conversation be without covetousness in that respect and be content with such things as you have.

In many, perhaps in the most numerous class, this anxiety for acquisition betrays itself in fretful fears about the future. And I must, in all honesty, grant that this form of the vice has sometimes the appearance of being the most excusable of the whole. “What shall I do,” we are apt to say, “in case I should be laid aside and a precarious income should suddenly come to an end? It is not for myself, alone—it is for my wife and numerous family that I am chiefly concerned—how would they be provided for?” Many a man lies awake at night desiring to increase his income, not because he is ambitious to be rich, but because he is haunted with the fear of being poor. Gifted, perhaps, for the present with competency, he is still scared with dire forebodings—“What will become of my family if I die?” “Or should such-and-such a source of income be dried up—and it is very precarious—what, then, will become of my household? What then?”

Full many are not content with such things as they have because the dread of a distant season of trial is constantly harassing them. They cannot be happy in the present sunshine because they think, perhaps, a storm is brewing out of sight. They cannot lie down in peace because they want to lay up against a rainy day. In vain their table is bountifully spread unless they have a store in hand against every contingency that may happen! Do you notice how precious is that promise which provides for all possible casualties that may befall you? “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” The censure, therefore, falls where this sacred pledge is unheeded—and he is accounted covetous who walks after the cravings of the flesh rather than after the counsel of the Spirit of God!

If God would have you live by the day, why do you want to gather enough for seven days at once? If your Father bids you trust Him, why do you distrust His paternal care? Use prudent thrift by all means! Do not waste what He gives, nor heedlessly forget that you will have needs tomorrow as well as today—but abstain from fretfulness, murmuring and abhor every tendency to unbelief, lest you provoke Him to anger—

**“Commit all your griefs
And ways unto His hands.
To His sure Word, and tender care,
Who earth and Heaven commands.”**

He would not have you careful about those earthly things after which the Gentiles seek. “Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things.” “Let your conversation be without covetousness.” This covetousness is a great and crying evil! It is expressly forbidden in the Law—it has a commandment all to itself—“You shall not covet.”

O Brothers and Sisters, would you wish to fly into an evil which the Lord, Himself, accounts so gross that He has branded it across the brow with one of the Ten Commands of the Decalogue—“You shall not covet”? Covetous people, I have often observed, are classed in Scripture with the

worst of criminals. How revolting to be included in such bad company! Here in this very chapter we read, “Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Let your conversation be without covetousness.” Thus covetousness is classed with the very filthiest of vices of the flesh! In another place the Apostle says, “covetousness, which is idolatry”—and thus it is identified with a loathsome impurity of the spirit. Let the Christian dread it!

God is not selfish, God is love—God hoards not, He gives liberally! He refuses not the poor, He delights in mercy. He spreads abroad in the midst of His creatures the good things which belong to Him and He bids them freely gather what He freely gives! Even thus would He have us distribute generously and disperse freely without covetousness. Covetousness is an evil thing! It leads to all sorts of evil and it is especially evil in times of persecution. The Apostle knew that men who loved the world and hugged it were not the men to stand fast for God in the day of trial. Those who had the greatest fondness for worldly wealth were the first to turn aside and forsake the Savior when they had to undergo losses and crosses for His name’s sake. Covetousness is a deadly poison, destructive of all virtue. It dries up the milk of human kindness in a man’s breast and makes him hard, callous, indifferent towards the needs of his fellow creatures. How much infamy it fosters!

The man whose heart is set on covetousness will do anything for gold—he will venture to stain his hands with blood, itself, if he may but gain it. I scarcely know any other vice which can more effectually damn its victim and I speak the more earnestly about it because covetousness can readily enter into a man’s heart and he may not know it. St. Francis de Sales said that many came to him to confess all manner of sins and many of them of a glaring nature. But he said that all his life long he never knew anybody acknowledge covetousness. Do you exclaim, “I wonder why this is?” Well, it is because a man does not like to think that he can be covetous! He cannot bring himself to acknowledge that he has quite gone to that length!

When his avarice is the most heartless, he generally calls it by a prettier name, such as *prudence*, thrift, or carefulness, so as to make it look more respectable. There is a great propensity about gold and silver and houses and lands to stick to one’s heart and blind the judgment. It is difficult for those who have much to do with *wealth* to be quite clear of *self*. Some men, by Divine Grace, get much and give much—they use the world and do not abuse it—but it is of the earth, earthy after all, and when it comes into contact with these hearts of ours it will corrupt and corrode. He that has this world’s goods has need to watch himself lest his possessions should injure him!

And he that has them *not* had need to watch himself, too, lest his indigence should injure him. There is an evil that comes by either the having or the not having. And let each man, therefore, be on his guard against it while he listens to the warning voice of the Apostle, “Let your conversation be without covetousness.”

II. Secondly, as there is a vice to be shunned so there is a virtue to be sought. The theme is more pleasing now that we speak upon CONTENT-

MENT. “Be content with such things as you have.” It is, after all, no very great virtue if we should attain it—the more pity, therefore—if we should miss it! The old moralists constantly remind us that we may have the necessities of life upon very easy terms, whereas we put ourselves to great pains for its luxuries. There have been contented persons whose heads have been clear, their hearts simple and their habits temperate, though they have not known the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We ought to surely, then, rise to that low average of sanctity in which our moderation shall be known unto all men! To be content with such things as we have should be specially easy to us because we have so much to be thankful for! We have such constant communications from the great Benefactor and so certain an assurance that He will withhold no good thing from those that walk uprightly! I am not speaking, now, of those who have houses and land and goods in abundance, for their repinings are discord, indeed, but I speak of *all* Christians. This world is ours and worlds to come. Earth is our lodge and Heaven our home! It ought to be easy for *us* to be contented since all things are ordered for our good.

Arranged by our own dear Father’s hand, His appointments ought not to be difficult for a loving child to approve. The trial of our faith will soon be over—a long life of affliction is but a pin’s point of time. Be it ever so painful, we ought to be willing to bear the light affliction which is but for a moment. We know that God loves us, for we feel His love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Should not contentment be easy under such circumstances? They say, “There is nothing ill that is well taken,” and that is the testimony of a *heathen*—but that no harm can come of that which *our God* means for our good is quite certain. With His sorest chastisements often come to us His sweetest caresses.

Beyond this lower sky when this brief day is over, we shall be rich to all the intents of bliss. We have a heritage which will require everlasting ages to unfold! We have a treasure laid up which fancy cannot paint, of which it would sound fabulous to tell. Do we grope just now in darkness? Yet are we children of the day! In reversion now, in possession soon are the things that are to be revealed to us—and they are far more real than anything we have ever seen with these mortal eyes! It ought not to be a difficult thing for us to be content here for this brief hour.

“What does it matter?” says a traveler, “I shall only stay here one night. I shall be up and away in the morning.” And what does it matter to us, Brothers and Sisters? Till the day breaks and the shadows flee away, we may put up with a few hard things, for we may be where our Lord is in His Glory within the twinkling of an eye! True contentment is absolutely essential to happiness. There is a plant called *selfishness* and if you will pull it up by its roots you will find that it grows in the soil of misery! Were self completely renounced and Christ fully received as All in All, sorrow would be so sweetly accepted by us that the sting of it would be taken away. We must be satisfied with what God appoints or else we shall be constantly the prey of discomfort and the victims of disappointment. O

Christian men and women, will you not seek to be content with such things as you have?

I believe that contentment depends very much upon taking right views of things. There is, to wit, a short view. To live by the day is the way to be cheerful. If you try to live by the month, you will bring home a month's troubles to eat up a day's meat. God has not constructed His people to live by the month—their souls, like their bodies—are fashioned to live by the *day*. His supplies, His promises—the very prayers He puts into our mouths, all deal with days—"Give us this *day* our daily bread." "As your *days* so shall your strength be." Live by the day, then, and you will be content. But also take *long* views as well as short views. Take the view which says, "It will be all the same a hundred years hence." Take the view which says, "We shall soon laugh at this present little vexation."

Take that distant view which says, "When I get to Heaven, this great trial will seem very small. When I look from the hilltops of Glory at my present dilemma, it will probably cause me many a smile to think that I should have been so vexed and tormented by it." Take this view of things—that a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things that he possesses. Full often the more your goods increase the more your cares multiply—the care to keep is often greater than the care to win—while, after all, the care rightly to use ought to be the most weighty care of all! If your God has loaded a neighbor with 10,000 pounds a year, thank God that He has not burdened you in that way! Be glad if He has given you as much as you can easily carry and no more.

When I go for a walk, I like a staff—just one, but I should not like to be compelled to carry a hundred! Some men appear to me to have a hundred times as much as they can possibly need and so they are hampered with what might, in moderation, have been their help. Be not eager for great riches, nor seek after large domains in this world lest you wallow in wealth, stick in it as in a bog and drown your soul! Why load yourself with more clay, when you have as much to carry, now, as you can get along with? Be not surprised, therefore, any of you, but rather be thankful if God does, sometimes, lighten your load a little to quicken your pace in the heavenly journey. The secret of true contentment and the way to get at it is admirably expressed in these words, "Be content with such things as you have, for He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

Some of the most easy-going people in the world are those who have a government pension of so much a month. It is little, but it is sure. If all the banks break, they will get it. They have no trouble as to how the markets fluctuate, or how different stocks rise and fall in value—or what dividends they might derive from investments. It is not a large income that falls to their lot, 'tis true, but then it is all they require and it is always sure. You say to such a person, "You may set your heart at rest because your supplies come from a sure source." Now, then, that is exactly where the child of God stands for we know Who has said—"Your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure." Between now and Heaven I do

not know who may starve, but I never shall, because the Lord is my Shepherd and I shall not want!

Those clever lawyers, those sharp-teethed schemers, those greedy oppressors, those young lions may lack and suffer hunger, but they that fear the Lord shall not want any good thing. The Christian man's fortune is made! "Oh, but he may be in great straits." Yes, but he shall be supplied in due time. All that he needs in this time state his heavenly Father will give him. He needs but faith to believe this and he shall find it to be really so—"For He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you." God's Word ought to be taken as the Truth of God, itself, because it is! A promise from the mouth of God is better than a bond signed and sealed by the wealthiest of men! No negotiable securities can be comparable in value to this declaration of the Lord, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

It is put very strongly. In the original there are five negatives, as in the verse you sang just now—

***"The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
He will not, He will not, desert to his foes!
That soul, though all Hell should endeavor to shake,
He'll never, no never, no never forsake."***

The five negatives in the last line of that verse correspond with the five placed in this text—"I will never leave you, nor forsake you." It means that in no one single instance will the Lord leave you, nor in any one particular will He leave you, nor for any reason will He leave you. If you have cast yourself upon His infinite power and Grace, He will carry you to the end. Not only will He not desert you altogether, but He will not leave you even for a little while! He may seem, for a small moment, to hide His face from you, but He will still love you and still supply your needs. Behind the wall He will pour oil upon the flame if in the front of the wall He permits Satan to throw water upon it.

He will feed you somehow—by the back door, if not by the front—by the ravens if not by the doves. If the brook Cherith fails, He will find a widow woman, even in a distant land who, in all *her* straits shall, nevertheless, feed the servant of God. "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Surely we cannot fail to be content if we do but get fast hold of this promise! Are you not always in the Divine Presence? Does He not say, "I will never leave you"? No carpet on the floor, no paper on the walls? No pictures, no furniture, room mean and unsightly? Yes, but suppose God is there—what does it matter?

Buckingham Palace has not a drawing room to compare with that little room upstairs against the thatch, or with that attic where you cannot stand upright, where the stars peep in at night between the tiles. If God is there, I would sooner live in the worst cottage's worst room, on the pittance of the parish, than where the floor was paved with marble and the richest hangings adorned the ample chambers but the Divine Glory was unknown! If God is there—"I will never leave you"—then wherever the child of God is cast, there is a Glory round about him which makes him sublime in the midst of his poverty. "I will not forsake you," by which I

understand that, as He will not withdraw His Presence, so will He not withhold His help. "I need," you say. "I need, I need." Go on with the list. "I need a thousand things." "I will not forsake you," He says.

"I will see you through the trial. I will carry you over the difficulty. I will bear you on. I will lift you over. I will bring you out. I will abide with you to the end. I will not leave you nor forsake you." Is not that enough for your faith to feed on? What more do you need? Suppose He had said, "I will send my angels with you," or, "I will move all mankind to help you"? It would still not come to so much in its *real* meaning as this—"I will never leave you, nor forsake you." But when did God originally say this? Well, you cannot find the exact words in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, but He did say the same, in effect, to Jacob at Bethel and to Joshua before he went to the invasion of Canaan.

David said it, in the Lord's name, to Solomon and Isaiah said the same to the whole people of God. Whatever God says to one saint, He says, virtually, to all saints who have the same faith. This renders the Bible such a rich storehouse of comfort to us! No Scripture is of private interpretation, but all Scripture is given for our personal appropriation! No promise is hedged about as the exclusive property of the one man who received it. If you are of like character and in like case, you may, O Believer, take the Lord's Words to others as being spoken to yourself! You may plead a promise which God made to Joshua or to Jacob with just as much confidence as if He had made it especially to you. Remember this and be content with such things as you have.

III. Our last point, upon which our time will only admit a word or two, is the CONFIDENCE with which we may encourage ourselves and bid defiance to a frowning world. "So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do to me." This promise of the Lord is fitted to nerve us with courage as well as to solace us with contentment. Chicken-hearts and cowardly fears ill become the disciples of Christ! If we are oppressed, or if we have to encounter opposition, we may just go straight ahead in the strength of our text, and say, "What can man do to me?" If God is our helper, dear Brothers and Sisters, why should we shrink or falter? Why should we droop or look dismayed? Why should we hold our peace or speak with bated breath?

Are there any of you who are afraid to confess my Lord's name before men, to enlist in His service, to buckle on His armor, to admit yourselves His followers? Parley no longer, I beseech you, with such ungracious fears! Great thoughts have stirred within your breasts while we have presented the consoling word and the Spirit of God has rested upon it. Be great in act as you have been in thought! Since He has said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you," why are you ashamed to come and acknowledge Him? "I am afraid I might dishonor His name," you say. But He has said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." "I am very weak," you say. He has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." "I might bring dishonor upon the Church to which I should unite myself." Very likely you

would if He left you, but He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

It is always safe to do what God bids. There can be no sound policy in neglecting a Divine precept. So come forward and say boldly, “The Lord is my helper.” Possibly some of you have been persecuted. Hard names have been hurled at you—I hope you did not cry because of that. Poor child of God, your strength is very small if you are afraid of an ugly name! We have had a good many in our time—they have not broken any of our bones, nor will they injure you. “Oh, but you do not know what the chaff of the shop is.” No, but give them some of your wheat in return. Let them see how a Christian can bear and forbear when their fun grows foul—how he can endure reproach for righteousness’ sake! You will be master of the situation, yet.

“Alas, Sir, but I am threatened with the loss of my job unless I will go contrary to Divine commands.” Then do not flinch, but tell your heavenly Father all about it. Commit your cause to Him! Let not 50 jobs or 500 people make you swerve from the course that faith dictates and duty demands! Appeal to God and He will provide for you. Any temporary loss you may sustain will be much more than made up in the prosperity He awards you—or if not in that way, in the peace He promises you and the honor He confers on you in suffering for Christ’s sake! Oh that this very night the veil might be taken off many faces, the burden unloaded from many shoulders and fear dispelled from many hearts!

If you have cast off your grievous disquietudes while I have been talking, do not put them on again when you get outside! I have known many a poor tried child of God forget his trouble when he was sitting here, but he looked it up before he reached his home and so he returned to his old condition. “Cast your burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain you. He will never suffer the righteous to be moved.” You have been looking too far ahead, dear Brother, dear Sister!

Cure that fault by looking still further! Remember the coming of our Lord and the joy of His appearing and you may ease your pains in the present. Oh to live exempt from care by the energy of prayer! Oh, to believe implicitly in God, to rest calmly in Him, to trust steadfastly in Christ and to take His yoke upon us cheerfully—then we shall find rest to our souls by learning of Him! The Lord help us all to do so, for His name’s sake. Amen.

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

“NEVER, NO NEVER, NO NEVER”

NO. 3150

**A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 1909.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 16, 1873.**

***“Let your conversation be without covetousness: and be content
with such things as you have. For He has said, I will never
leave you, nor forsake you. So that we may boldly say,
The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man
shall do unto me.”
Hebrews 13:5, 6.***

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon the whole or parts of these two verses, are as follows—
Sermons #477, Volume 8—NEVER! NEVER! NEVER! NEVER! NEVER!; #1449, Volume 24—
A VILE WEED AND A FAIR FLOWER and #1880, Volume 32—A LESSON AND A
FORTUNE FOR CHRISTIAN MEN OF BUSINESS—Read/download the entire
sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

WHEN the Lord foretold, through the mouth of His servant, the Prophet Isaiah, that He would “make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow,” surely He must have had in His mind such precious Truths of God as this one which we have in our text, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” This is the very essence of consolation! I might truly say that it is the quintessence of delight! Here is solid spiritual food condensed into a very small space. Take these eight words and extract the marrow from them, or treat them as a honeycomb and get the sweetness out of them into your soul—and it will be full of content, no, more—it will be overflowing with sacred delight! “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

I. With such a text before us, we need no further preface, so we will at once begin our meditation upon the text. And first, I will ask you to VIEW THESE WORDS AS A QUOTATION.

You observe that the Apostle writes, “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” from which it plainly appears that Paul was quoting from Holy Writ. This should teach us how necessary it is for us, also, to quote Scripture whenever we can. The Holy Spirit abounds in gracious thoughts and in fitting language in which to express those thoughts, so He has no need to make extracts from what He has previously said. Yet He pleases to do so. Instead of giving us a new promise, He here gives us an old one over again, as if to remind us that there are no better things in the world than the Words of God, Himself, and that the very noblest expressions are those which have been already used!

Besides, the Holy Spirit here puts honor upon the Old Testament by quoting from it for the consolation of New Testament Believers. There are

some persons who seem to think more of the New Testament than they do of the Old Testament. I have met with Christians in Germany with whom it has been quite a superstition that the Evangelists were superior to the Apostles and that the Apostles were superior to the Prophets. I trust that such notions as those will never spread among us! We see here that when an Apostle writes as an Inspired man, he quotes from the Pentateuch, he quotes from the Chronicles and he quotes from the prophecy of Isaiah—so that we are to honor the Old Testament and not to look upon it as a secondary book compared with the New Testament, but to reverence the Divine teaching in both portions of the Inspired Word.

In addition to that, the Holy Spirit bids Paul apply this Old Testament promise to us to show us that the Words of God spoken to saints in the ancient times were spoken also to us, so that if the Lord gave a promise to Jacob, it was not meant to be restricted to Jacob, but to belong to all those who, like Jacob, can wrestle in prayer! And that if God spoke, as He did, a promise to Joshua, it was not intended to be only for Joshua, but for all who were in like circumstances to his. Scripture promises have, all of them, a message to all Believers—and if you believe in Jesus Christ—what God has said to other Believers of old He says this day to you!

I think we may learn much from the fact that this promise is a quotation from the Old Testament. Where did Paul find it? It is not very easy to say, because it occurs in various places and the Apostle has not quoted it literally. He has given the sense rather than the exact words of the quotation. He may have quoted the Septuagint version rather than the Hebrew, for no doubt he was familiar with both. There is not any one text in the Old Testament of which you could positively say that it is the one he intended, but there are several passages, any one of which you might say, “The words are almost here, and the spirit and meaning of the passage are entirely here.”

One of the first passages which Paul may be supposed to have quoted is Genesis 28:15. The fugitive Jacob lies asleep, with a stone for his pillow. In his dream, he sees a ladder reaching from earth to Heaven. At the top of it stands the Almighty, who makes a Covenant with him—and among the other Covenant promises is this, “Behold, I am with you, and will keep you in all places where you go, and will bring you again into this land; for *I will not leave you* until I have done that which I have spoken to you of.” Here you get the words, “I will not leave you.” Does not that passage, in its proper connection, suggest that *the promise is very applicable to young people starting out in life?* Jacob was leaving his father’s house under very unfavorable circumstance and he was going to a distant country where he had relatives, but strangers might have been kinder to him than Laban was, for he got all he could out of him and gave him as little in return as he could! So Jacob, starting for Padanaram, gets this promise from God, “I will not leave you.”

I can conceive of that promise coming to some young friend here. You have committed yourself to God’s keeping. You are a Believer in the Lord

Jesus Christ and now you are about to start on a new career. Some measure of trembling comes over you and you have been breathing this prayer to God, “O Lord, lead me in the way in which You would have me go—guide me in all my untrodden way.” It is just possible that you are going to a distant land and you are a lover of your home, as Jacob was, and you feel some natural anxiety concerning the change that you are about to make. Here comes in the promise that is just suited to your case, “I will not leave you.” Jacob proved the truth of that promise. Although he had many trials, which were, most of them, of his own making, yet never was he deserted by his God! In his old age, he said, “All these things are against me,” but he was not speaking the truth when he said that, for even then everything was working for his good! And, notwithstanding his troubles, he died a blessed old man who was able to give blessings to others as well as to enjoy them himself. So, my dear young Friend, take this text as the Lord’s promise to you for many years to come, “I will not leave you until I have done that which I have spoken to you of.”

There is a second passage which is more nearly to the point from which the Apostle probably quoted. That is Deuteronomy 31:6-8. Moses first speaks to the children of Israel and he says to them, “Be strong and of a good courage: fear not, nor be afraid of them: (that is, of the Canaanites) for the Lord your God, He it is that does go with you; He will not fail you, nor forsake you.” Then turning to Joshua, Moses says, “The Lord, He it is that does go before you; *He will be with you, He will not fail you, neither forsake you:* fear not, neither be dismayed.” In Joshua 1:5, we find that the Lord repeated the promise to Joshua, “I will not fail you, nor forsake you.” In the version which Paul may have read, the words here may have been identical with those he uses in writing to the Hebrews. What do we learn from the context of this passage? *God was here speaking to those who were about to lose their leader and who would need this assurance.* Moses was about to die. He had been the mainstay of the children of Israel and they had always looked up to him as their leader. Under God, Moses was the father of that nation and he carried them like children in his bosom. If they wanted water, it was he who smote the Rock to make the stream gush forth. If they needed that their enemies should be destroyed, it was he whose uplifted hands brought them the victory! Now Moses was about to go up to the top of Nebo and to die there—and the people greatly trembled at the prospect of losing him. But the Lord gave them this promise to console them, “I will not fail you, nor forsake you.”

Moses dies, but Moses’ God does not die! The strong man, whose eyes had not waxed dim, and whose natural force had not abated, must look from the mountaintop upon the good land beyond the Jordan—and then his God must take away his soul as with a kiss—yet God would not be gone. He is the dwelling place of His people in all generations! You see then, dear Friend, what is the bearing of the text upon your experience. You have lost, or are about to lose, the mainstay of your house. Your fa-

ther is failing in health and you cannot shake off from your mind the apprehension that in a few more days, you may have to pay a visit to the grave. One in whom you have rightly reposed much confidence and in whose presence you have felt that all was well, is soon to be taken away from you. But be not distressed as though God Himself were about to die, for Jehovah ever lives and He said to you, “I will not fail you, nor forsake you.” You who are already, or who soon will be a widow, dry your eyes with this blessed handkerchief! You who are, or soon will be, a fatherless child, be of good comfort, for your Father in Heaven will not leave you nor forsake you! Perhaps I am addressing members of a bereaved Church. You have lost a man of God who went in and out among you as Moses did among the children of Israel in the wilderness—and you are asking, “Where is his successor to come from?” Perhaps there is a Joshua within sight, but you are half afraid as to whether he will have the power needed to carry on the great work. Trust that the God who was with Moses will also be with Joshua and take this promise home to your own heart—and say to each of your fellow members in the sorrowing Church that the Lord has said, “I will not fail you, nor forsake you.”

There is another passage from which Paul may have quoted, in the first Book of the Chronicles, in the 28th Chapter, at the 20th verse, where David says to his son, Solomon, “Be strong and of good courage, and do it: (that is, build the Temple) fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, even my God, will be with you; *He will not fail you, nor forsake you*, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord.” I scarcely need indicate that *the promise is applicable to any who are about to undertake some great enterprise for God’s Glory*. You have not to build a material temple, but you have, perhaps, to build up a spiritual Church, or to evangelize a wide district, or to gather together a class of young people—and you feel half afraid that you are unequal to the task—but will not this promise be like a girdle about your loins? Will it not strengthen you to do exploits when the Lord says, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you”? Go in this your might, O you who are full of weakness and trembling! Go, for God bids you go and, therefore, let not your heart again ever fear!

One other passage contains part of our text in another form. It is that well-known one in Isaiah 41:10—“Fear you not; for *I am with you*: be not dismayed; for I am your God: I will strengthen you; yes, *I will help you*; yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness.” There the promise is enlarged, but the sense of it is the same—it is a promise of the Divine Presence and of the Divine help to the Lord’s tried and afflicted people!

II. Now we will change the run of our thought and VIEW THESE WORDS AS AN ADAGE OR HOUSEHOLD WORD FROM GOD.

I think this must have been a sort of proverb or common saying among the early Christians, “The Lord has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” and that it was one of the things that they constantly said, the one to the other. I wish that we had more such holy proverbs

current among us nowadays—that our common sayings were more worth saying than they often are, and that our proverbial philosophy were more truly Christian philosophy!

This saying, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” is *peculiarly a saying of God*. Paul puts a, “Thus says the Lord” to this saying—“He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” To my mind, it invests these words with special power to my soul when I remember that it is God who speaks to me and to each of my fellow Believers, and says, “*I—I say this, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.*” As I repeat these words, they may not seem to you to have much power in them, but if the Holy Spirit will impress these simple syllables upon your heart, they will come to you full of the music of Heaven and you will realize that it is GOD who says, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

Further, *these words are remarkably forcible in the original*. You probably have heard that in the Greek there are no less than five negatives. We cannot well translate them into English except in such language as that of the verse we were singing just now—

**“The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes!
That soul, though all Hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake!”**

In our English language, two negatives would destroy each other, but it is not so in the Greek language—and the heaping up, as it were, of these denials on God’s part of all thought of ever forsaking His people ought to be sufficient to satisfy even the most doubtful among us! If God has said, “I will not, *not*, NOT, no never forsake My people,” we must believe Him! And we must chase away all thought of the possibility of the Lord’s forsaking His servants, or leaving them to perish.

These words also derive much of their preciousness as a Christian proverb from the fact that *they relate to God Himself and His people*. They are God’s own words and they speak concerning Himself—“I will not leave you.” This is not merely a promise of deliverance out of trouble, or of the presence of angels to bear us up in their hands lest we dash our feet against a stone. God is not here promising us any temporal mercies, nor indeed any spiritual mercies by themselves, but He is speaking concerning *Himself*, who is the Substance of all His own promises, but Infinitely greater than the promises! And He says, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

And you will observe that *this promise ensures to us God’s Presence and God’s help*. “I will never leave you”—that is, “I will always be with you”—“nor forsake you.” The force of that promise is, “Being with you, I will never let you work alone. I will help you. I will not desert you as to My Presence and I will not desert you as to My succor. I will be with you and I will help you in all that you have to do.” This is a double promise and it is doubly sweet!

Besides that, *this promise wards off from us the most terrible calamity that could possibly occur to us*. It may help to make this promise increa-

singly precious to us if we think for a minute what would become of us if God did leave us or forsake us. Then, indeed, might the heavens be hung with blackness and the light of the sun be put out forever if God should leave us! The straight road to Hell would be open before us and we should soon be going there if we were forsaken of God. It would have been far better to never have been born, or never to have known the way of life at all than, after all, to be deserted of God and be left to perish! Thank God that can never be the portion of anyone who has truly trusted in Him.

Recollect also that, *if He had not been God, He would have forsaken us long ago*. Our patience with our fellow creatures holds out but a very little while. But it is because God is God and, therefore, changes not, that we are not consumed. Have you not done a thousand times enough to have made Him forsake you if He were like the sons of men? I confess sorrowfully that I know I have. And if He could turn from His eternal purpose, and if His everlasting love could change, then surely He would long ago have cast my poor soul far away from His Presence, to receive its well-deserved punishment! Is it not a blessed thing to think that the very thing that is most to be feared by any man can never happen to a Believer, for God has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you”? You well deserve to be forsaken of God, but He will never leave you! He will deal with you in the way of Grace, and not of Justice. If He left you, you would utterly perish, but He will not and cannot do so—you are too dear to Him for His heart to ever turn away from you.

And while this promise averts from us the direst ill, *it secures to us the richest possible blessing*. To have God with us—is there anything beneath the sky—is there anything above the sky that is a choicer blessing than that? To be with God and to have God with us is the very Heaven of heavens! And he who has this blessing here has a veritable Heaven upon earth! No other blessings can ever be compared with this one. No mirth of them that make merry in the dance, or of those who shout by reason of wine can ever be likened to the holy excitement and enthusiasm of a soul that is in the Presence of God and knows that it is there! To be helped of God, which is the second part of the promise, is bliss indeed. What better help than that does anyone need? We are glad to be helped by our fellow Christians who have the ability to aid us—but to be helped of God is to have the Treasury of Heaven and the great deeps of Divine Omnipotence to draw upon! Whatever it is that we really need, we already have if God is with us, for, “no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” The best of blessings are secured to the man or woman to whom God has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

Then, Beloved friends, *this is a promise that only God could give*. The husband whispers in the ear of his wife, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” but he forgets the hour of death when he must go from all below. The mother, as she presses her child to her bosom, says, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” but she knows not how soon that little

child may be an orphan to need another's care. Friend says to friend, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” forgetting how changeable human friendships are, for many are the hearts that have been torn asunder by vows, honestly whispered at the time, which have been forgotten through the lapse of years, or have been treacherously broken. “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” is not a promise for mortal lips to utter! Transient beings like ourselves must not venture to say, “I will never do this or that,” for, alas, we know not what we may do, or may not do! Even though we think we shall never prove to be traitors, yet traitors we may prove to be. Or if not traitors, our power may fail so that we shall be unable to do what we have promised. But when Jehovah says, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” it is a Divine Promise and He who utters it, Divinely keeps it! 'Tis a fit promise for God to speak and 'tis a fit promise for God's servants to hear. You have lost many of those dear to you, but you have not lost your God! They have gone from you, one by one, “as star by star grows dim,” but His Light still shines on—and shall shine on forever!

Further, Beloved, *this choice promise provides against all troubles*. We do not know what troubles may come upon us. Let us not think about them. They will come soon enough and it will be quite sufficient for us to trouble ourselves about them when they do come. But whatever they may be, “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” There may come to us great losses. Our riches may take to themselves wings and fly away—where we had large estates, we may be without a place whereon to lay our head. But “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” We may be the victims of cruel slanders and under the pressure of those slanders those that used to respect us may avoid us—and former friends may be alienated from us. But “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” We may have to suffer great pain and the earthly physician may be unable to relieve us. But God's promise will still avail us, for, “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” Sore sinking of heart may come upon us and all God's waves and billows may roll over us—but “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

In the course of our service for God, we may meet with many difficulties. Where we looked for helpers, we may find opponents. But let us still press onward, for, “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” We may have to move to distant lands, but “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” Days of weakness may come to us, when the pillars of the house shall tremble, when they that look out of the windows shall be darkened and our teeth shall fail because they are few. The infirmities of old age may tell upon us, but “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” And with old age may come the loss of children and friends till we seem left, “like the last rose of summer,” or the last sere leaf of the woods in the autumn—yet “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” And then shall come the chill river of death and the gathering darkness of the night—but “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” And after that shall come another world where our

spirit shall fly through tracks unknown and where new and wondrous scenes shall burst upon our astonished view! And, in the fullness of time, Christ shall come and the last great battle shall be fought—but whatever is to be, or is not to be—a Christian has nothing to fear, for, “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” Come forth, you dragon bound with the chain and ravage the world again if so it must be! Rise, Antichrist, from your den amidst the seven hills! Pollute the Churches once again if you can! Let war and bloodshed, famine and pestilence break loose again with unknown fury—but whatever happens, in time or in eternity, “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” “Therefore will we not fear, though the earth is removed, and though the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea.” If the Lord of Hosts is with us, what grounds can there be for fear? I know of no supposable dangers, no imaginable troubles, no conceivable difficulties through which, and out of which, and beyond which this text will not carry us—if by faith we grasp it—“He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

III. Now I must pass on to the next point. We have viewed these words as a quotation and as a proverbial saying. Now the practical outcome of this subject, according to the text, is that we are to VIEW THESE WORDS AS A MOTIVE FOR CONTENTMENT. “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have. For He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” That is to say, do not be grasping, do not be seeking to rake all the world to yourself, do not stretch out your arms, like seas, to enclose all the shore!

“But,” says one, “I have so very little.” You have as much as God has been pleased to give you, so be content with such things as you have. “I wish I had a great deal laid by,” says another. Do you need more than this—“He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you”? “I wish I had a large regular income,” says another. This looks pretty regular, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” Someone asks, “But does that mean temporal things? “Do you think that God will let your body die of starvation when He promises to take care of your soul? There is an ancient promise for the man who walks righteously and speaks uprightly—“Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” And it shall still be so in this matter, also—the Lord will not leave you, nor forsake you if you trust in Him. It seems to me that the man who can claim this promise has his fortune made for him. If he had made large investments, they might turn out badly. If he possessed large estates, they might have to be sold. If he had wealthy friends, they might all forget him, for memories are not always very strong in the direction in which some people wish they might be. Many a man has fallen from the pinnacle of personal wealth to the pit of personal need—and many others who were waiting for dead men’s shoes, have had to go barefoot to their own graves. It is poor confidence that trusts in men, but it is blessed confidence that rests in this glorious Truth of God, “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” “Trust in the Lord, and do good: so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.”

But I know how it is with many of us—we cannot live by faith! We are so apt to think that something to see and to handle is so much more satisfactory than a promise of God. But is not that a species of blasphemy? Is not God’s promise better, more sure, more satisfactory, more ennobling, more Divine than anything that can be seen? O child of God, what more do you need than this gracious assurance, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you”? What though your wallet holds but little, if your God has said that He will fill it every morning and every evening, what more do you need? The children of Israel tried to store the manna, but it bred worms and stank, for they were to gather their daily supply morning by morning. There is many a man who has not been content to trust in God, so he has asked for something to look at and to handle—and he has had it and it has been a stench in his nostrils all his days! And he has never again been the man he was when he had not given way to an evil spirit of covetousness! I would rather be the poorest Christian in this world and live on this promise, than be the richest man that lives and not have this promise! And in saying this I am sure that I am speaking for every Christian here. Our true treasure is this, “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” That is our bank stock in the Bank of Heaven! All else that we have is but the spending money of a traveler when he stays at an inn. But we are soon to be up and away to the land where our true treasure lies, where our God and our Father lives who has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you”!

IV. The last point is that THESE WORDS ARE TO BE VIEWED AS A REASON FOR COURAGE. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper and I will not fear what man shall do to me.”

If God says to me, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” I never ought to be the victim of fear of man. Yet the fear of man that brings a snare is one of the curses of the lives of many professors. They are afraid of opposition and afraid of persecution—and although persecution is very mild nowadays compared with what it used to be, they are afraid of the public opinion in their little circle, afraid of the contemptuous remarks that will be made, afraid of the cold shoulder, afraid of the innuendoes and the dark hints, afraid to be thought to be one of those “vulgar people” who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and who desire to follow Him “wherever He goes.” That horrible fear of losing the respect of ungodly people still operates upon thousands and tens of thousands who, if they only realized the Truth of this promise, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” would, each one, say, “Let men think what they like of me. Let them call me a fool or a fanatic. Let them shun me, but what does it matter as long as You, my Lord, do not forsake me?”

So, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ, let every one of us, first of all, fling away from our souls, by the power of God’s Spirit, all desire to grasp this world and make that our god! Let us abhor covetousness. If God sends us wealth, let us reckon that we are only stewards of it and use it for His Glory. If He does not send it to us, let us be quite content to be without it, for it brings a heap of trouble with it! Let us always keep the

world under our feet and reckon it to be unworthy of a Christian’s craving!

Then let us fling away all cowardice and boldly say that the Lord is our Helper, so we will not fear what man may do to us. Accursed be the lips of any minister who dares to say, “I must not utter that unpopular Truth of God for fear I should have the censure of the public press or public opinion.” Shall such fear as that ever stop us from uttering what we believe to be true? If it does, how shall we be able to give in our account at the Last Great Day? I reckon it to be my business, as a man sent of God, never for a moment to consider how you or anybody else will like what I have to say in my Master’s name, nor whether it shall be approved by this man or that, whether he is eminent in rank or eminent as a critic! No, let him be what or who he may, if I have done my Master’s work faithfully, it matters not to me whether the man praises it to the skies or condemns it to the bottomless Pit! In the pulpit it does not concern me what man’s judgment upon my message shall be—and you in the pews must never hesitate to take the consequences of doing what is right. Be just in your business, come what may of it! Be honest in your profession, carry out your principles and if that should involve loss, be content to lose! Whatever comes of it, be straight—as straight as though God had ruled you with His own Divine hand and there was ne’er a bend or crack in your character! Press onward towards the goal of sincerity and purity—and may God strengthen you to reach it!

Though there are a thousand influences that might make a true man fall and cause a brave man to turn coward and might urge you to sell your principles, or at least to take off the sharp angles of them, do not do it—do not do it—by the love of God, do not do it! As “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” do not leave your God, do not forsake his Truth! Your fathers died rather than give up the Gospel. Your ancestors fought for it on many a bloody field. We have cast away the sword of the warrior and we have done well, for we fight not with carnal weapons, but, by the Grace of God we grasp “the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God”—and with brave hearts and strong we stand steadfastly for the faith! And so will we stand until the Truth shall win the day and the victory shall be unto the Captain of our salvation! Stand fast, Brothers and Sisters, in the name of God, and may the Lord bless you, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: HEBREWS 13:1-21.

This is a practical Chapter at the close of this most instructive Epistle.

Verse 1. *Let brotherly love continue.* The word, “continue,” implies that the “brotherly love” exists. There are many things which might put an end to it, so see to it that as far as you are concerned, it continues. Under all provocations and under all disappointments, “let brotherly love continue.”

2, 3. *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.* And being likely, therefore, to take your own turn of suffering and to need the sympathy of your fellow Christians. Show sympathy to others while they need it and they will gratefully remember you when you are in bonds or in adversity.

4. *Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* And terrible will be their doom when God does judge them! They may think that because they sin in secret, they shall escape punishment—but it shall not be so. Whether men judge them or not, God *will* judge them.

5. *Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have: for He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.* Therefore you have a grand reserve! What you have in possession is only a little spending money to use on the road to Heaven, but “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” You may confidently fall back upon the Providence of God in all times of straitness and need.

6-8. *So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and forever.* [See Sermons #170, Volume 4—THE IMMUTABILITY OF CHRIST; #848, Volume 15—JESUS CHRIST IS IMMUTABLE and #2358, Volume 40—THE UNCHANGEABLE CHRIST—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] It is for your own benefit to remember in your prayers those who preach the Word of God to you, for what can they do without Divine assistance and how can you be profited by them unless they are first blessed of God? Remember them, therefore.

9. *Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.* Do not put yourself into every man’s hand to let him play with you as he pleases. The fish that never nibbles at the bait is not likely to be caught by the hook—and he who will not give heed to “divers and strange doctrines” is not likely to be carried away in the net of heresy!

9. *For it is a good thing that the heart is established with Grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.* Some in the Apostle’s day made religion to consist almost entirely in observing certain rules as to what they ate and what they drank. “Be not so foolish,” says Paul, “there is something better than that. Seek to have your heart established with Divine Grace.”

10. *We have an altar, of which they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.* Those who cling to the external and ceremonial observances of religion have no right to the privileges which belong to those who come to the spiritual altar—they cannot share that secret.

11-14. *For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. There-*

fore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. Then, my Brother or Sister, do not look for a continuing city here. Do not build your nest on any one of the trees of earth, for they are all marked for the axe—and they will all have to come down, and your nest too, if you have built upon them.

15. *By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.* [See Sermon #2048, Volume 34—A LIFE-LONG OCCUPATION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] If you are Believers in Christ, you are God’s priests and this is the sacrifice that you are continually to offer—the fruit of your lips, giving thanks to God’s name!

16. *But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* We are to do good to others, to communicate [give] of our own good things to those who need them and to do this at some sacrifice to ourselves, “for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

17-19. *Obeys them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.* You must have noted how often the Apostle asks for the prayers of those to whom he is writing. So we are following a good example when we ask you to pray for us.

20, 21. *Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is ever pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.* [See Sermons #277, Volume 5—THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT; #1186, Volume 20—THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT and #1368, Volume 23—THE GOD OF PEACE AND OUR SANCTIFICATION—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

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

THE IMMUTABILITY OF CHRIST

NO. 170

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 3, 1858,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever.”
Hebrews 13:8.***

IT is well that there is one Person who is the same. It is well that there is one stable rock amidst the changing billows of this sea of life. For how many and how grievous have been the changes of last year? How many of you who commenced in affluence, have by the panic, which has shaken nations, been reduced almost to poverty? How many of you, who in strong health marched into this place on the first Sabbath of last year, have had to come tottering here, feeling that the breath of man is in his nostrils and wherein is he to be accounted of? Many of you came to this hall with a numerous family, leaning upon the arm of a choice and much-loved friend.

Alas, for love, if you were all and nothing beside, O earth! For you have buried those you loved the best. Some of you have come here childless, or widows, or fatherless, still weeping your recent affliction. Changes have taken place in your estate that have made your heart full of misery. Your cups of sweetness have been dashed with draughts of gall. Your golden harvests have had tares cast into the midst of them and you have had to reap the noxious weed along with the precious grain. Your much fine gold has become dim and your glory has departed. The sweet frames at the commencement of last year became bitter ones at the end. Your raptures and your ecstasies were turned into depression and forebodings. Alas, for our changes—and hallelujah to Him that has no change.

But greater things have changed than we. For kingdoms have trembled in the balances. We have seen a peninsula deluged with blood and mutiny raising its bloody war whoop. No, the whole world has changed—earth has doffed its green and put on its somber garment of autumn and soon expects to wear its ermine robe of snow. All things have changed. We believe that not only in appearance but in reality, the world is growing old. The sun itself must soon grow dim with age. The folding up of the worn-out vesture has commenced. The changing of the heavens and the earth has certainly begun.

They shall perish. They all shall wax old as does a garment. But forever blessed is He who is the same and of whose years there is no end. The

satisfaction that the mariner feels, when, after having been tossed about for many a day, he puts his foot upon the solid shore, is just the satisfaction of a Christian when, amidst all the changes of this troublous life, he plants the foot of his faith upon such a text as this—"the same yesterday and today and forever." The same stability that the anchor gives the ship, when it has at last got the grip of some immovable rock, that same stability does our hope give to our spirits, when, like an anchor, it fixes itself in a truth so glorious as this—"Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever."

I shall first try this morning to open the text by a little *explanation*. Then I shall try to *answer a few objections* which our wicked unbelief will be quite sure to raise against it. And afterwards I shall try to *draw a few useful, consoling and practical lessons* from the great truth of the immutability of Jesus Christ.

I. First, then, we open the text by a little EXPLANATION—"Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever." He is the same in *His Person*. We change perpetually. The bloom of youth gives place to the strength of manhood and the maturity of manhood fades away into the weakness of old age. But, "You have the dew of Your youth." Christ Jesus, whom we adore, You are as young as ever! We came into this world with the ignorance of infancy. We grow up searching, studying and learning with the diligence of youth. We attain to some little knowledge in our riper years. And then in our old age we totter back to the imbecility of our childhood. But O, our Master, You did perfectly foreknow all mortal or eternal things from before the foundations of the world and You know all things now and forever You shall be the same in Your Omniscience.

We are one day strong and the next day weak—one day resolved and the next day wavering—one hour constant and the next hour unstable as water. We are one moment holy, kept by the power of God. We are the next moment sinning, led astray by our own lusts. But our Master is forever the same—pure and never spotted—firm and never changing—everlastingly Omnipotent, unchangeably Omniscient. From Him no attribute does pass away. To Him no parallax, no tropic, ever comes. Without variableness or shadow of a turning, He abides fast and firm. Did Solomon sing concerning his best Beloved, "His head is as the most fine gold. His locks are bushy and black as a raven. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers. His lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl. His belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires. His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold. His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars"?

Surely we can even now conclude the description from our own experience of Him. And while we endorse every word which went before, we can end the description by saying, “His mouth is most sweet, yes He is altogether lovely. His matchless beauty is unimpaired. He is still ‘the chief among ten thousand’—‘fairest of the sons of men.’ ” Did the divine John talk of Him when he said—“His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow. And His eyes were as a flame of fire. And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace. And His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars. And out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. And His countenance was as the sun shines in His strength”?

He is the same—upon His brow there is never a furrow. His locks are gray with reverence, but not with age. His feet stand as firm as when they trod the everlasting mountains in the years before the world was made. His eyes as piercing as when, for the first time, He looked upon a newborn world. Christ’s Person never changes. Should He come on earth to visit us again, as surely He will, we should find Him the same Jesus. As loving, as approachable, as generous, as kind and though arrayed in nobler garments than He wore when first He visited earth, though no more the Man of Sorrows and grief’s acquaintance, yet He would be the same Person, unchanged by all His glories, His triumphs and His joys. We bless Christ that amid His heavenly splendors His Person is just the same and His nature unaffected. “Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever.”

Again—Jesus Christ is the same with regard to *His Father* as ever. He was His Father’s well-beloved Son before all worlds. His well-beloved in the stream of Baptism. He was His well-beloved on the Cross. He was His well-beloved when He led captivity captive and He is not less the object of His Father’s infinite affection now than He was then. Yesterday He lay in Jehovah’s bosom, God, having all power with His Father—today He stands on earth man, with us, but still the same, forever. He ascends on high and still He is His Father’s Son still by inheritance, having a more excellent name than angels—still sitting far above all principalities and powers and every name that is named.

O Christian, give Him your cause to plead. The Father will answer Him as well now as He did afore time. Doubt not the Father’s grace. Go to your Advocate. He is as near to Jehovah’s heart as ever—as prevalent in His intercession. Trust Him, then, and in trusting Him you may be sure of the Father’s love to you.

But now there is a yet sweeter thought. Jesus Christ is the same to *His people* as ever. We have delighted in our happier moments, in days that have rolled away, to think of Him that loved us when we had no being. We

have often sung with rapture of Him that loved us when we loved not Him—

***“Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God.
He to save my soul from danger
Interposed His precious blood.”***

We have looked back, too, upon the years of our troubles and our trials. And we can bear our solemn though humble witness, that He has been true to us in all our exigencies and has never failed us once. Come, then, let us comfort ourselves with this thought—that though today He may distress us with a sense of sin, yet His heart is just the same to us as ever. Christ may wear masks that look black to His people but His face is always the same. Christ may sometimes take a rod in His hand instead of a golden scepter—but the name of His saints is as much engraved upon the hand that grasps the rod as upon the palm that clasps the scepter.

And oh, sweet thought that now bursts upon our mind! Beloved, can you conceive how much Christ will love you when you are in Heaven? Have you ever tried to fathom that bottomless sea of affection in which you shall swim, when you shall bathe yourself in seas of heavenly rest? Did you ever think of the love which Christ will manifest to you when He shall present you without spot, or blemish, or any such thing, before His Father’s throne? Well, pause and remember that He loves you at this hour as much as He will love you then. For He will be the same forever as He is today and He is the same today as He will be forever. This one thing I know—if Jesus’ heart is set on me He will not love me one atom better when this head wears a crown and when this hand shall with joyous fingers touch the strings of golden harps, than He does now—amidst all my sin and care and woe.

I believe that saying which is written—“As the Father has loved Me, even so have I loved you.” And a higher degree of love we cannot imagine. The Father loves His Son infinitely and even so today, Believer, does the Son of God love you. His heart yearns over you. His heart flows out to you. All His life is yours. All His Person is yours. He cannot love you more. He will not love you less. “The same yesterday, today and forever.”

But let us here recollect that Jesus Christ is *the same to sinners* today as He was yesterday. It is now eight years ago since I first went to Jesus Christ. Come the sixth of this month, I shall then be eight years old in the Gospel of the grace of Jesus—a child, a little child therein as yet. I recall that hour when I heard that exhortation—“Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and beside Me there is none else.” And I remember, how with much trembling and with a little faith I ventured to approach the Savior’s feet.

I thought He would spurn me from Him—"Surely," said my heart, "if you should presume to put your trust in Him as your Savior, it would be a presumption more damnable than all your sins put together. Go not to Him—He will spurn you." However, I put the rope about my neck, feeling that if God destroyed me forever, He would be just. I cast the ashes on my head and with many a sigh I did confess my sin. And then when I ventured to draw near to Him, when I expected that He would frown, He stretched out His hand and said, "I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions for My own sake and will not remember your sins."

I came like the prodigal, because I was forced to come. I was starved out of that foreign country where in riotous living I had spent my substance and I saw my Father's house a great way off. But little did I know that my Father's heart was beating high with love to me. O rapturous hour, when Jesus whispered I was His and when my soul could say, "Jesus Christ is my salvation." And now I would refresh my own memory by reminding myself that what my Master was to me yesterday He is today. And if I know that as a sinner I went to Him then and He received me, if I have ever so many doubts about my saintship I cannot doubt but what I am a sinner. So to your Cross, O Jesus, I go again and if You did receive me then, You will receive me now. And believing that to be true, I turn round to my fellow mortals and I say, "He that received me, He that received Manasseh, He that received the thief upon the cross, is the same today as He was then."

Oh, come and try Him! Come and try Him! Oh, you that know your need of Him, come to Him! You that have sold for nothing your heritage above may have it back unbought, the gift of Jesus' love. You that are empty, Christ is as full today as ever. Come! fill yourselves here. You that are thirsty, the stream is flowing. You that are black in sin, the fountain still can purify. You that are naked, the wardrobe is not empty—

***"Come, guilty souls and flee away
To Christ and heal your wounds.
Still 'tis the Gospel's gracious day,
And now free grace abounds."***

I cannot pretend to enter into the fullness of my text as I could desire. But one more thought—Jesus Christ is the same today as He was yesterday *in the teachings of His Word*. They tell us in these times that the improvements of the age require improvements in theology. Why, I have heard it said that the way Luther preached would not suit this age. We are too polite! The style of preaching, they say, that did in John Bunyan's day, is not the style now. True, they honor these men. They are like the Pharisees—they build the sepulchers of the prophets that their fathers slew and so they do confess that they are their fathers' own sons and like their

parents. And men that stand up to preach as those men did, with honest tongues and know not how to use polished courtly phrases are as much condemned now as those men were in their time. Because, say they, the world is marching on and the Gospel must march on, too.

No, Sirs, the old Gospel is the same. Not one of her stakes must be removed, not one of her cords must be loosened. “Hold fast the form of sound words, which you have heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” Theology has nothing new in it except that which is false. The preaching of Paul must be the preaching of the minister today. There is no advancement here. We may advance in our knowledge of it. But it stands the same for this good reason—it is perfect and perfection cannot be any better. The old Truth that Calvin preached, that Chrysostom preached, that Paul preached, is the Truth that I must preach today, or else be a liar to my conscience and my God. I cannot shape the Truth. I know of no such thing as paring off the rough edges of a doctrine.

John Knox’s Gospel is my Gospel. That which thundered through Scotland must thunder through England again. The great mass of our ministers are sound enough in the faith but not sound enough in the way they preach it. Election is not mentioned once in the year in many a pulpit. Final Perseverance is kept back. The great things of God’s Law are forgotten and a kind of mongrel mixture of Arminianism and Calvinism is the delight of the present age. And hence the Lord has forsaken many of His tabernacles and left the house of His covenant and He will leave it till again the trumpet gives a certain sound. For wherever there is not the old Gospel we shall find “Ichabod” written upon the Church walls before long. The old truth of the Covenanters, the old truth of the Puritans, the old truth of the Apostles is the only Truth that will stand the test of time. It never needs to be altered to suit a wicked and ungodly generation. Christ Jesus preaches today the same as when He preached upon the Mount. He has not changed His doctrines—men may ridicule and laugh, but still they stand the same—*semper idem* written upon every one of them.

They shall not be removed or altered. Let the Christian remember that this is equally true of the *promises*. Let the sinner remember this is just as true of the *threats*. Let us each recollect that not one word can be added to this Sacred Book, nor one letter taken away from it. For as Christ Jesus is yet the same, so is His Gospel—the same yesterday, today and forever. I have thus briefly opened the text, not in its fullest meanings, but still enough to enable the Christian at his own leisure to see into the depth without a bottom—the immutability of Christ Jesus the Lord.

II. And now comes in one of crooked gait, with hideous aspect—one that has as many lives as a cat and that cannot be killed anyhow, though many a great gun has been shot against him. His name is old Mr. Incre-

dulity—unbelief. And he begins his miserable oration by declaring, “How can that be true? ‘Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever.’ Why, yesterday Christ was all sunshine to me—today I am in distress!” Stop, Mr. Unbelief. I beg you to remember that Christ is not changed. *You* have changed yourself, for you have said in your very accusation that yesterday you rejoiced, but today you are in distress. All that may happen and yet there can be no change in Christ. The sun may be the same always though one hour may be cloudy and the next bright with golden light. Yet there is no proof that the *sun* has changed. ‘Tis even so with Christ—

***“If today He deigns to bless us
With a sense of pardoned sin,
He tomorrow may distress us,
Make us feel the plague within.
All to make us,
Sick of self and fond of Him.”***

There is no change in Him—

***“Immutable His will
Though dark may be my frame,
His loving heart is still
Unchangeably the same.
My soul through many changes goes,
His love no variation knows.”***

Your frames are no proof that Christ changes—they are only proof that *you* change.

But says old Unbelief again—“Surely God has changed. You look at the old saints of ancient times. What happy men they were! How highly favored of their God! How well God provided for them! But now, Sir, when I am hungry, no ravens come and bring me bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening. When I am thirsty, no water leaps out of the rock to supply my thirst. It is said of the children of Israel that their clothes waxed not old, but I have a hole in my coat today and where I shall get another garment I know not. When they marched through the desert He suffered no man to hurt them. But, Sir, I am continually beset by enemies.

“It is true of me as it says in the Scriptures, ‘And the Ammonites distressed Israel at the coming in of the year’—for they are distressing me. Why, Sir, I see my friends die in clouds. There are no fiery chariots to carry God’s Elijahs to Heaven now. I lost my son—no Prophet laid upon him and gave him life again. No Jesus met me at the city gates, to give me back my son from the gloomy grave. No, Sir, these are evil times—the light of Jesus Christ has become dim. If He walks among the golden candlesticks, yet still it is not as He used to do. And worse than that, Sir, I have heard my father talk of the great men that were in the age gone by. I have

heard the names of Romaine and Toplady and Scott. I have heard of Whitfields and of Bunyans. And even but a few years ago I heard talk of such men as Joseph Irons—solemn and earnest preachers of a full Gospel.

“But where are those men now? Sir, we have fallen upon an age of driveling. Men have died out and we have only a few dwarfs left. There are none that walk with the giant tramp and the colossal tread of the mighty fathers, like Owen and Howe and Baxter and Charnock. We are all little men. Jesus Christ is not dealing with us as He did with our fathers.” Stop, Unbelief, a minute—let me remind you that the ancient people of God had their trials, too. Know you not what the Apostle Paul says? “For your sake we are killed all the day long.” Now, if there is any change it is a change for the better. For you have not yet “resisted unto blood, striving against death.”

But remember that still does not affect *Christ*. For neither nakedness nor famine, nor sword, have separated us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is true that you have no fiery chariot. But then the angels carry you to Jesus’ bosom and that is as well. It is true no ravens bring you food, it is quite as true you get your food somehow or other. It is quite certain that no rock gushes out with water, but still your water has been sure. It is true your child has not been raised from the dead, but you remember that David had a child that was not raised any more than yours. You have the same consolation as he had: “I shall go to him, he shall not return to me.” You say that you have more heart-rending than the saints had of old. It is your ignorance that makes you say so.

Holy men of old said, “Why are you cast down, O my Soul? Why are you disquieted within me?” Even Prophets had to say—“You have made me drunken with wormwood and broken my teeth with gravel stones.” Oh, you are mistaken—your days are not more full of trouble than the days of Job—you are not more vexed by the wicked than was Lot of old—you have not more temptations to make you angry than had Moses. And certainly your way is not half so rough as the way of your blessed Lord. The very fact that you have troubles is a proof of His faithfulness. For you have got one half of His legacy and you will have the other half. You know that Christ’s last will and testament has two portions in it. “In the world you shall have tribulation.” You have got that. The next clause is—“In Me you shall have peace.” You have that, too. “Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.” That is yours also.

And then you say that you have fallen upon a bad age with regard to ministers. It may be so. But remember, the promise is true still. “Though I take away from you bread and water yet will I never take away your pas-

tors.” You have still such as you have—still some that are faithful to God and to His Covenant and who do not forsake the Truth. And though the day may be dark, yet it is not so dark as days have been. And besides, remember what you say today is just what your forefathers said. Men in the days of Toplady looked back to the days of Whitfield.

Men in the days of Whitfield looked back to the days of Bunyan. Men in the days of Bunyan wept, because of the days of Wycliffe and Calvin and Luther. And men then wept for the days of Augustine and Chrysostom. Men in those days wept for the days of the Apostles. And doubtless men in the days of the Apostles wept for the days of Jesus Christ. And no doubt some in the days of Jesus Christ were so blind as to wish to return to the days of prophecy and thought more of the days of Elijah than they did of the most glorious day of Christ. Some men look more to the past than the present. Rest assured that Jesus Christ is the same today as He was yesterday and He will be the same forever.

Mourner, be glad! I have heard of a little girl who, when her father died, saw her mother weeping immoderately. Day after day and week after week her mother refused to be comforted and the little girl stepped up to her mother and putting her little hand inside her mother’s hand, looked up in her face and said, “Mamma, is God dead? Is God dead, Mamma?” And her mother thought, “Surely, no.” The child seemed to say “Your Maker is your husband. The Lord of hosts is His name. So you may dry your tears. I have a father in Heaven and you have a Husband still.” Oh, you saints that have lost your gold and your silver! You have got treasure in Heaven, where no moth nor rust does corrupt, where no thieves break through and steal! You that are sick today, you that have lost health, remember the day is coming when all that shall be made up to you and when you shall find that the flame has not hurt you—it has but consumed your dross and refined your gold. Remember, Jesus Christ is “the same today, yesterday and forever.”

III. And now I must be brief in drawing one or two sweet conclusions from that part of the text. First, then, if He is the same today as yesterday, my Soul, set not your affections upon these changing things—but set your heart upon *Him*. O my Heart, build not your house upon the sandy pillars of a world that soon must pass away—but build your hopes upon this Rock—which when the rain descends and floods shall come, shall stand immovably secure. O my Soul, I charge you, lay up your treasure in this secure granary. O my Heart, I bid you now put your treasure where you can never lose it. Put it in Christ. Put all your affections in His Person, all your hope in His glory, all your trust in His efficacious blood, all your joy in His Presence—and then you will have put yourself and put your all where you can never lose anything because it is secure. Remember, O my

Heart, that the time is coming when all things must fade and when you must part with all. Death's gloomy night must soon put out your sunshine. The dark flood must soon roll between you and all you have.

Then put your heart with Him who will never leave you. Trust yourself with Him who will go with you through the black and surging current of death's stream and who will walk with you up the steep hills of Heaven and make you sit together with Him in heavenly places forever. Go, tell your secrets to that Friend that sticks closer than a brother. My Heart, I charge you, trust all your concerns with Him who never can be taken from you, who will never leave you and who will never let you leave Him, even "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever." That is one lesson.

Well, then, the next. If Jesus Christ is always the same, then, my Soul, endeavor to imitate Him. Be you the same, too. Remember that if you had more faith, you would be as happy in the furnace as on the mountain of enjoyment. You would be as glad in famine as in plenty. You would rejoice in the Lord when the olive yielded no oil, as well as when the vat was bursting and overflowing its brim. If you had more confidence in your God, you would have far less tossing up and down. And if you had greater nearness to Christ you would have less vacillation. Yesterday you could pray with all the power of prayer—perhaps if you did always live near your Master, you might always have the same power on your knees.

One time you can bid defiance to the rage of Satan and you can face a frowning world—tomorrow you will run away like a craven. But if you did always remember Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, you might always be firm and steadfast in your mind. Beware of being like a weather-cock. Seek God that His Law may be written on your hearts as if it were written in stone and not as if it were written in sand. Seek that His grace may come to you like a river and not like a brook that fails. Seek that you may keep your conversation always holy—that your course may be like the shining light that tarries not, but that burns brighter and brighter until the fullness of the day. Be like Christ—ever the same.

Again—if Christ is always the same, Christian, rejoice! Come what may you are secure—

***"Let mountains from their seats be hurled
Down to the deeps and buried there.
Convulsions shake the solid world—
Our faith shall never need to fear."***

If kingdoms should go to the rack, the Christian need not tremble. Just for a minute imagine a scene like this—Suppose for the next three days the sun should not rise. Suppose the moon should be turned into a clot of

blood and shine no more upon the world—imagine that a darkness that might be felt, brooded over all men. Imagine next that all the world did tremble in an earthquake till every tower and house and hut fell down. Imagine next that the sea forgot its place and leaped upon the earth and that the mountains ceased to stand and began to tremble from their pedestals. Conceive after that that a blazing comet streamed across the sky—that the thunder bellowed incessantly—that the lightning without a moment's pause followed one the other.

Conceive then that you did behold many terrible sights, fiendish ghosts and grim spirits. Imagine next that a trumpet, waxing exceeding loud, did blow—and there were heard the shrieks of men dying and perishing. Imagine that in the midst of all this confusion there was to be found a saint. My Friend, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever,” would keep him as secure amidst all these horrors as we are today. Oh, rejoice! I have pictured the worst that can come. Even *then* you would be secure. Come what may, then, you are safe, while Jesus Christ is the same.

And now, last of all, if Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday, today and forever,” what sad work this is for the ungodly! Ah, Sinner, when He was on earth He said, “Their worm dies not and their fire is not quenched.” When He stood upon the mount He said, “It were better to enter life halt or maimed, than having two hands or two feet to be cast into Hell's fire.” As a Man on earth, He said that the goats should be on the left and that He would say to them, “Depart, you cursed.” Sinner, He will be as good as His Word. He has said, “He that believes not shall be damned.” He will damn you if you believe not, depend upon it. He has never broken a promise yet—He will never break a threat. That same truth which makes us confident today that the righteous shall go away into everlasting life should make you quite as confident that unbelievers shall go into eternal misery. If He had broken His promise He might break His threat. But as He has kept one He will keep the other.

Do not hope that He will change, for change He will not. Think not that the fire which He said was unquenchable will after all be extinguished. No, within a few more years, my Hearer, if you do not repent, you will find that every jot and every letter of the threats of Jesus will be fulfilled. And, mark you, fulfilled in *you*. Liar, He said, “All liars shall have their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.” He will not deceive you. Drunkard, He has said, “You know that no drunkard has eternal life.” He will not belie His Word. You shall not have eternal life. He has said, “The nations that forget God shall be cast into Hell.” All you that forget religion—moral people you may be—He will keep His Word to you—He will cast you into Hell.

O “kiss the Son lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” Come, Sinner, bow your knee. Confess your sin and leave it. And then come to Him. Ask Him to have mercy upon you. He will not forget His promise—“Him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out.” Come and try Him. With all your sins about you, come to Him now. “Believe on the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved.” For this is my Master’s Gospel and I now declare it—“He that believes and is immersed shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned.” God grant you grace to believe, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

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THE UNCHANGEABLE CHRIST

NO. 2358

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, APRIL 29, 1894.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 23, 1888.**

***“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today and forever.”
Hebrews 13:8.***

LET me read to you the verse that comes before our text. It is always a good habit to look at texts in their connection. It is wrong, I think, to lay hold of small portions of God's Word and take them out of their connection as you might pluck feathers from a bird. It is an injury to the Word of God and, sometimes, a passage of Scripture loses much of its beauty, its true teaching and its real meaning, by being taken from the context. Nobody would think of mutilating Milton's poems by taking a few lines out of *Paradise Lost*, and then imagining that he could really get at the heart of the poet's power. So, always look at texts in the connection in which they stand. The verse before our text is this, “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

Observe, then, that God's people are a thoughtful people. If they are what they ought to be, they do a great deal of remembering and considering—that is the gist of this verse. If they are to remember and to consider their earthly leaders, much more are they to remember that Great Leader, the Lord Jesus, and all those matchless Truths which fell from His blessed lips. I wish, in these days, that professing Christians remembered and considered a great deal more, but we live in such a flurry, hurry and worry, that we do not give time for thought. Our noble forefathers of the Puritan sort were men with backbone, men of solid tread, independent and self-contained men who could hold their own in the day of conflict. And the reason was because they took time to meditate, time to keep a diary of their daily experiences, time to commune with God in secret. Take the hint and try and do a little more *thinking*—in this busy London and in these trying days—remember and consider.

My next remark is that God's people are an imitative people, for we are told, here, that they are to remember them who are their leaders, those who have spoken to them the Word of God, “whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.” There is an itching, nowadays, after originality, striking out a path for yourself! When sheep do that, they are bad sheep. Sheep follow the shepherd and, in a measure, they follow one another when they are all together following the shepherd. Our Great Master never aimed at originality—He said that He did not even speak His own Words, but the Words that He had heard of His Father. He was

docile and teachable. As the Son of God and the Servant of God, His ears were open to hear the instructions of the Father and He could say, "I do always those things that please Him."

Now, that is the true path for a Christian to take, to follow Jesus and, in consequence, to follow all such true saints as may be worthy of being followed, imitating the godly so far as they imitate Christ! The Apostle puts it, "whose faith follow." Many young Christians, if they were to pretend to strike out a path for themselves, must infallibly fall into many sorrows. Whereas, by taking some note of the way in which more experienced and more instructed Christians have gone, they will keep by the way of the footsteps of the flock and they will also follow the footprints of the Shepherd. God's people are a thoughtful people and they are an imitative and humble people, willing to be instructed and willing to follow holy and godly examples.

One good reason, however, for imitating saints is given in our text—it is because our Lord and His faith are always the same—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." You see, if the old foundation shifted, if our faith was always changing, then we could not follow any of the saints who have gone before us. If we have a religion especially for the 19th Century, it is ridiculous for us to imitate the men of the 1st Century—and Paul and the Apostles are just old fogies who are left behind in the far distant ages. If we are to go on improving from century to century, I cannot point you to any of the Reformers, or the confessors, or the saints in the brave days of old, and say to you, "Learn from their example," because, if religion has altogether changed and improved, it is a curious thing to say, but we ought to set an example to our ancestors! Of course, they cannot follow it because they have gone from the earth, but as we know so much better than our fathers, we cannot think of learning anything from them! As we have left the Apostles all behind, and gone in for something quite new, it is a pity that we should not forget what they did, what they suffered and think that they were just a set of simpletons who acted up to their own light, but then they had not the light we have in this wonderful 19th Century!

O Beloved, it almost makes my lips blister to talk after the present evil fashion, for grosser falsehood never could be uttered than the insinuation that we have shifted the everlasting foundations of our faith! Verily, if these foundations were removed, we might ask in many senses, "What shall the righteous do? Whom shall they copy? Whom shall they follow? The landmarks having gone, what remains to us of the holy treasury of example with which the Lord enriches those who follow Christ?"

I. Coming to our text, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever," my first observation is that JESUS CHRIST, HIMSELF, IS ALWAYS THE SAME. He is, was, and will always be the same!

Changes of position and of circumstances there have been in our Lord, but He is always the same *in His great love to His people*, whom He loved before the earth was. Before the first star was kindled, before the first living creature began to sing the praise of its Creator, He loved His Church with an everlasting love! He spied her in the glass of predestination, pictured her by His Divine foreknowledge and loved her with all His heart.

And it was for this cause that He left His Father and became one with her, that He might redeem her. It was for this cause that He went with her through all this vale of tears, discharged her debts and bore her sins in His own body on the Cross. For her sake He slept in the tomb and with the same love that brought Him down, He has gone up, again, and with the same heart beating true to the same blessed betrothal, He has gone into Glory, waiting for the marriage day when He shall come, again, to receive His perfected spouse who shall have made herself ready by His Grace! Never for a moment, whether as God over all, blessed forever, or as God and Man in one Divine Person, or as dead and buried, or as risen and ascended—never has He changed in the love He bears to His chosen! He is “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

Therefore, Beloved Brothers and Sisters, He has never changed *in His Divine purpose towards His beloved Church*. He resolved in eternity to become One with her, that she might become one with Him and, having determined upon this, when the fullness of time had come, He was born of a woman and made under the Law. He took upon Him the likeness of sinful flesh, “and being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.” Yet He never abandoned His purpose—He set His face like a flint to go up to Jerusalem—even when the bitter cup was put to His lips and He seemed to stagger for a moment. He returned to it with a strong resolve, saying to His Father, “If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as You will.” That purpose is strong upon Him, now, for Zion’s sake He will not hold His peace and for Jerusalem’s sake He will not rest until her righteousness goes forth as brightness and her salvation as a lamp that burns!

Jesus is still pressing on with His great work and He will not fail nor be discouraged in it. He will never be content till all whom He has bought with His blood shall become glorified by His power. He will gather all His sheep in the heavenly fold and they shall pass, again, under the hands of Him that counts them—every one of them being brought there by the Great Shepherd who laid down His life for them! Beloved, He cannot turn from His purpose—it is not according to His Nature that He should, for He is, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

He is also “the same yesterday, and today, and forever,” *in the holding of His offices* for the carrying out of His purpose and giving effect to His love. He is still a Prophet. Men try to set Him on one side. Science, falsely so-called, comes forward and bids Him hold His tongue, but, “the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice; and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.” The teachings of the New Testament are as sound and true today as they were 1800 years ago—they have lost none of their value, none of their absolute certainty—they stand fast like the everlasting hills! Jesus Christ was a Prophet and He is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

He is the same, too, as a Priest. Some now sneer at His precious blood—alas, that it should be so! But, to His elect, His blood is still their purchase price—by this they overcome, through the blood of the Lamb they win the victory—and they know that they shall praise it in Heaven

when they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! They never turn away from this great Priest of theirs and His wondrous Sacrifice, once offered for the sins of men and perpetually efficacious for all the blood-bought race! They glory in His everlasting Priesthood before the Father's Throne. In this we rejoice, yes, and will rejoice, that Jesus Christ is our Priest, "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

And as King He is always the same. He is supreme in the Church. Before You, O Jesus, all Your loyal subjects bow! All the sheaves make obeisance to Your sheaf—the sun and moon and all the stars obey and serve You, King of Kings and Lord of Lords! You are Head over all things to Your Church, which is Your body. Beloved, if there is any other office which our Lord has assumed for the accomplishment of His Divine purposes, we may say of Him, concerning every position, that He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

So also, once more, He is the same *in His relationship to all His people*. I like to think that, as Jesus was the Husband of His Church ages ago, He is still her Husband, for He hates divorce. As He was the Brother born for adversity to His first disciples, He is still *our* faithful Brother. As He was a Friend that sticks closer than a brother to those who were sorely tried in the medieval times, He is equally a Friend to us upon whom the ends of the earth have come. There is no difference, whatever, in the relationship of the Lord Jesus Christ to His people at any time! He is just as ready to comfort us tonight as He was to comfort those with whom He dwelt when here below! Sister Mary, He is as willing to come down to your Bethany and help you in your sorrow about Lazarus, as He was when He came to Martha and Mary whom He loved! Jesus Christ is just as ready to wash your feet, my Brother, after another day's weary travel through the foul ways of this world. He is as willing to take the basin and the towel, and to give us a loving cleansing, as He was when He washed His disciples' feet! Just what He was to them, He is to us! Happy is it if you and I can truly say, "What He was to Peter, what He was to John, what He was to the Magdalene, that is Jesus Christ to *me*—the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

Beloved, I have seen men change—oh, how they change! A little frost turns the green forest to bronze and every leaf forsakes its hold and yields to it's winter's blast. So fade our friends and the most attached adherents drop away from us in the time of trial. But Jesus is to us what He always was. When we get old and gray-headed and others shut the door on men who have lost their former strength, and can serve their turn no longer, then will He say, "Even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you," for He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Thus much, Beloved, with regard to Jesus, Himself—He is always the same!

II. Now let us go a step farther. JESUS CHRIST IS ALWAYS THE SAME IN HIS DOCTRINE.

This text must refer to the Doctrine of Christ, since it is connected with imitating the saints' faith—"Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and

forever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart is established with Grace.” From the connection it is evident that our text refers to the teaching of Christ, who is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” This is not according to the “development” folly. Theology, like every other science, is to grow, watered by the splendid wisdom of this enlightened age, fostered by the superlative ability of the gentlemen of light and leading of the present time, so much superior to all who came before them!

We think not so, Brothers and Sisters, for *the Lord Jesus Christ was the perfect Revelation of God*. He was the express image of the Father’s Person and the brightness of His Glory. In previous ages, God had spoken to us by His Prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son. Now as to that which was a complete Revelation, it is blasphemous to suppose that there can be any more revealed than has been made known in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God! He is God’s *ultimatum*—last of all, He sends His Son. If you can conceive a brighter display of God than is to be seen in the Only-Begotten, I thank God that I am unable to follow you in any such imagination! To me, He is the last, the highest, the grandest Revelation of God! And as He shuts up the Book that contains the written Revelation, He bids you never dare to take from it, lest He should take your name out of the Book of Life! And never dare to add to it, lest He should add unto you the plagues that are written in this Book!

At this time, *the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ is the same as it was in all ages*. Jesus Christ still saves sinners from the guilt, the power, the punishment and the defilement of sin. Still, “there is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” Jesus Christ still makes all things new. He creates new hearts and right spirits in the sons of men and engraves His Law upon the tablets which once were stone, but which He has turned into flesh. There is no new salvation! Some may talk as if there were, but there is not! Salvation means to you, today, just what it meant to Saul of Tarsus on the way to Damascus. If you think it has another meaning, you have missed it altogether!

And, again, *salvation by Jesus Christ comes to men in the same way as it always did*. They have to receive it, now, by *faith*. In Paul’s day, men were saved by faith, and they are not now saved by works. They began in the Spirit in the Apostolic age, and we are not now to begin in the flesh. There is no indication in the Book and there is no indication in the experience of God’s children, that there is ever to be any alteration as to the way in which we receive Christ! All live by Him. “By Grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God”—the gift of God, today, as much as it ever was, for Jesus Christ—“is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

Once more, *this salvation is just the same as to the persons to whom it is sent*. It is to be preached, now, as always, to every creature under Heaven. But it appeals with a peculiar power to those who are guilty and who, by God’s Grace, confess their guilt. It appeals to hearts that are broken, to men who are weary and heavy laden. It is to these that the

Gospel comes with great sweetness. I have quoted to you, before, those strange words of Joseph Hart—

**“A sinner is a sacred thing
The Holy Spirit has made him so.”**

He is—the Savior is only for sinners! He did not come to save the righteous. He came to seek and to save the lost and still, “to you is the word of this salvation sent,” and this declaration still stands true, “This Man receives sinners, and eats with them.” There is no change in this statement, “the poor have the Gospel preached to them,” and it comes to those who are farthest off from God and hope—and inspires them with Divine power and energy!

Beloved, I can bear witness that *the Gospel is the same in its effects upon the hearts of men*. Still it breaks and still it makes whole! Still it wounds and still it heals! Still it kills and still it quickens! Still it seems to hurl man down to Hell in their terrible experience of the evil of sin, but still it lifts them up into an ecstatic joy till they are exalted almost to Heaven when they lay hold upon it and feel its power in their souls! The Gospel that was a Gospel of births and deaths, of killing and making alive, in the days of John Bunyan, has the same effect upon our hearts to this day when it comes with the power that God has put into it by His Spirit! It produces the same results and has the same sanctifying influence as it ever had.

Looking beyond the narrow stream of death, we can say that *the eternal results produced by the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ are the same as they always were*. The promise is this day fulfilled to those who receive Him as much as to any who went before. Life eternal is their inheritance. They shall sit with Him upon His throne and, on the other hand, the threat is equally sure of fulfillment—“These shall go away into everlasting punishment.” “He that *believes not* shall be damned.” Christ has made no change in His words of promise or of threat, nor will His followers dare to do so, for His doctrine is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

If you were to try to think over this matter and imagine for a minute that the Gospel really did shift and change with the times, it would be very extraordinary. Look, here is the Gospel for the 1st Century—make a mark and note how far it goes. Then there is a Gospel for the 2nd Century—make another mark, but then remember that you must change the color to another shade! Either these people must have altered, or else a very different effect must have been produced in the same kind of minds. In eternity, when they all get to Heaven by these 19 gospels in the 19 centuries, there will be 19 sets of people and they will sing 19 different songs, depend upon it, and their music will not blend! Some will sing of “Free Grace and dying love,” while others will sing of “evolution.” What a discord it would be and what a Heaven it would be, too! I should decline to be a candidate for such a place!

No, let me go where they praise Jesus Christ and Him, alone, singing, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” That is what the 1st Century saints sing—yes, and it is what the saints of *every* century

will sing, without any exception! And there will be no change in this song forever. The same results will flow from the same Gospel till Heaven and earth shall pass away, for Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

III. We may sound the same note, again, for a moment, because JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME AS TO HIS MODES OF WORKING—“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

How did Jesus Christ save souls in olden times? “It pleased God by *the foolishness of preaching*, to save them that believe.” And if you will look down through Church history, you will find that, wherever there has been a great revival of religion, it has been linked with the preaching of the Gospel! When the Methodists began to do so much good, what did they call the men who made such a stir? “Methodist preachers,” did they not say? That was always the name, “Here comes a Methodist preacher.” Ah, my dear Friends, the world will never be saved by Methodist doctors, or by Baptist doctors, or anything of the sort! But multitudes will be saved, by God’s Grace, through preachers! It is the preacher to whom God has entrusted this great work! Jesus said, “Preach the Gospel to every creature.”

But men are getting tired of the Divine Plan—they are going to be saved by the priest, going to be saved by the music, going to be saved by theatricals and who knows what! Well, they may try these things as long as they like, but nothing can ever come of the whole thing but utter disappointment and confusion—God dishonored, the Gospel travestied, hypocrites manufactured by thousands and the Church dragged down to the level of the world! Stand to your guns, Brothers, and go on preaching and teaching nothing but the Word of God, for it still pleases God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe! And this test still stands true, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

But remember that there must always be *the prayers of the saints* with the preaching of the Gospel. You must have often noticed that passage in the Acts concerning the new converts on the day of Pentecost, “They continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine”—they thought a great deal about doctrine in those days. “And fellowship”—they thought a good deal of being in Church fellowship in those days. “And in breaking of bread”—they did not neglect the blessed ordinance of the Lord’s Supper in those days. “In breaking of bread.” And then what follows? “And in prayers.” Some say, nowadays, that Prayer Meetings are religious expedients pretty well worn out. Ah, dear me! What a religious expedient that was that brought about Pentecost, when they were all assembled with one accord in one place, and when the whole Church prayed and suddenly the place was shaken, and they heard the sound as of a rushing mighty wind, that betokened the Presence of the Holy Spirit!

Well, you may try to do without Prayer Meetings if you like, but my solemn conviction is that, as these decline, the Spirit of God will depart from you and the preaching of the Gospel will be of small account. The Lord will have the prayers of His people to go with the proclamation of His Gospel if it is to be the power of God unto salvation—and there is no change in this matter since Paul’s day! Jesus Christ is “the same yester-

day, and today, and forever.” God is still to be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them—and He still grants blessings in answer to believing prayer.

Remember, too, that the Lord Jesus Christ has always been inclined to work by *the spiritual power of His servants*. Nothing comes out of a man that is not first in him. You will not find God’s servants doing great things for Him unless God works mightily in them, as well as by them. You must first be endued with power from on high, or else the power will not manifest itself in what you do. Beloved, we need our Church members to be better men and better women. We need baby-Christians to become grownup-Christians and we need the grownup-Christians among us to be “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” God will work by His servants when they are adapted to His service—and He will make His instruments fit for His work. It is not in themselves that they have any strength—their weakness becomes the reason why His strength is seen in them! Still, there is an adaptation, there is a fitness for His service, there is a cleanness that God puts upon His instruments before He works mighty things by them and Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever,” in this matter, too.

All the good that is ever done in the world is worked by *the Holy Spirit* and, as the Holy Spirit honors Jesus Christ, so He puts great honor upon the Holy Spirit. If you and I try, either as a Church or as individuals, to do without the Holy Spirit, God will soon do without us. Unless we reverently worship Him and believingly trust in Him, we shall find that we shall be like Samson when his locks were shorn. He shook himself as he had done before, but when the Philistines were upon him, he could do nothing against them. Our prayer must always be, “Holy Spirit, dwell with me! Holy Spirit, dwell with Your servants!” We know that we are utterly dependent upon Him. Such is the teaching of our Master and Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

IV. I do not want to weary you, my dear Brothers and Sisters, but may I be helped, just for a few moments, to speak on a fourth point! JESUS CHRIST HAS ALWAYS THE SAME RESOURCES, for He is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

I will repeat what I said—Jesus Christ has always the same resources. We sit down, sometimes, very sorrowful, and we say, “The times are very dark.” I do not think that we can very well exaggerate their darkness and they are full of threatening omens. And I do not think that any of us can really exaggerate those omens, they are so terrible. But still is it true, “The Lord lives, and blessed be my Rock.”

Does the Church feel her need of *faithful men*? The Lord can send us as many as ever! When the Pope ruled everywhere, nobody thought, I should imagine, that the first man to speak out for the old faith would be a *monk*—they thought they had taken stock of all the men that God had at His command and they certainly did not think that He had one of the leaders of the Reformation in a monastery! But there was Martin Luther, “the monk that shook the world,” and though men dreamed not what he would do, God knew all about him. There was Calvin, also, writing that famous book of his Institutes. He was a man full of disease—I think he

had 60 diseases at once in his body, and he suffered greatly. Look at his portrait—pale and wan. And as a young man he was very timid. He went to Geneva and he thought he was called to write books, but Farel said to him, “You are called to lead us in preaching the Gospel here in Geneva.” “No,” said Calvin, for he shrank from the task. But Farel said, “The blast of the Almighty God will rest upon you unless you come out and take your proper place.”

Beneath the threat of that brave old man, John Calvin took his place, prompt and sincere in the work of God, in life and in death never faltering! Then there was Zwingli over there at Zurich. He had come out, too, and Oecolampadius, and Melancthon and their fellows—who ever expected *them* to do what they did? Nobody! “The Lord gave the Word, great was the company of them that published it.” And so, today, He has only to give the Word and you shall see starting up all over the world earnest preachers of the everlasting Gospel, for He has the same resources as always! He is “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

He has also the same resources of *Grace*. The Holy Spirit is quite as able to convert men, to quicken, enlighten, sanctify and instruct. There is nothing which He has done which He cannot do again! The treasures of God are as full and as running over, now, as they were in the beginning of the Christian age! If we do not see such great things, where lies the restraining force? It is in our *unbelief*. “If you believe, all things are possible to him that believes.” Before this year has gone, God can make a wave of revival break over England, Scotland and Ireland—from one end to the other! Yes, and He can deluge the whole world with the Gospel if we will but cry to Him for it! And He wills to do it, for He is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever,” in the resources of His Grace.

V. So I close my sermon with this fifth head, on which I will be very short, indeed. JESUS CHRIST IS ALWAYS THE SAME TO ME—“yesterday, and today, and forever.” I will not talk about myself except to help you to think about yourselves. How long have you known the Lord Jesus Christ? Perhaps only a short time. Possibly many years. Do you remember when you first knew Him? Can you point out the spot of ground where Jesus met you? Now, what was He to you at first? I will tell you what He was to me.

Jesus was to me, at first, *my only trust*. I leaned on Him very hard, then, for I had such a load to carry. I laid myself and my load down at His feet. He was All in All to me. I had not a shred of hope outside of Him, nor any trust beyond Himself, crucified and risen for me. Now, dear Brothers and Sisters, have you got any further than that? I hope not! I know that I have not. I have not a shadow of a shade of confidence anywhere but in Christ’s blood and righteousness! I leaned on Him very hard at the first, but I lean harder now! Sometimes, I faint away into His arms. I have died into His life. I am lost in His fullness! He is all my salvation and all my desire. I am speaking for myself, but I think that I am speaking for many of you, too, when I say that Jesus Christ is to me, “the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” His Cross, before my failing eyes, shall be my dying comfort as it is my living strength.

What was Jesus Christ to me at the first? He was the object of my warmest love. Was it not so with you? Was He not chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely? What charms, what beauties were there in that dear face of His! And what a freshness, what a novelty, what a delight which set all our passions on fire! It was so in those early days when we went after Him into the wilderness. Though all the world around was barren, He was All in All to us. Very well, what is He today? He is fairer to us, now, than He ever was! He is the one gem that we possess—our other jewels have all turned out to be but glass and we have flung them from the chest—but He is the Kohinoor that our soul delights in! He is all perfections joined together to make one absolute perfection! He is all the Graces adorning Him and overflowing to us! Is not that what we say of Him? “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

What was Jesus Christ to me at the first? Well, He was *my highest joy*. In my young days, how my heart did dance at the sound of His name! Was it not so with many of you? We may be huskier in voice, heavier in body and slower in moving our limbs, but His name has as much charm for us as it ever had! There was a trumpet that nobody could blow but one who was the true heir—and there is nobody who can ever fetch the true music out of us but our Lord to whom we belong! When He sets me to His lips, you would think that I was one of the trumpets of the seven angels! And there is no one else who can make me sound like that! I cannot produce such music as that by myself and there is no theme that can ravish my heart, there is no subject that can stir my soul until I get to Him! I think it is with me as it was with Rutherford when the Duke of Argyle called out, as he began to preach about Christ, “Now, Man, you are on the right string, keep to that!” The Lord Jesus Christ knows every key in our souls and He can wake up our whole being to harmonies of music which shall set the world ringing with His praises! Yes, He is our joy, our everything, “the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

Let us go forward, then, to the unchanging Savior, through the changing things of time and sense, and we shall meet Him soon in Glory, and He will be unchanged even there, as compassionate and loving to us when we shall get Home to Him and see Him in His splendor, as He was to His poor disciples when He had not where to lay His head and was a Sufferer among them.

Oh, do you know Him? Do you know Him? Do you know Him? If not, may He, this night, reveal Himself to you, for His sweet mercy’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: HEBREWS 13.

Verse 1. *Let brotherly love continue.* It is supposed to already be there—let it continue, not only love of a common kind, such as we are to have to all men, but that special “brotherly love” which Christians bear to one another as members of one family. “Let brotherly love continue.”

2. *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.* Abraham did and Lot did. They thought they were entertaining ordinary strangers and they washed their feet and prepared their food but it turned out that they had entertained angels! Some people will never entertain angels unawares, for they never entertain *anybody*. May we be given to hospitality, for that should be part of the character of saints.

3. *Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them.* Christian people who have got into trouble through being Christians and persons who have been shut up in prison for righteousness' sake—there were many such in Paul's day. Sympathize with them, says the Apostle, "as bound with them."

3. *And them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves, also, in the body.* So that, if you are not, now, in adversity, you may be before long. Therefore, have a fellow feeling for those who are in trouble. If you are not, yourself, distressed, you are not out of the reach of such a thing—therefore be tender towards your afflicted Brothers and Sisters.

4, 5. *Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.* There is a fortune for you. There is a pension to fall back upon. You may very well be content to leave your temporal concerns in the hands of God, for He has said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Why, if you believe that one promise of God, He will be better to you than ten thousand friends who promise to provide for you! The Provider in Heaven is better than any provider on earth! A beautiful motto is that of the old house of Chester, "God's Providence is my inheritance."

6, 7. *So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.* It seems that there were special persons who were leaders in the Church of God, who were to be remembered and thought upon, and considered. They were set apart for this world—"them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God." They were leaders among the saints and Paul would have the rank and file imitate them in their confident trust in the Lord Jesus Christ—"whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

8, 9. *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.* Do not believe one thing, today, and another thing, tomorrow. Be not carried about like the thistledown in the wind. Have a faith of your own—know what you believe and stand firmly to it.

9, 10. *For it is a good thing that the heart is established with Grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. We have an altar.* Yes, true religion cannot exist without an altar, but what kind of altar is it? Is it a material altar? Far from it! But "we have an altar"—

10. *Whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.* They have nothing to do with it, for they are still under the old ceremonial Law and those whose religion consists in outward rites and ceremonies can never eat of the *spiritual* altar whereat spiritual men eat, for they do not understand the Scripture and they still serve the Mosaic tabernacle.

11-13. *For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus, also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.* Outside the gate was the place of Christ's atoning death. "Outside the camp," is the place where His servants will find themselves most at home.

14. *For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.* We cannot stop in the condemned city—we must be outside its walls. Our Lord went out of the city to die and we must go outside the camp to live!

15, 16. *By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* Christian people should be always doing good. As God is always doing good, so we can never say we have done all we ought to do and will do no more—"To do good and to communicate," that is, to communicate of your substance and of your charitable help, "forget not."

17-19. *Obeys them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.* The movements of God's servants may be controlled by prayer. You cannot tell how much of blessing will come to your own souls through the ministry if you are in the habit of praying about it! The man who comes up to God's House, having prayed for God to bless the preacher, is not likely to go away unprofited.

20-25. *Now the God of peace, that brought, again, from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words. Know you that our brother, Timothy, is set at liberty; with whom, if he comes shortly, I will see you. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. Grace be with you all. Amen.* Does not that blessing seem to come across the centuries as fresh as if we heard the Apostle speak it with his living lips? Oh, to feel it true tonight! "Grace be with you all. Amen."

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JESUS CHRIST IMMUTABLE

NO. 848

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

***“Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever.”
Hebrews 13:8.***

FOR a very considerable number of years an esteemed and venerable vicar of a Surrey parish has sent me at the New Year a generous testimony of his love and an acknowledgment of the pleasure which he derives from the weekly reading of my sermons. Enclosed in the parcel which his kindness awards to me is a text from which he hopes that I may preach on the first Sunday morning of the New Year. This year he sends me this golden line, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever.”

I have preached from it before—you will find a sermon from this text in print. But we need not be at all afraid of preaching from the same text twice. The Word is inexhaustible—it may be trod in the winepress many times and yet run with generous wine. We ought not to hesitate to preach a second time from a passage any more than anyone going to the village well would be ashamed to put down the same bucket twice, or feel at all aggrieved at sailing twice down the same river! There is always a freshness about Gospel Truth, and though the matter may be the same, there are ways of putting it in fresh light so as to bring new joy to those who meditate upon it.

Moreover, what if we should repeat our teachings concerning Christ? What if we should hear over and over again the same things “touching the King”? We can afford to hear them! Repetitions concerning Jesus are better than varieties upon any other subject. As a French monarch declared that he would sooner hear the repetitions of Bourdaloue than the novelties of another, so we may declare concerning our Lord Jesus, we would sooner hear again and again the precious truths which glorify Him than listen to the most eloquent orations upon any other theme in all the world!

There are a few works of art and wonders of creation which you might gaze upon every day in your life and yet not weary of them. A great architect tells us there are but few buildings of this kind, but he instances Westminster Abbey as one—and everyone knows, who has ever looked upon the sea, or upon the Falls of Niagara—that look as often as you may, though you see precisely the same object, yet there are new tints, new motions of the waves and new flashes of the light which forbid the least approach of monotony and give to the assembling of the waters an ever-enduring charm.

Even thus is it with that sea of all delights which is found in the dear Lover of our souls. We come, then, to the old subject of this old text and may the blessed Spirit give us new unction while we meditate upon it. Note, first, our Lord's personal name, *Jesus Christ*. Notice, secondly, His

memorable attribute—“*He is the same yesterday and today and forever.*” And then let us have a few words about His evident claims derived from *the possession of such a Character.*

I. First, then, the personal names of our Lord here mentioned—“JESUS CHRIST.” “JESUS” stands first. That is our Lord’s Hebrew name, “Jesus,” or, “Joshua.” The word signifies, a Savior, “for He shall save His people from their sins.” It was given to Him *in His cradle*—

**“Cold on His cradle the dewdrops are shining,
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall.
Angels adore Him, in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch and Savior of all.”**

While He was yet an Infant hanging on His mother’s breast, He was recognized as Savior, for the fact of God’s becoming Incarnate was the sure pledge, guarantee and commencement of human salvation. At the very thought of His birth the virgin sang, “My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.” There is hope that man shall be lifted up to God, when God condescends to come down to man! Jesus in the manger deserves to be called the Savior, for when it can be said that, “the tabernacle of God is with men and He does dwell among them,” there is hope that all good things will be given to the fallen race.

He was called Jesus, *in His childhood*—“The Holy Child Jesus.” It was as Jesus that He went up with His parents to the Temple and sat down with the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. Yes, and Jesus as a Teacher in the very first principles of His doctrine is a Savior—emancipating the minds of men from superstition, setting them loose from the traditions of the fathers—scattering, even, with His Infant hand the seeds of Truth, the elements of a glorious liberty which shall emancipate the human mind from the iron bondage of false philosophy and priestcraft.

He was Jesus, too, and is commonly called so both by His foes and by His friends *in His active life.* It is as Jesus the Savior that He heals the sick, that He raises the dead, that He delivers Peter from sinking, that He rescues from shipwreck the ship tossed upon the Galilean lake. In all the teachings of His middle life, in those laborious three years of diligent service, both in His public ministry and in His private prayer, He is still Jesus the Savior. By His active, as well as by His passive obedience, we are saved.

All through His earthly sojourn He made it clear that the Son of Man had come to seek and to save that which was lost. If His blood redeems us from the guilt of sin, His life shows us how to overcome its power. If by His death upon the tree He crushes Satan for us, by His life of holiness He teaches us how to break the dragon’s head within us. He is the Savior as a Babe, the Savior as a Child, the Savior as the toiling, laboring, tempted Man.

But He comes out most clearly as Jesus *when dying on the Cross*—named so in a writing of which the author said, “What I have written, I have written,” for over the head of the dying Savior you read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” There pre-eminently was He the Savior, being made a curse for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. After beholding the dying agonies of his Master, the beloved

Apostle said, “We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.”

On Calvary was it seen that the Son of Man saved others, though, through blessed incapacity of love, “Himself He could not save.” When He was made to feel the wrath of God on account of sin, and pangs unknown were suffered by Him as our Substitute—when He was made to pass through the thick darkness and burning heat of Divine wrath—then was He, according to Scripture, “the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe.” Yes, it is on the tree that Christ is peculiarly a Savior. If He were nothing better than our Exemplar, alas for us! We might be grateful for the example if we could imitate it, but without the pardon which spares us and the Divine Grace which gives us power for holiness, the brightest example were a tantalizing of our grief!

To be shown what we *ought* to be, without having any method set before us by which we could attain to it were to mock our misery! But Jesus first draws us up out of the horrible pit into which we were fallen, takes us out of the miry clay by the efficacy of His atoning Sacrifice and then, having set our feet upon a rock by virtue of His merits, He Himself leads the way onward to perfection! And so is He Savior both in life and in death—

**“That JESUS saves from sin and Hell,
Is truth Divinely sure.
And on this Rock our faith may rest
Immovably secure.”**

Still bearing the name of Jesus, *our Lord rose from the dead*. The Evangelists delight in calling Him Jesus—in His appearance to Magdalene in the garden—in His manifestation of Himself to the disciples when they were together, the doors being shut. He is always Jesus with them as the risen One. Beloved, since we are justified by His Resurrection, we may well regard Him as Savior under that aspect. Salvation is still more linked with a risen Christ, because we see Him, by His Resurrection, destroying death, breaking down the prison of the sepulcher, bearing away like another Samson the gates of the grave. He is a Savior for us since He has vanquished the last enemy that shall be destroyed, that we, having been saved from sin by His death should be saved from *death* through His Resurrection.

Jesus is the title under which He is called *in Glory*, for, “Him has God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.” He is today, “the Savior of the body.” We adore Him as the only-wise God and our Savior. “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” As Jesus *He shall shortly come* and we are, “Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” Our daily cry is, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” Yes and this is the name, the name, “Jesus,” by which He is known *in Heaven at this hour*.

Thus the angel spoke of Him before He was conceived by the virgin! Thus the angels serve Him and do His bidding, for He said to John in Patmos, “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify these things.” The angels prophesied His coming under that sacred name. They came to those who stood looking up into Heaven and they said, “You men of Galilee, why

stand you gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven.”

Under this name the devils fear Him, for didn't they say, “Jesus we know and Paul we know, but who are you?” This is the spell that binds the hearts of cherubim in chains of love and this is the Word that makes the hosts of Hell to tremble and to shrink back in fear! This name is the joy of the Church on earth! It is the joy of the Church above! It is a common Word, a household name for our dear Redeemer among the family of God below! And up there they still sing it—

**“Jesus, the Lord, their harps employ—
‘Jesus, my Love,’ they sing!
Jesus, the life of both our joys,
Sounds sweet from every string.”**

That man of God, Mr. Henry Craik, of Bristol, who, much to our regret, was lately called away to his rest, tells us in his little work upon the study of the Hebrew tongue, as an instance of how much may be gathered from a single Hebrew word, that the name *Jesus* is particularly rich and suggestive to the mind of the Hebrew scholar. It comes from a root signifying amplitude, spaciousness. And then it comes to mean setting at large, setting free, delivering—and so comes to its common use among us, namely, that of Savior.

But there are *two* words in the name Jesus. The one is a contraction of the word “Jehovah,” the other is the word which I have just now explained to you as ultimately coming to mean “salvation.” Taken apart, the word *Jesus* means JEHOVAH-SALVATION. You have the glorious Essence and Nature of Christ revealed to you as Jehovah, “I Am that I Am.” And then you have in the second part of His name His great work for you in setting you at large and delivering you from all distress.

Think, beloved fellow Christian, of the amplitude, the spaciousness, the breadth, the abundance, the boundless all-sufficiency laid up in the Person of the Lord Jesus! “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” You have no contracted Christ, you have no narrow Savior! Oh, the infinity of His love, the abundance of His Grace, the exceedingly greatness of the riches of His love towards us! There are no words in any language that can bring out, sufficiently, the unlimited, the infinite extent of the riches of the glory of Christ Jesus our Lord! The word which lies at the root of this name “Jesus,” or, “Joshua,” has sometimes the meaning of riches—and who can tell what a wealth of Divine Grace and glory are laid up in our Immanuel?

Mr. Craik tells us that another form of the same word signifies “a cry.” “Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God.” Thus salvation, riches and a cry are all derived from the same root and all find their answer in our Joshua or Christ. When His people cry out of their prisons, then He comes and sets them free—He comes with all the amplitude and wealth of His eternal Grace—all the plenitude of His overflowing power! And delivering them from every form of bondage, He gives them to enjoy the riches of the Glory treasured up in Himself! If this interpretation should make the name of Jesus one particle more dear to you, I am sure I shall be exceedingly rejoiced.

What do you think—if there is so much stored up in the one single name, what must be laid up in Himself! And if we can honestly say that it would be difficult to give the full bearing of this one Hebrew name which belongs to Christ, how much more difficult will it be to give the full bearing of all His Character? If His bare *name* is such a mine of excellence, what must His Person be? If this, which is but a part of His garment, does so smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia, O what must His blessed Person be but a *bundle* of myrrh which shall lie forever between our breasts, to be the perfume of our life and the delight of our soul?—

***“Precious is the name of Jesus,
Who can half its worth unfold?
Far beyond angelic praises,
Sweetly sung to harps of gold.
Precious when to Calvary groaning,
He sustained the cursed tree.
Precious when His death atoning,
Made an end of sin for me.
Precious when the bloody scourges
Caused the sacred drops to roll.
Precious when of wrath the surges
Overwhelmed His holy Soul.
Precious in His death victorious,
He, the host of Hell overthrows.
In His Resurrection glorious,
Victor crowned o’er all His foes.
Precious, Lord! Beyond expressing,
Are Your beauties all Divine!
Glory, honor, power and blessing,
Be henceforth forever Yours!”***

Thus much have we spoken upon the Hebrew name. Now reverently consider the second title—*Christ*. That is a *Greek* name, a *Gentile* name—Anointed. So that you see you have the Hebrew Joshua, Jesus, then the Greek Christos, Christ. And so that we may see that no longer is there either Jew or Gentile, but all are one in Jesus Christ. The word Christ, as you all know, signifies *anointed* and as such our Lord is sometimes called, “the Christ,” “the very Christ.” At other times, “the Lord’s Christ,” and sometimes, “the Christ of God.” He is the Lord’s Anointed, our King and our Shield.

This word, “Christ,” teaches us three great Truths of God. First, *it indicates His offices*. He exercises offices in which anointing is necessary and these are three—the office of the King, of the Priest and of the Prophet. He is King in Zion, anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, even as it was said of old, “I have found David My servant; with My holy oil have I anointed him: with whom My hand shall be established: My arm also shall strengthen him. I will set his hand also in the sea and his right hand in the rivers. Also I will make him My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.”

Saul, the first king of Israel, was anointed with but a *vial* of oil—David, with a *horn* of oil—as if to signify the greater plenitude of his power and excellence of his kingdom. But as for our Lord Jesus Christ, He has received the Spirit of anointing *without any measure*—He is the Lord’s Anointed, for whom an unquenchable lamp is ordained. “There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for My Anointed.”

Beloved, as we think of that name, Christ, let us reverently yield our souls up to Him whom God has anointed to be King. Let us stand up for His rights over His Church, for He is King of Zion and *none* have a right to rule there but under and in subjection to the great Head over all, who in all things shall have the pre-eminence! Let us stand up for His rights within our own hearts, seeking to thrust out all rival objects, desirous to keep our souls chaste for Christ and to make every member of our body, though it may have surrendered itself before unto sin, to become subservient to the anointed King who has a right to rule over it.

Next, the Lord Christ is Priest. Priests were anointed. They were not to undertake this office of themselves nor without passing through the ceremony which set them apart. Jesus Christ our Lord has Divine Grace given to Him that no priest ever had. Their outward anointing was but symbolic—His was the true and the real! He has received that which their oil did but set forth in type and shadow. He has the real anointing from the Most High. Beloved, let us always look at Christ as the anointed Priest. My Soul, you can never come to God except through the only ever-living and truly anointed High Priest of our profession! O never for a moment seek to come without Him, nor through any pretender who may call himself a priest!

High Priest of the house of God, we see You thus ordained and we give our cause into Your hands. Offer our sacrifices for us! Present our prayers! Take our praises and put them into the golden censer and offer them before Your Father's Throne. Rejoice, my Brethren, every time you hear the name Christ, that He who wears it is anointed to be Priest! So with regard to the prophetic office. We find Elisha anointed to prophesy and so is Jesus Christ the Prophet anointed among His people. Peter spoke to Cornelius of, "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him."

He was anointed to preach the glad tidings and to sit as Master in Israel. We hold no man's teaching to be authoritative among us but the testimony of the Christ. The teaching of the Lord's Christ is our creed and nothing else. I thank God that in this Church we have not to divide our allegiance between some venerable set of articles and the teaching of our Lord. One is our Master! We declare no right of any *man* to bind another's conscience, even though they are great in piety and deep in learning! Augustine and Calvin, whose names we honor—for God honored them—they still have no dominance over private judgment in regard to the people of God. Jesus Christ is the Prophet of Christendom! His Words must always be the first and the last appeal!

This, then, is the meaning of the word, "Christos." He is anointed as King, Priest and Prophet. But it means more than that. The name Christ *declares His right to those offices*. He is not King because He sets Himself up as such. God has set Him as King upon His holy hill of Zion and anointed Him to rule. He is also Priest, but He has not taken the priesthood upon Himself, for He is the Propitiation whom God has set forth for human sin. He is the Mediator whom the Lord God has appointed and set to be the *only* Mediator between God and man. And as for His prophesying He speaks not of Himself—those things which He has learnt

of the Father, He has revealed unto us. He comes not as a Prophet who assumes office, but God has *anointed* Him to preach glad tidings to the poor and to come among His people with the welcome news of eternal love.

Moreover, this anointing signifies a third thing, that as He has the office, and as it is His by right, so *He has the qualifications for the work*. He is anointed to be King. God has given Him royal power and wisdom and government. He has made Him fit to rule in the Church and to reign over the world. No better king than Christ! None so majestic as He who wore the crown of thorns, but who shall put upon His head the crown of universal monarchy! He has the qualifications for a priest, too, such qualifications as even Melchisidec had not—such as cannot be found in all the house of Aaron—in all its length of pedigree. Blessed Son of God, perfect in Yourself, and needing not a sacrifice for Your own sake, You have presented unto God an offering which has perfected forever those whom You have set apart. And now, needing not to make a further offering, You have forever put away sin!

And so is it with our Lord's prophesying—He has the power to teach. "Grace is poured into Your lips: therefore God has blessed You forever." All the words of Christ are Wisdom and Truth. The substance of true philosophy and certain knowledge are to be found in Him who is the wisdom and the power of God. Oh, that word, "Christ!" It seems to grow upon us as we think it over—it shows us the offices of Christ—His right to those offices and His qualifications for them—

***"Christ, to You our spirits bow!
Prophet, Priest and King are You!
Christ, anointed of the Lord,
Evermore be You adored."***

Now, put the two titles together and ring out the harmony of the two melodious notes—Jesus Christ, Savior-Anointed. Oh, how blessed! Can you see that our Beloved is a Savior duly appointed, a Savior abundantly qualified? My Soul, if God appoints Christ a Savior of sinners, why do you raise a question? God set Him forth as a sinner's Savior. Come, then, you sinners, take Him, accept Him and rest in Him! Oh, how foolish we are when we begin raising questions, quibbles and difficulties! God declares that Christ is a Savior to all who trust in Him! My poor heart trusts Him—she has peace! But why do some of you imagine that He cannot save you? Why do you ask, "How can it be that this Man shall save me?" God has appointed Him! Take Him! Rest in Him!

Moreover, God has qualified Him, given Him the anointing of a Savior. What? Do you think God has not girded Him with power enough, or furnished Him with enough of merit with which to save such as you are? Will *you* limit what God has done? Will *you* think that His anointing is imperfect and cannot qualify Jesus to meet your case? O do not so slander the Grace of Heaven! Do not do such despite to the Wisdom of the Lord! Honor the Savior of God's anointing by coming now, just as you are, and put your trust in Him!

II. We shall now examine the second point, HIS MEMORABLE ATTRIBUTES. He is said to be the same. Now, Jesus Christ has not been the same in condition at all times, for He was once adored of angels but afterwards spit upon by men! He exchanged the supernal splendors of

His Father's court for the poverty of the earth, the degradation of death and the humiliation of the grave.

Jesus Christ is not and will not be always the same as to *occupation*. Once He came to seek and to save that which was lost, but we very truly sing, "The Lord *shall* come, but not the same as once in lowliness He came." He shall come with a very different objective—He shall come to scatter His enemies and break them as with a rod of iron! We are not to take the expression then, "the same," in the most unlimited sense conceivable. Looking at the Greek, one notices that it might be read thus, "Jesus Christ *Himself* yesterday and today and forever."

The anointed Savior is *always* Himself. He is always Jesus Christ—and the word, "same," seems to me to bear the most intimate relation to the two titles of the text. It does as good as say that Jesus Christ is always Jesus Christ, yesterday, and today and forever. Jesus Christ is always Himself. At any rate, if that is not the correct translation, it is a very correct and blessed sentence! It is sweetly true that Jesus Christ is always Himself. Immutability is ascribed to Christ and we remark that *He was evermore to His people what He now is*, for He was the same yesterday.

Distinctions have been drawn by certain exceedingly wise men (measured by their own estimate of themselves), between the people of God who lived *before* the coming of Christ and those who lived afterwards. We have even heard it asserted that those who lived before the coming of Christ do not belong to the Church of God! We never know what we shall hear next, and perhaps it is a mercy that these absurdities are revealed one at a time in order that we may be able to endure their stupidity without dying of amazement!

Why, *every* child of God in every place stands on the same footing! The Lord has not some children best beloved, some second-rate offspring and others whom He hardly cares about. These who saw Christ's day before it came had a great difference as to what they knew and, perhaps, in the same measure a difference as to what they enjoyed while on earth in meditating upon Christ. But they were all washed in the same blood, all redeemed with the same ransom price and made members of the same body!

Israel in the Covenant of Grace is not *natural* Israel, but *all* Believers in *all* ages. Before the first Advent, all the types and shadows all pointed one way—they pointed to Christ—and to Him *all* the saints looked with hope. Those who lived before Christ were not saved with a different salvation to that which shall come to us! They exercised faith as we must. That faith struggled as ours struggles and that faith obtained its reward as ours shall. As like as a man's face to that which he sees in a glass is the spiritual life of David to the spiritual life of the Believer now. Take the book of Psalms in your hand and forgetting, for an instant, that you have the representation of the life of one of the olden time, you might suppose that David wrote but yesterday.

Even in what he writes of Christ, he seems as though he lived *after* Christ instead of *before* and both in what he sees of himself and in what he sees of his Savior, he appears to be rather a Christian writer than a Jew. I mean that living before Christ he has the same hopes and the

same fears, the same joys and the same sorrows—there is the same estimate of his blessed Redeemer which you and I have in these times. Jesus was the same yesterday as an anointed Savior to His people as He is today and they under Him received like precious gifts.

If the goodly fellowship of the Prophets could be here today, they would all testify to you that He was the same in every office in *their* times as He is in these, our days. *Jesus Christ is the same now as He was in times gone by*, for the text says, “The same yesterday and today.” He is the same today as He was from old eternity. Before all worlds He planned our salvation. He entered into Covenant with His Father to undertake it. His delights were with the sons of men in prospect and now, today, He is as steadfast to that Covenant as ever. He will not lose those who were then given to Him, nor will He fail nor be discouraged till every stipulation of that Covenant shall be fulfilled.

Whatever was in the heart of Christ before the stars began to shine, that same infinite love is there today! Jesus is the same today as He was when He was here on earth. There is much comfort in this thought. When He tabernacled among men, He was most willing to save. “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy-laden,” was the burden of His cry. He is still calling to the weary and the heavy-laden to come to Him. In the days of His flesh He would not curse the woman taken in adultery, neither would He reject the publicans and sinners who gathered to hear Him. He is merciful to sinners, still, and says to them yet, “Neither do I condemn you: go and sin no more.”

That delightful sentence which so graciously came from His lips, “Your sins, which are many, are forgiven you,” is still His favorite utterance in human hearts. O think not that Christ in Heaven has become distant and reserved so that you may not approach Him! Such as He was here—a Lamb gentle and meek, a Man to whom men drew near without a moment’s hesitation—such is He now! Come boldly to Him, you lowest and guiltiest ones! Come near to Him with broken hearts and weeping eyes! Though He is King and Priest, surrounded with unknown splendor, yet He still retains the same loving heart and the same generous sympathies towards the sons of men! He is still the same in His ability as well as in His willingness to save. He is still Jesus Christ the anointed Savior!

In His earthly days He touched the leper and said, “I will. Be you clean.” He called Lazarus from the tomb and Lazarus came. Sinner, Jesus is still as able to heal or quicken you now, as then! “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” Now that the blood is spilt, indeed, and the sacrifice is fully offered, there is no limit to the ability of Christ to save! O come and rely upon Him and find salvation in Him now! Believer, it will cheer you, also, to remember that when our Lord was here upon earth He showed great perseverance in His art of saving. He could say, “Of them which You gave Me I have lost none.” Rejoice that He is the same today—He will not cast one of you away, nor suffer His little ones to perish! He brought all safe in the days of His flesh. He takes care to keep all safely in these, the days of His Glory. He is the same today, then, as He was on earth.

Blessed be His name, Jesus Christ is the same today as in apostolic days. Then He gave the fullness of the Spirit. Then, when He ascended up on high, He gave gifts to men—Apostles, preachers, teachers of the Word. Do not let us think we shall not see as good as days now as they saw at Pentecost! He is the same Christ! He could as readily convert 3,000 under one sermon today as in Peter's time! His Holy Spirit is not exhausted, for God gives it not by measure unto Him! We ought to pray that He would raise up among us eminent men to proclaim the Gospel. We do not pray enough for the ministry.

The Gospel ministry is peculiarly the gift of the Ascension. When He ascended on high He received gifts for men and He gave—what? Why, men, Apostles, teachers, preachers. If we ask for salvation, we plead the blood—why do we not ask for ministers and plead the *Ascension*? If we would do this more, we should see raised up among us more Whitefields and Wesleys! More Luthers and Calvins, more men of the apostolic stock and the Church would be revived. Jesus is the same to enrich His people with all spiritual gifts in this year, 1869, as in the year when He ascended to His Throne. “He is the same yesterday and today.”

He is the same, today, as He was to our fathers. These have gone to their rest, but they told us before they went what Christ was to them—how He succored them in their time of peril—how He delivered them in their hour of sorrow. He will do for us just what He did for them. Some who lived before us went to Heaven in a chariot of fire, but Christ was very precious to them at the stake. We have our martyrologies which we read with wonder. How sustaining the company of Christ was to those that lay in prison! To those that were cast to the lions! To those that wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins! England, Scotland—all the countries where Christ was preached—have been dyed with blood and ennobled with the testimonies of the faithful! Whatever Jesus was to these departed worthies, He is to His people still. We have only to ask of God and we shall receive the same benefit.

“Jesus Christ the same today,” says the text. Then He is the same today as He has been to us in the past. We have had great enjoyments of God's Presence. We remember the love of our espousals and if we have not the same joys today it is no fault of His. There is still the same water in the well and if we have not drawn it, it is our own fault. We have come away from the fire and therefore we are cold. We have walked contrary to Him and therefore He walks contrary to us. Let us return to Him and He will be as glad to receive us now as in our first moment of repentance. Let us return to Him! His heart is as full of love and as ready to weep upon our neck as when we first came and sought pardon from His hands. There is much sweetness in the text, but I cannot linger longer upon that part of the subject. It is enough for us to remember that Jesus Christ is the same today as He always was.

Now, further, *Christ shall be tomorrow what He has been yesterday and is today*. Our Lord Jesus Christ will be changed in no respect throughout the whole of our life. It may be long before we shall descend to our graves, but let these hairs all be gray and these limbs begin to totter and these eyes grow dim—Jesus Christ shall have the dew of His youth upon Him and the fullness of His love shall still flow to us. And af-

ter death, or if we die not, at the coming of Christ and in His glorious reign, Jesus will be the same to His people, then, as now.

There seems to be a notion abroad among some that after His coming Christ will deal differently with His people than now. I have been informed by a modern school of inventors (and, as I tell you, we live to learn) that some of us will be shut out from the kingdom when Christ comes! Saved by His precious blood and brought near and adopted into the family—and our names written upon the breastplate of Christ—and yet some of us will be shut out from the kingdom! Nonsense! I see nothing in the Word of God—though there may be a great deal in the fancies of men—to support these novelties.

The people of God, equally bought with blood, and equally dear to Jesus' heart, shall be treated on the same scale and footing. They will never be put under the Law. They will never come to Christ and find Him rule them as a legal Judge and beat them with many stripes in a future state, or shut them out of His estate of millennial Majesty. He will give to none, as a mere matter of reward, such rule and government so as to exclude others of His redeemed family! They shall find Him always treating them all as unchanging love and immutable Grace shall dictate. The rewards of the millennial state shall be always those of Divine Grace—they shall be such as not to exclude the very least of all the family—*all* shall have tokens of reward from the dear Savior's hand.

I know He will not love me today and give me a glimpses of His face—give me to delight in His name—and yet after all, when He comes, tell me I must stand out in the cold and not enter into His kingdom! I have not a shade of faith in the purgatory of banishment which certain despisers of the ministry have chosen to set up! I marvel that in a Protestant sect there should rise up a dogma as villainous as the dogma of “purgatory” and that, too, from those who say they are no sectarians! We all are wrong but these Brethren! These are deeply taught and can discover what the ablest Divines have never seen!

That Jesus will love His people in time to come as strongly as He does now seems to be a doctrine which, if destroyed or denied, would cast sorrow into the whole family of God! Throughout eternity, in Heaven, there shall still be the same Jesus Christ with the same love to His people and they shall have the same familiar communion with Him, no, shall see Him face to face and rejoice forever in Him as their unchangeably, anointed Savior!

III. Our time has failed us and therefore just two or three words upon our Lord's EVIDENT CLAIMS. If our Lord is “the same yesterday and today and forever,” then, according to the connection of our text, *He is to be followed to the end*. Observe the seventh verse, “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God; whose faith follow considering the end of their conversation.” The meaning being—these holy men ended their lives with Christ. Their exit was to go to Jesus and to reign with Him.

Beloved, if the Lord is still the same, follow Him till you reach Him! Your exit out of this life shall bring you where He is and you will find Him, then, what He always was. You shall see Him as He is. If He were a will-o'-the-wisp, forever changing, it were dangerous to follow Him. But

since He is ever and equally worthy of your admiration and example, follow Him evermore. That was an eloquent speech of Henry the Sixth, of France, when on the eve of battle, he said to his soldiers, "Gentlemen, you are Frenchmen. I am your King. There is the enemy!" Jesus Christ says, "You are My people. I am your Leader. There is the foe!"

How shall we dare to do anything unworthy of such a Lord as He is, or of such a citizenship as that which He has bestowed upon us? If we are, indeed, His and He is, indeed, Immutable, let us by His Holy Spirit's power persevere to the end that we may obtain the crown! The next evident claim of Christ upon us is that we should be steadfast in the faith. Notice the ninth verse: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today, and forever. Be not carried about with various and strange doctrines."

There is nothing new in theology but that which is false. All that is true is old, though I say not that all that is old is true. Some speak of developments as though we had not the whole Christian religion discovered yet—but the religion of Paul is the religion of every man who is taught by the Holy Spirit. We ought not, therefore, to indulge for a moment the idea that something has been discovered which may correct the teaching of Christ! We must not even *think* that some new philosophy or discovery of science has risen up to correct the declared Testimony of our Redeemer! Let us hold fast that which we have received and never depart from "the Truth once delivered unto the saints" by Christ Himself.

If Jesus Christ is Immutable, *He has an evident claim to our most solemn worship.* Immutability can be the attribute of none but God. Whoever is "the same yesterday and today and forever," must be Divine. Then, Believer, bring your adoration to Jesus! At the feet of Him that was crucified, cast down your crown! Give royal and Divine honors unto Him who stooped to the ignominy of crucifixion! Let no one stop you of glorying in your boast that the Son of God was made Man for *you*! Worship Him as God over all, blessed forever!

He also claims of us, next, that *we should trust Him.* If He is always the same, here is a rock that cannot be moved! Build on it! Here is an anchor! Cast your anchor of hope into it and hold fast in time of storm. If Christ were variable, He were not worthy of your confidence. Since He is evermore unchanged, rest on Him without fear. And, lastly, if He is always the same, rejoice in Him and rejoice always! If you ever had cause to rejoice in Christ, you *always* have cause, for He never alters!

If yesterday you could sing of Him, today you may sing of Him. If He changed, your joy might change. But, if the stream of your gladness springs solely and only out of this great deep of the Immutability of Jesus, then it need never stay its flow. Beloved, let us, "rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." And, until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, till the blest hour arrive when we shall see Him face to face and be made like He is, be this our joy, that, "He is the same yesterday, and today and forever." Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Hebrews 13.

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SUFFERING OUTSIDE THE CAMP NO. 2660

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1900.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 3, 1858.**

***“Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood,
suffered outside the gate.”
Hebrews 13:12.***

IN one sense, sanctification is wholly the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, but there is another meaning which is more usually affixed to the term, in which sanctification is rightly described as the work of God the Holy Spirit. Many disputes have arisen concerning this Doctrine of God, because all men do not distinguish between the two meanings of the same word. There is one kind of sanctification which signifies setting apart and, in that sense, God's people were sanctified from all eternity. They were sanctified in election, before they had a being, for they were even then set apart from the impure mass, to be vessels of honor meet for the Master's use. Further, as redemption has in it much of peculiarity and specialty, God's people were sanctified, or set apart, by the blood of Christ, when, on Mount Calvary He offered up Himself, an offering without spot or blemish, for the sins of His people. So it is true that Jesus is not only made unto us wisdom and righteousness, but also sanctification.

You will remember that in one of my recent sermons, [Sermon #2634, Volume 45—*“Jesus Only”*—A Communion Meditation—read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>] the text of which was, “Jesus only,” I made the remark that it was “Jesus only” for sanctification. And I have not had any reason to retract that expression, for there is a sense in which sanctification, as far as it means setting apart, is an *eternal* work and is a work wholly completed for us by the election of the Father and the blood of Jesus Christ. Still, sanctification sometimes, and most generally, signifies another thing—it means the work of the Spirit within us. There is a work which God the Holy Spirit carries on, from the first moment of our spiritual birth, to the last moment when we are taken to Heaven—a work by which corruptions are overcome, lusts restrained, faith increased, love inflamed, hope brightened and the spirit made fit to dwell with the glorified above. That is the work of God's Holy Spirit, yet we must remember that even though it is the work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, even in this, still sanctifies His people! For with what does the Holy Spirit sanctify them?

Beloved, He sanctifies them with the precious blood of Jesus! We know that when our Savior died, His Sacrifice had a double objective—one objective was pardon, the other was cleansing—and both the blood and the water flowed from the same source to show us that justification and sanctification both spring from the same Divine Fountain and, though sanctification is the work of the Spirit in us, yet, to accomplish this purposes, the Holy Spirit uses the sacrificial blood of Jesus and the sacred water of His Atonement applied to our heart, sprinkling us from dead works and purging us from an evil conscience, that we may serve God without let or hindrance. So, then, Christian, in your sanctification, look to Jesus! Remember that the Spirit sanctifies you, but that He sanctifies you through Jesus. He does not sanctify you through the works of the Law, but through the Atonement of Christ! And will you therefore remember that the nearer you live to the Cross of Jesus, the more of sanctification, growth and increase in all spiritual blessings will His Spirit give to you? So, then, we see that whatever sanctification may mean, the text is still true—“Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.”

Let us pause here a minute and let each of us, as we begin a new year, ask this question—How far has Christ’s purpose of sanctifying me been answered in my own case? I know that in one sense I am completely sanctified, but, in another sense, I still feel my imperfections and infirmities. How far have I progressed in sanctification during the past year? How much has my faith increased during the year? How many of my corruptions have I overcome? How much nearer am I living to Christ, now, than on the first Sabbath of last year? How much do I know of the Savior? How much closer do I approach in my likeness to Him? Have I more power in prayer? Am I more careful in my life? Is my spirit more loving than it used to be? Am I more decisive for that which is right? At the same time, am I more meek in standing up for it? Am I, in all respects, more like my Master than I was a year ago? Or, on the other hand, have I been going backward? Stand still, I cannot—I must either go forward in Grace or go backward! Which have I been doing during the past year? And I charge you, O my Heart, whatever answer you have to give to these questions, to remember that if you are ever so much sanctified, you have not yet attained perfection! I beseech you, forget that which is behind, and press forward toward that which is before, looking still unto Jesus, who is both the Author and the Finisher of faith! The Lord give you so plenteously of His Grace that you may be sanctified wholly, by soul and spirit! And I pray God to preserve you all unto His coming and glory.

I. But now the principal subject upon which I wish to speak is the fact that JESUS CHRIST SUFFERED OUTSIDE THE GATE.

You know that when the High Priest offered the sin-offering, because it typified sin, it was so obnoxious to God that it might not be burned upon the great altar, but it was always burned outside the camp, to show God’s detestation of sin and His determination not only to put it away from Himself, but also to put it away from His Church. Now, when our

Lord Jesus Christ came into this world to be our Sin-Offering, it behooved Him, also, to be put outside the camp—and it is very interesting to note how remarkably Providence provided for the fulfillment of the type. Had our Lord been killed in a tumult, He would most likely have been slain in the city. Unless He had been put to death judicially, He would not have been taken to the usual Mount of Doom. And it is remarkable that the Romans should have chosen a hill on the outside of the city to be the common place for crucifixion and for punishment by death. We might have imagined that they would have selected some mount in the center of the city and that they would have placed their gibbet in as conspicuous a spot as our Newgate, so that it might strike the multitude with greater awe. But, in the Providence of God, it was arranged otherwise. Christ must not be slain in a tumult! He might not die in the city and when He was delivered into the hands of the Romans, they had not a place of execution within the city, but one outside the camp, that by dying outside the gate, He might be proved to be the Sin-Offering for His people.

Concerning this great Truth of God, I have one or two remarks to offer to you very briefly. First, I want to ask you a question. *Do you know who the people were who lived outside the gate?* If you could have gone to the great camp of Israel, you would have seen the tents all placed in order, the standard of Dan there, of Judah there, of Ephraim there—surrounding the Ark of the Covenant. And you would have seen a few wretched huts far away in the rear, outside the camp. And if you had asked, “Who lives, there? Who are the poor people that are put away from kith and kin, and who cannot go up to the sanctuary of the Lord to present their offerings unto Him, or to join in the songs of praise unto His holy name?” The answer to your enquiry would have been, “The people out there are lepers and others who are unclean.” And if, in later days, you had walked through some of the shady glens around the city of Jerusalem, you might have heard in the distance, the cry, “Unclean! Unclean! Unclean!”—a bitter wail that sounded like the sighing of despair, as if it came from some poor ghost that had been commanded to forever walk this earth with restless steps. Had you come nearer to the unhappy being who had uttered so mournful a sound, you would have seen him cover his upper lip and again, cry, “Unclean! Unclean! Unclean!—to warn you not to come too near him, lest even the wind should blow infection towards you from his leprous skin. If, for a minute, he had moved his hand from his mouth, you would have seen, instead of those scarlet, ruddy lips of health which God had originally put there, a terrible, white mark not to be distinguished from his teeth. His lips were unclean, for there the leprosy had discovered itself and, in a minute, he would have again covered up that lip that had the white mark of disease upon it—and again he would have cried, “Unclean! Unclean! Unclean!”

Of whom was that leper a type? He was a picture of you and me, my Brothers and Sisters, in our natural state! And if the Holy Spirit has quickened us and made us to know our ruined condition, we shall feel

that the leper's cry well becomes our unholy lips! Perhaps I have, within the walls of this house of prayer, a hearer who is today separate from all mankind. With worldlings, he dares not associate any longer. The harlots and others, with whom he spent his living riotously, are not now his companions. He cannot bear their pleasures, for they are dashed with bitterness. With the children of God, he dares not go—he feels that they would put him outside the camp, for he has no hope, no Christ, no faith! He cannot say that Christ has died for him. He has no trust in Jesus—not so much as one pale ray of hope has stolen into his poor darkened heart and, tonight, the inward wail of his now-awakened spirit is—

***“Unclean! Unclean! Unclean!
Unclean, and full of sin,
From first to last, O Lord, I've been!
Deceitful is my heart.”***

Leper, leper, be of good cheer! Christ died outside the camp that you might be sanctified through His blood! I see the leper now stealing through the desert places, not daring to sip of the clear stream that lies in his track, lest he should communicate contagion to the next person who drinks from it, but seeking out some filthy puddle, that there he may satisfy his thirst, where no others are likely to drink. I see him covering up his lips. If his father met him, he must run away from him. If the wife of his bosom saw him, she must shun his presence, for a loathsome disease is in his skin and in his garments—and in the very breath that comes from his lips there is death! Well, suddenly, as he steals along, he sees a Cross, and on it lifted up One who is dying. He stands there astonished! He thinks that surely he may come near to a dying man, leper though he is—to the living, he must not approach—but to the dying he cannot bring a new death. So he draws near to the Cross and the lips of the dying Man are opened, and He says, “Verily I say unto you, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise.” Oh, what joy and rapture rush through his poor leprous spirit! How his heart, that had long been heavy and baked like a black coal within him, begins, again, to burn with bright light! He smiles, for he feels that that marvelous Man upon the Cross has forgiven him all his sins and before he has begun to feel it, his leprosy is cleansed! And soon he goes his way, for his flesh has come unto him like the flesh of a little child and he is clean! O leprous Sinner, hear this and believe it for yourself! Tonight look unto Him who died outside the camp that poor unclean sinners might find a Savior there!

That is my first lesson from the text. If the Lord the Spirit shall graciously apply it to your souls, it will be a very precious one to many a sin-distracted heart!

But, Believer, did you never feel as if you, too, were unclean and outside the camp? Brothers and Sisters, let me tell you just a little of my own heart's feelings and let me see whether you have ever felt the same. You have often known yourselves to be children of God. I have felt myself, with much joy, to be certainly assured of my interest in Christ but, suddenly, sin has surprised me, some unhappy propensity has developed itself and I have felt as if I could not meet my God. When I was on my

knees in prayer, I seemed as if I could not pray. I felt like the unclean one that must be put outside the camp—like Miriam, who, though the leprosy was but for a little time, would still be unclean for seven days. And when I have come to the House of God, I have felt as if the lowliest Christians there were so much superior to myself that I would but have been glad to have been a footstool at their feet! I would have crept into any part of the fold if I might have known myself to be the lowliest lamb in the flock of Jesus. I have seen the deacon and I have seen the Church member and I have thought, “Brethren, you are happy, but my heart is sad, for I am not worthy to be called God’s son. Father, I have sinned. I have done grievously and have transgressed against You.”

For a little while faith has seemed sluggish and hope has been dull. And the sense of sin has rested on us and we have seemed to be quite put away from our Lord’s Presence. We have read the Bible, but we could get no comfort there. The heavens seemed like brass above our heads. No shower of Grace fell upon our thirsty souls—both God and man seemed to put us outside the camp! I believe that many times, in a Christian’s experience, he will have to feel what I have been describing. I do not mean merely little Christians, but I mean the greatest Christians, those who have lived nearest to their God, those who have been eminent in the Lord’s service—God’s Aarons and Miriams who sometimes have to be put outside the camp!

Who, then, is there among us who will not sometimes be unclean? Surely, not any of the great ones of Israel could always live outside contracting some ceremonial defilement, for you know that under the Jewish law, the sitting upon the bed of a leper made a man unclean—and many things that happened to men rendered them unclean for seven days. And who can wonder if, through the infirmities of our bodies, through the companionships into which we are called, through the evil thoughts of our mind, we are often unclean as the Jews were? And who wonders that, sometimes, the Lord should put us, as it were, out of the camp for a little season till we have been purged with hyssop and have been made clean—till we have again been thoroughly purified by the washing of water through the Word?

But, Brothers and Sisters, what a mercy it is that when we are outside the gate, Christ is outside the gate, too! O poor Backslider, does your conscience shut you out of the Church today? Remember, Christ shut Himself out, too. He was “despised and rejected of men.” Do you feel, tonight, as if you cannot come to His Table—as if your Master would spurn you from it? Remember, if you are His, you are welcome, for His Table is where His Cross is—and His Cross is outside the gate. Come, sinner! Come, backsliding saint! Come and welcome! God may seem to have put you away, but it is only seeming, for we know He has written that He hates to put away. Come, and though you are outside the gate, behold your Lord, who, “that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.”

II. I have only one more thought to bring before your notice. The Apostle says, in the next verse to our text, “Let us go forth, therefore, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.” So, AS CHRIST SUFFERED OUTSIDE THE CAMP, LET US NOT BE ASHAMED TO SUFFER THERE, TOO.

I do not think much of the religion of that man who is not put outside the, camp. If you can dwell with the wicked. If you can live as they live and be, “hail-fellow well met,” with the ungodly. If their practices are your practices. If their pleasures are your pleasures, then their god is your god and you are one of them! There is no being a Christian except being shut out of the world’s camp! I can scarcely conceive it possible for any man to be a true saint, a holy man, one who is set apart unto God and sanctified in Christ Jesus, unless he is reproached while on earth for being too strict, too Puritan, or perhaps, sometimes, too melancholy. There must be a grave distinction between a Christian and a man of the world—and where there is no such distinction, or only a slight one—there is most solemn cause for suspicion that all is not right! When I see a man dress like worldlings. When I hear him talk like worldlings. When I know that all his outward carriage is just like a worldly man’s. When I can detect no difference. When I see no mark of the Lord Jesus upon him. When I can hear no “shibboleth” in his speech, whereby he is to be detected from a shibboleth-speaking world. When I discover no distinction between him and others, then this I know, “God is not mocked.” That man is in the flesh and he shall, “of the flesh reap corruption.”

No, I will go further still! In *this* age I can scarcely imagine it possible for a man to serve his Master faithfully unless he is sometimes shut out of the camp, even of the Church itself! I do not mean excommunicated—I mean something far different from that. I mean that the man who serves his God aright will often feel himself left in the minority, even in the Church. It is never his business to so act and to so think that others are obliged to differ from him. It is folly to be singular except where to be singular is to be right! But so lax has the professing Church become, so low in its doctrine, so light in its experience and, sometimes, so unholy in its life, that to be Christians, now, we must be elect out of the elect—elect out of the Church as well as elect out of the world! What pride, on the one hand. What sloth, on the other. What anger, what distrust, what covetousness, what worldly-mindedness we constantly see! The most of us are too much mingled with the world, too much joined unto Egypt! And the man who is firm in the faith and loves his Master well is a rarity! The man of a loving spirit, the man of a large heart and yet of a determined zeal, and of a steadfast mind—such a man will have to go outside the camp—and he will have to suffer, now, even as all have had to suffer who have dared to go into the front of the sacramental host of God’s elect, in advance of the more tardy followers of the Lamb! If any minister of Christ dares to be too bold, too plain, too honest for the common run of professors, he must expect to be maligned! Let him reckon on that and let him willingly go forth outside the camp, for that is where his Master went before him!

If I turn to the pages of history to find out the best men who ever lived, do you know where I find them? I never find them among those who were called, “respectable,” in their time. There, in the pages of history, I see great names—Erasmus and others, mighty and learned men—but, on a dirty-thumbed page, I see the name of Luther associated with such epithets as, “dog, adulterer, beast,” and everything else that Rome’s malice could suggest! And I say, “Ah, *this* is the man whom God chose, for he went outside the camp!” That list of great divines, of schoolmen and of theologians you may wipe out without much regret—but this man outside the camp—he is somebody, depend upon it! He is the man whom God has blessed!

Turn to another list of archbishops, bishops, deans, rural deans, rectors and curates. There they are, all as respectable as possible, and great volumes of their sermons may be found on bookshelves, nowadays, with the dust of years upon them! I read their names. There is one, there is another, there is another—but there is nothing special about any of them! At last, I find a picture by Hogarth—a caricature of a man preaching with devils coming out of his mouth, and underneath it written, “Fire and brimstone!” I look at the portrait and I say, “Look, that is Mr. Whitefield!” Ah, there is the man of the age, depend on it! That man, all black, charged with crimes that Sodom never knew—that is the man! Not the curate in the other picture who is preaching to a congregation all asleep—but this man, here, that is abused, that is laughed at, that is mocked—this is the man who is somebody!

So you may go on as long as you like and you shall always find that those “intruders into the ministry,” as some call them, those that the parliament of parsons dislikes, those that the great mass reject and laugh and scoff at—those are the very men whom God blesses! So, if you go outside the camp, you will be in very good company. The great and holy men of years gone by have all been put outside the camp. If an ungodly throng have thrust out our fathers and have said, “Get you gone, we want you not,” it is true—their children build their sepulchers and then they thrust us out. What if it is so? We are content to share the lot of so goodly a parentage! We think it a high honor to be thrust out of these gates whose only glory is that good men once passed through them, and whose great disgrace is that good men pass through them the wrong way—not into them, but out of them! So, Beloved, be you content to be cast outside the camp.

But mark, going outside the camp in itself is nothing—it is *suffering* outside the camp that is the great thing. Making myself different from everybody else is nothing—it is suffering for the Truth of God’s sake that is the truly noble thing! It is being crucified with Christ that is honorable! It is not my being a Sectarian or a Separatist. It is not your going outside the camp that is any good—it is your *suffering* outside the camp that proves you to be a Believer. O Christians, if you have to do the same, rejoice!

And now, as you come to this Communion Table, I shall bid you only remember that word, *suffered*. “Jesus suffered outside the gate” and I shall ask you, as you sit there, to meditate upon that word. Turn it over again and again, and think how His body and His soul all suffered for you. Then, when you have meditated upon that great Truth of God, you will be in a fit frame of mind to commune with Him who has sanctified you by His own blood, by suffering outside the gate.

May the God of mercies give to sinners Grace, that, like lepers outside the camp, they may look to Jesus, crucified for them, and so obtain eternal life! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
JEREMIAH 5:1-6; 10-31; REVELATION 22:1-7.**

Jeremiah 5:1. *Run you to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if you can find a man, if there is any that executes judgment, that seeks the truth; and I will pardon it.* It was a very wonderful offer, on the part of God, to forgive the inhabitants of the whole city of Jerusalem for the sake of *one man*! And it was all the more remarkable because He gave them time to make a thorough search to see whether such a person could be found—“if there is any that executes judgment, that seeks the truth.” Into what a horrible state of guilt must the Jewish capital have fallen when there was not *one man*, even among the magistrates or the priests, who cared for that which was just and true! May God prevent London and England from becoming like Jerusalem and Judah! May truth and righteousness flourish in our land!

2. *And though they say, The LORD lives; surely they swear falsely.* Even those who assumed an appearance of being religious and who said, “Jehovah lives”—even *they* were false swearers. To what a terribly sad state had the age come when its very religion was a lie and its professedly holy things were thoroughly rotten!

3. *O LORD, are not Your eyes upon the truth?* If there is any truthful man anywhere, God sees him. His eyes are upon him, He regards him with attentive delight and He will take care of him with the utmost vigilance. But what was the real character of these people? Listen.

3. *You have stricken them, but they have not grieved; You have consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.* Nothing could make them act rightly! Whatever God did with them, they still persisted in their iniquity.

4, 5. *Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God. I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the LORD, and the judgment of their God.* But Jeremiah found no improvement among them—they were even worse than the poor and ignorant, for he goes on to say—

5, 6. *But these have altogether broken the yoke and burst the bonds. Therefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: everyone that goes out from there shall be torn in pieces: because their transgressions are many, and their backsliding are increased.* Now let us continue our reading at verse 10, where we shall see that both the house of Israel and the house of Judah had turned aside from the Lord their God.

10-12. *Go up upon her walls and destroy; but make not a full end: take away her battlements; for they are not the LORD'S. For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against Me, says the LORD. They have lied about the LORD—They have made it out as though God, Himself, were a liar! They have contradicted Him whose Word is Truth itself. They have despised His threats, they have refused His invitations, they have disbelieved His promises! “They have lied about the Lord”—*

12-14. *And said, It is not He; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine: and the Prophets shall become wind, and the Word is not in them: thus shall it be done unto them. Therefore thus says the LORD God of hosts, Because you speak this word, behold, I will make My Words in your mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.* It is a dreadful state of things when God turns from pleading with men to threatening them! When He ceases to invite them to return to Him and denounces them as transgressors against His Laws! At such times He makes the words that come out of the mouths of His Prophets to be like fire and men are utterly consumed by them as the stubble in the field is destroyed by the devouring flames!

15-18. *Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, says the LORD: it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language you know not, neither understand what they say. Their quiver is as an open sepulcher, they are all mighty men. And they shall eat up your harvest, and your bread, which your sons and your daughters should eat: they shall eat up your flocks and your herds: they shall eat up your vines and your fig trees: they shall impoverish your fenced cities, wherein you trusted, with the sword. Nevertheless in those days, says the LORD, I will not make a full end of you.* See how, in the midst of His wrath, God remembers mercy? He utters a terrible sentence concerning transgressors and then He pauses and says, “Nevertheless”—listen to the gentle note of pity in that word—“Nevertheless, in those days, says the Lord, I will not make a full end of you.” Still does He spare the guilty and in His long-suffering He gives them further opportunities for repentance!

19. *And it shall come to pass, when you shall say, Why does the LORD our God do all these things unto us? Then shall you answer them, Like as you have forsaken Me, and serve strange gods in your land, so shall you serve strangers in a land that is not yours.* A man may often see his sin in its punishment. Because they had served strange gods, therefore the Lord sent them to serve strangers in a strange land! Remember, O transgressor, that your sin will come home to you in some form or other! If we

sow the wind, we shall reap the whirlwind. “Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.” Therefore let us beware of scattering seeds of sin, for they will produce a terrible harvest of woe!

20, 21. *Declare this in the house of Jacob, and publish it in Judah, saying, Hear now this, O foolish people and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not.* And, alas, there are far too many of such people still around! They hear God’s Word, yet it never reaches their hearts. They see what God’s hand is doing all around them, yet they do not and they will not really see it as they should.

22. *Do you not fear Me? says the LORD. Will you not tremble at My Presence, which, have placed the sand for the boundary of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?* There is a little belt of sand which checks the surging sea and says to it, “To here shall you come, but no further! And to here shall your proud waves be stayed.” Now, if sand, which is so weak a thing, can, nevertheless, control the mighty ocean within bounds, how readily ought you and I to be governed by God and held in check even by the slightest intimations of His will?

23. *But this people has a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.* God restrains the sea, but nothing seems to be able to restrain the sinfulness of man! Man breaks every barrier that should keep him back—he is like a desolating torrent when he gives way to iniquity!

24. *Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, that gives rain, both the former and the latter, in its season: He reserves unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.* Though God gives timely and suitable seasons for the growth and ingathering of the corn—rain when it is needed to aid the springing up of the blade and fine weather for garnering the harvest—yet many men see not the hand of God at all and they are, therefore, not moved by gratitude to bless His name and fear Him to whom they are indebted for all that they receive. Oh, what an ungrateful and blind creature is man!

25. *Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withheld good things from you.* Does any unconverted man here know what good things he has missed up to the present moment? Suppose you, my Friend, were to be saved tonight? Can you even imagine what joy you have lost through all the years of your past impenitence? Nothing can ever give back to you the years that have gone, or impart to you in the future, the joy you might have had, but which you have missed! And, mark you, if there were no Hell to be endured, it is enough of Hell to have missed Heaven! It will be grief enough to your heart, at the last, to find that “your sins have withheld good things from you.”

26. *For among My people are found wicked men.* “Among My people,” says the Lord—in the very Church, itself, making as loud a profession as the most genuine Christian! “Among My people are found wicked men.” Here, in this place, tonight, mingling with the godly in this congregation,

are found wicked men! The Lord have mercy upon them and turn them from their evil ways!

26. *They lay wait, as he that sets snares; they set a trap, they catch men.* Beware of these man-catchers who entrap souls and ruin them forever, ensnaring them by leading them into evil habits and transgressions!

27, 28. *As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich. They are waxen fat, they shine: yes, they exceed the deeds of the wicked.* The manifestly wicked—

28, 29. *They judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge. Shall I not visit for these things?* Angels in Heaven, God says to you, “Shall I not visit for these things?” And they answer, “Yes, Lord.” Even to the devils in Hell, He may put the same question. They are already smarting under His wrath and He may say to them, “Shall I not visit for these things?” And they also answer, “Yes.” He puts the question to all intelligent beings who know what is right and true, “Shall I not visit for these things?” And they, with one consent, reply, “Yes, Lord, it must be so!”

29-31. *Says the LORD: shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the Prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so.* It is a most horrible thing that God’s own people should ever be willing that error should be preached and that oppression and wrong-doing of any kind should be practiced! You know that if God’s own people did not tolerate false doctrine, it would soon cease to be heard in many places. But it is when those who profess to know God’s Word endorse that which is contrary to the Truth of God that error is kept in power in the land—“The Prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so.”

31. *But what will you do in the end?* That is a question which I would propose in God’s name to all here. Is your religion of such a character that when you come to die, it will bear you up? Or have you taken up with some form of falsehood which will not stand the test of your dying hour? Are you living in neglect of God? Is your life such that He must be angry with you, for He is angry with the wicked every day! Then take home to yourself the question with which this chapter closes, “What will you do in the end?” I am going to speak to you presently about those who go forth with Christ, outside the camp, bearing His reproach, so let us read a few verses about the glory which awaits them, by-and-by. [Remember that the exposition was delivered before *the sermon was preached.*—EOD]

Revelation 22:1. *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.* Infinite sovereignty bestows Grace. The River of Grace flows from the Throne of God. It is the King who saves His people, yet the Atonement is always connected with the sovereignty. “He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.”

2. *In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* God will enrich His Church by giving her a great variety of good things—“twelve fruits.” There shall also be a constant and perpetual supply of them, for this tree “yielded her fruit every month.” And if there is anything of ill remaining anywhere in the world in those halcyon days, God shall supply a cure for it—“The leaves of the tree were for the healing of nations.”

3. *And there shall be no more curse.* The curse shall be taken from the soil on which it fell when God said to Adam, “Cursed is the ground for your sake.” There shall be no curse upon man’s body—there shall be nothing but blessing. Blessing shall swallow up the cursing and God shall be manifest everywhere.

3. *But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him.* This is what we try to do, now, but we shall more fully accomplish the blessed task in those brighter days which every revolution of the wheel of time is hastening on.

4. *And they shall see His face.* Oh, that is glorious service—to serve the Lord and to see His face at the same time! Communion and service are always best when they are blended. There can be no fellowship better than that which serves, and no service sweeter than that of those who continue to see the face of their Master while they are serving Him.

4. *And His name shall be on their foreheads.* There will be no mistaking them—they shall bear on their foreheads the glorious name of God, just as the High Priest of old had the words, “Holiness unto the Lord” upon his brow.

5. *And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun.* Even the sun is only worthy to be ranked with a candle in comparison with the Light of God, Himself! John puts the two things in one sentence. “They need no candle, neither light of the sun”—

5-7. *For the Lord God gives them light: and they shall reign forever and ever. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the LORD God of the holy Prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold I come quickly! Blessed is he that keeps the sayings of the prophecy of this Book.*

Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly! Amen

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

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

“LET US GO FORTH”

NO. 577

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 26, 1864,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Let us go forth therefore unto Him outside the camp,
bearing His reproach.”
Hebrews 13:13.***

MODERN professors have discovered a very easy way of religion. There is a method by which a man may attain to great reputation as a Christian and yet avoid all the trials of the Believer's estate. He may go through the world finding his path as smoothly turfed as the flesh could desire. Blessed with the smiles of friendly formalists and with the admiration of the ungodly, he may pass from his first entrance into the Church to his grave without experiencing so much as a single shower to dampen his happiness. The sun may smile sweetly upon him all the way, the birds may sing—not a raven may dare to croak, not a single owl may hoot—his road to glory and immortality shall be all that ease could wish!

Let him adopt the modern theory of universal love. Let him believe that a lie is a truth and that whether it is a lie or a truth is of no consequence at all. Let him be complacent towards every man, and with a smooth and oily tongue chime in with every other man's principles, having none of his own worth mentioning. Let him trim his sails whenever the wind changes. Let him in all things do in Rome as Rome does. Let him yield at all times to the current and float gently with the stream and he shall come to the haven—though I fear not the desired one—he shall come to some sort of haven at last, without any storm or tempest by the way.

But a daring thought comes across one's mind. Is this the kind of religion which we read of in the Bible? Is this the way in which Scriptural saints went to Heaven? It would be a very pleasant thing if we could please men and please God, too—if we could make the best of both worlds and have the sweets of this and of the next also! But a warning cry arises from the pages of Holy Scripture, for the Word of God talks very differently from this. It talks about a straight and narrow way and about few that find it. It speaks of persecution, suffering, reproach, contending even unto blood, and striving against sin! It talks about wrestling and fighting, struggling and witnessing. I hear the Savior say not, “I send you forth as sheep into the midst of green pastures,” but, “as sheep in the midst of wolves.”

I hear him prophesy that we should be hated of all men for His name's sake. Truly these things are enough to startle those good easy souls who go so delicately onward! Surely they may at once enquire, “Can it be that this smooth-faced godliness—this very delightful way of getting to

Heaven—is the right one?” Is it not all a delusion? Are we not buoyed up with a false hope, if that hope is never assailed by trouble and persecution? All is not gold that glitters—may not the glittering religion of the many be, after all, only a pretense and a sham?

O you lovers of carnal ease, woe unto you! Inasmuch as you take not up the Cross, you shall never win the crown! The disciples of Christ must expect to follow their Master not merely in obedience to His doctrines, but also in the reproach which gathers about His Cross. I do not find Christ carried on flowery beds of ease to His Throne. I do not find Him applauded with universal acclamations! On the contrary, wherever He goes He is a protestor against things established by human wisdom. And in return, the things established vow His destruction and are not satisfied until at last they gloat their cruel eyes with His martyrdom upon the Cross.

Jesus Christ has no life of pleasure and of ease! He is despised and rejected of men—a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief! And let us rest assured that if we bear faithfully our testimony we shall discover that the servant is not above his Master, nor the disciple above his Lord—if they have called the Master of the house “Beelzebub,” much more shall they call them of His household by titles as ignominious and shameful. We must expect, if the Christian soldier is really a soldier and not a mere pretender to the art of war, that he will have to fight until he joins the Host triumphant. If the Church is properly imaged by a ship, she must expect to have storms. And every man on board her must look to bear his share.

From the first day, when Cain and Abel divided the first family into two camps, even until now, the flesh lusts against the Spirit. The evil contends with the good and the good wrestles with the evil. Wherever the true and the good have pitched their tents, there the enemy have gathered to attack them. Righteousness courts no peace or truce with sin—our peaceful Savior came not to form an alliance so unhallowed. Hear His own words—“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.”

Turning to Scripture, then, I find nothing about this pretty by-path meadow and its quiet, respectable walk to Heaven. I find nothing about riding in the gilded chariots of ease or walking in silver slippers. But I do find contention and strife, and rebuke and suffering, and cross-bearing and if need be, resistance unto blood striving against sin! Our text seems to convey that thought to us most powerfully. Let us take it up, and may the Holy Spirit lead us to its true meaning. We have before us, first of all, the Believer’s path. Secondly his Leader. Thirdly, his burden. And fourthly, his reason for following that path.

I. We have, first of all, THE BELIEVER’S PATH. The Believer’s path is, “Let us go forth outside the camp.” The Divine Command is not, “Let us stop in the camp and try to reform it—things are not anywhere quite per-

fect—let us, therefore, stop and make matters right.” No, the Christian’s watch cry is, “Let us go forth.” Luther caught this note. Many there were who said, “The Church of Rome has in it good and true men—let us try and reform her. Her cloisters are not without piety, her priests are not without sanctified lives—let us try and restore her purity.” But Luther heard the voice of God, “Come you out from among her, lest you be partakers of her plagues,” and therefore he led the van, taking for his watchword, “Let us go forth outside the camp.”

To this day the Christian’s place is not to tarry in the camp of worldly conformity, hoping, “Perhaps I may aid the movement for reform.” It is not the Believer’s duty to conform to the world and to the world’s ways and say, “Perhaps by so doing I may gain a foothold and men’s hearts may be the more ready to receive the Truth of God.” No, from the first to the last day of the Church of God, the place of witness is not *inside*, but *outside* the camp. And the true position of the Christian is to go forth outside the camp bearing Christ’s reproach.

In this respect Abraham becomes an example to us. The Lord’s first word to Abraham is that he should leave his father, his kinsfolk and the idolatrous house in which he lived and go to a land which God would show him. Away he must go—Faith must be his guide—Providence his provision and the living God his only keeper! The separate life of Abraham, in the midst of the sons of Canaan, is a type of the separated walk of the Church of God.

Again, when Israel had gone down to Egypt they were not commanded to stay there and subdue their oppressors by force of arms, or petition the legislature that they might obtain gentler usage—no, but with a high hand and an outstretched arm, the Lord brought forth His people out of Egypt! Egypt was no place for the seed of Israel. And while they wandered in the wilderness and afterwards when they settled in isolation in the midst of the promised land, God’s Word was fulfilled, “The people shall dwell alone: they shall not be numbered among the nations.”

As if to keep up the type, the Jewish people at this very period, though mingled with all the nations of the world, are as distinct as men can be. And you cannot pass by a Jew without remarking at once in his face that he is distinct and separate from all mankind. This, I say, is but a type of the Church of God—the Church of God is to be distinct and separate from all other corporations or communities! Her laws come from no human legislator! Her officers claim no royal appointment! Her endowments are not from the coffers of the State! Her subjects are a peculiar people and her spirit is not of this world!

What is meant then, dear Friends, by this “going forth without the camp”? I understand it to mean, first of all, that every Christian is to go forth by an open profession of his faith. You that love the Lord are to *say* so. You must come out and avow yourselves on His side. You may be Christians and make no profession, but I cannot be sure that you are a Believer, nor can any other man. While you make no profession, we must, to a great extent, judge you by the non-profession. And since you do not

acknowledge yourselves to be a part of Christ’s Church we are compelled to adjudge you as not a part of that Church! We cannot suppose you to be better than you profess to be for the most of men are not half so good as their professions.

Usually, as a rule, no man is as good as his religion and certainly no man is ever better than his religion. If you do not profess to be on Christ’s side—with all charity we are forced to accept your own confession of having no interest in Jesus. Come out, Christians! Your Master commands you and warns you that if you are ashamed of Him in this generation, He will be ashamed of you in the day of His Glory! He bids you acknowledge Him, for if you confess Him before men He will confess you when He comes in the Glory of His holy angels. I pray you, then, come out from among them by taking up the name of a Christian!

Why, what is there to shudder at? Are you a soldier and will you not wear your Captain’s livery? What? Do you love Christ and blush to admit it? You ought to be glad to plead guilty to the blessed impeachment. Why do you stand back? Let not fear or shame restrain you. If you are Christians there is really nothing discreditable in it. Up! Stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of God and say, “I will go with you because the Lord is with you.” This done, the Christian is to be separate from the world as to his company. He must buy and sell and trade like other men in the world, but he is not to find his bosom friends in it.

He is not to go out of society and shut himself up in a monastery—he is to be in the world, but not of it. And his choice company is not to be among the loose, the immoral, the profane! No, not even among the merely moral—his choice company is to be the saints of God. He is to select for his associates those who shall be his companions in the world to come. As birds of a feather flock together, so the birds of paradise are gregarious. Like the speckled birds they are pecked at by the common flock. As idle boys were wont to mock at foreigners in the streets, so do worldlings jeer at Christians. Therefore the Believer flies away to his own company when he wants good fellowship. The Christian must come out of the world as to his company.

I know that this rule will break many a fond connection, but be not unequally yoked with unbelievers. I know it will snap ties which are almost as dear as life, but it must be done. We must not be overruled even by our own brother when the things of God and conscience are concerned. You must follow Christ, whatever may be the enmity you excite—remembering that unless you love Christ better than husband, or father, or mother, yes and your own life also—you cannot be His disciple. If these are hard terms, turn your backs and perish in your sins! Count the cost. And if you cannot bear such a cost as this, do not undertake to be a follower of Christ!

The follower of Jesus goes without the camp as to his *pleasures*. He is not without his joys nor his recreations. But he does not seek them where the wicked find them. The mirth which cheers the worldly makes the Christian sad—the carrion which delights the crow would disgust the

dove. And so those things which are delightful and full of pleasure to unrenewed men shock and grieve the hearts of the regenerate. If you have no separation from the world as to your pleasures—since your heart is generally in your pleasures—your heart, therefore, is with the wicked and with them shall your doom be when God comes to judge mankind!

Furthermore, the true follower of Christ is divided from the world as to his *maxims*. He does not subscribe to the laws which rule most men in their families and their business. Men generally say, “Everyone for himself and God for us all.” That is not the Christian’s maxim. “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others,” is the Christian’s rule. Some men will sail very near the wind. They would not absolutely cheat, but still they use very sharp practices. They would not lie, but their puffs and recommendations are not quite the truth. The Christian scorns all this questionable dealing and in all matters keeps to the rule of uprightness.

If the Believer is true to his Master and goes outside the camp to follow Him, his actions are as clear as the noonday. His word is his bond and in his trade he would as soon think of becoming absolutely a thief as to condescend to the common tricks of trade. From my soul I loathe those men, who, under the pretense and profession of religion, use the very respectability of their position to gain credit among others that they may defraud by obtaining credit which they do not deserve! Such persons are the greatest possible disgrace to the Christian Church.

The bankruptcy courts may whitewash them but the devil has blackened them beyond all power of bankruptcy to cleanse them. Their black deceitfulness shows through! Men may escape censure when standing at the easy bar of the commissioner and get a certificate, but they will find it very difficult to get a certificate when God comes to judge them in the Last Great Day. Our laws in England really seem to me to be made on purpose that men may thieve and rob with impunity, so long as they do it under color of commerce. Well, if man’s law will not touch such men, God’s Law shall! And the Church should see that she cleanses herself as much as possible from them. If we are followers of Christ, we must go forth without this camp of discrepancy and thieving! Ours must be a downright and honest religion that will not let us swerve a hair’s breadth from the straight line of integrity and uprightness.

Once more, and here is a very difficult part of the Christian’s course—the Christian is to come out not only from the world’s pleasures and sins and irreligion—but there are times when the true followers of Christ must come out from the world’s *religion* as well as irreligion. Every nation has a religion. In the days of Abraham the little nationalities round him all had their god. In the days of Christ there was an established religion in Judea—and I suppose that out of its synagogues our Lord Jesus Christ was thrust with fury. There was an established religion with its priests and its proud Pharisaic professors—but our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ boldly proclaimed His protest against its distortions of Scripture, its want of true spirituality, its worldliness, its pomp and pride.

In His day Jesus Christ was as true a Dissenter as any of us and separated Himself and His little company from the authorized and established ecclesiastical camp. Judaism was not the religion of Abraham, neither were the Pharisees the true exponents and successors of Moses. Therefore Christ, with burning words, though full of charity and with a loving heart—but with a thundering tongue—bore an awful witness against the religion of His own age! He knew how the multitude respected it and how the great ones lived upon it, but for all this, though His life must be shed for His protest, Christ led His disciples away from the national religion to something better, nobler and more sublime. And you and I, too, Brethren, must see that we never fall in with the religion of the times because it happens to be fashionable and because the multitude follow it, or the law of the land patronizes it!

If there exists anywhere on earth a Church which teaches for doctrine the commandments of *men*, come out of her and bear your witness for the Truth of God. I see before me now a Church which tolerates evangelical truth in her communion, but at the same time lovingly embraces Puseyism and finds room for infidels and for men who deny the authenticity of Scripture. This is no time for us to talk about friendship with so corrupt a corporation. The godly in her midst are deceived if they think to mold her to a more gracious form. Her bishops will not touch the Burial Service, although four thousand clergymen petition for a little ease for their consciences.

Nor will they give up reading in God's own worship the filthy story of “Susannah and the Elders,” nor the nursery tale of “Bell and the Dragon”—though one of their priests asserts that he would quite as soon read “Jack and the Bean-stalk.” We have waited long enough—her space for repentance has been already too long! Flee out of her, all of you who love your souls! Come out from among her! Be you separate—touch not the unclean thing lest you be partakers of her plagues, for her plagues are many. Often have I read works in which the Puseyites call the Church of Rome their sister Church! Well, if it is so let the two harlots make a league together, but let good and honest men come out of both apostate churches! And those who love the Lord Jesus, whether clergy or laity, must leave them to their doom.

I know it is hard work. It calls upon many to be poor and give up their livings, but they must do it. Scotland witnessed, a few years ago, one of the noblest spectacles the world ever beheld. My heart would break with joy for England if I should live to see such a day and such a deed of heroism—but there is not spirit enough left in us. There is not Divine Grace enough left in us. I fear we have fallen upon a degenerate age.

The “land of brown heath and shaggy wood, land of the mountain and the flood,” has nurtured a noble race of brave, bold men and these could give up house and home and living for the Truth and for God's sake. But it is not so in England. No, they will sell their consciences. They will cower down and mutter a lie at the command of the State. They will bury adulterers and seducers in sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection.

They will teach a catechism which their conscience tells them is not true, for riches, for station! For the sake of the loaves and fishes, the men of God (and many of them we hope are such) will hold still to the false Church. Our protest is lifted up against her and our foot stands altogether without her camp. Come you out from among her! Be you separate! Touch her not! Have no communion with her false doctrines!

As for each of us who knows the Truth, our place is with Christ outside the camp, bearing His reproach. I am sure my text contains all this and more. And I would to God that His Church would take up her true position now and be separate in all things from anything that defiles and makes a lie.

II. But now, secondly, we have in the text, THE CHRISTIAN'S LEADER. It does not say, “Let us go forth outside the camp” merely, but, “Let us go forth therefore unto Him.” Here is the heart of the text—“unto Him.” Beloved, we might leave society—we might forsake all its conventionalities and become Nonconformists in the widest sense and yet not carry out the text—for the text is, “Let us go forth unto Him.” O Beloved, it is this point that I would urge upon you! I am no politician! I care not one whit what Church has the State-pay, or what has not. I care not for political dissent—but I do care for religiously following my Master's Word and, by His Grace, I will.

And when I read this text, “Let us go forth therefore unto Him,” I set myself to learn what the Word means. It means, first, let us have fellowship with Him. He was despised. He had no credit for charity. He was mocked in the streets. He was hissed at. He was hounded from among society. If I take a smooth part, I can have no fellowship with Him—fellowship requires a like experience. Come, then, my Soul, put on the Savior's garb—walk through the mire with Him! Off with your silver slippers—go barefoot within Christ! Be you, yourself, like the bush which burns but is not consumed. Be content that your shoulders should be raw with His rough Cross—He carried it—do not shirk the labor! Expect not to wear the crown where Christ carried the Cross, but, for fellowship's sake, follow Him.

Again, if I am to follow Him, I am to follow His example. What Christ did I am to do. I am to go forth unto Him. It is never to be a rule unto me that Mr. So-and-So did such-and-such a thing, or Mrs. So-and-So—what *Christ* did is to be my rule. Some men are for hanging on what Luther did, or what Calvin did—that is nothing to the Christian—he says, “I am to go forth unto Jesus.” Follow Jesus Christ and none but Jesus Christ and then you will be separate, indeed, from the rest of men. I am to go forth unto Him—that is, I am to go forth to His Truth. Wherever I see His Truth, I am to espouse it—wherever I see error I am to denounce it without hesitation.

I am to take His Word to be my only standard. And just where His Word leads me, there I am to go, no matter where. I may have been educated in one way but I am to bend my education to this Book. I may have conceived prejudices but they must give way before His Truth. I may know

that such-and-such a belief is profitable to me but my profit shall go for nothing in comparison with the Word of God. And then I can go forth to Christ's witness-bearing. The present age does not believe in witness-bearing but the whole Bible is full of it. The duty of every Christian is to bear witness for the Truth of God. Christ says, “For this purpose was I born and came into the world.” He who knows the Truth but lays the finger of silence on his lips, saying, “Peace, peace, when there is no peace,” is a sorry Christian!

If you have been washed in Jesus' blood and saved by His righteousness, I do implore you, take your position with Christ as witness-bearers for the Truth as it is in Jesus. My Master wants today a band of men and women who are prepared to be singular, so long as to be singular is to be right. He wants men and women of bold, unflinching, lion-like hearts who love Christ first and His Truth next—and Christ and His Truth beyond all the world! Men and women, too, whose holy lives and consistent conversation are not to be perverted by the bribes of this world and whose testimony is neither to be distorted nor silenced by frowns or by smiles.

Happy souls shall they be who dare to take their stand with Christ today! The struggles of the Covenanters of old need to be renewed at this moment. The strife of the Puritan age needs to return once more to the Church. And what if the stakes of Smithfield come again? And what if the times of persecution return to us? The good old vessel which outrode the blood-red storm, will outride it still and with all her passengers and crew safe on board, be received by the King and honored with His gracious smile!

We are to take care, however, that it is to Christ we go! Not to party, not to denomination—not to anything but Christ and His Truth! Out with denominationalism or anything else which savors not of Christ Jesus! Whether it is the Baptist Church, or the Episcopalian, or the Presbyterian Church which errs from Christ's way, it is nothing to any one of us which it may be. It is CHRIST we are to care for and Christ's Truth. And this we are to follow over all the hedges and ditches of men's making—straight away to Christ, clinging to Christ's mantle, fighting a way straight through where He Himself fought and opened the path to His Crown. Thus have we spoken of the Christian's Leader.

III. Now, in the third place, we have THE CHRISTIAN'S BURDEN. He is to bear the Lord's reproach. The reproach of Christ, in these days, takes this shape. “Oh,” they say, “the man is too precise.” “He is right. But still, Truth is not always to be *spoken*. The thing is wrong, no doubt, which he denounces, but still, the time has not come yet—we must be lenient towards these things. The man is right in what he says, but we must not be too precise nowadays. We must give and take a little—there must be charity.” God's Word, in this age, is a small affair. Some do not even believe it to be Inspired. And those who profess to revere it set up other books in a sort of rivalry with it.

Why, there are great Church dignitaries nowadays who write against the Bible and yet find bishops to defend them! “Do not, for a moment,

think of condemning their books or them. They are our dear Brethren and must not be fettered in thought.” How many days ago is it since a bishop talked in this way in convocation? Some believe in Popery. But here, again, the plea will be, “They are our dear Brethren.” Some believe in nothing at all—but they are still all safely housed in one Church, like the beasts, clean and unclean, in Noah’s ark.

Those who come out with Christ, get this reproach—they are too precise—in fact, they are “bigots.” That is how the world brings it out at last—“bigots”—a set of “bigots!” I have heard say that the word, “bigot,” took its rise from this—that a certain Protestant nobleman being commanded, in order to gain his lands, to kneel down and in some way or other commit the act of idolatry towards the host, said, when he came at last to the point, “By God, I will not!” And they called him henceforth a “By-God.” If this is the meaning of the word “bigot,” we cheerfully adopt the title! And were it right to swear, we would declare, “By Him that lives! By Heaven! We cannot speak a lie and we cannot bend our knee to the shrine of Baal, bigots or no bigots.” The Truth of God is first and our reputation next.

Then they say, “Ah, these people are behind their time. The world has made such advances. We are in the nineteenth century—you ought to know better! The discoveries of science put your narrow views out of court.” Very well, Christian, be content to be behind the times for the times are getting nearer to judgment and the last plagues. “Ah, but,” they say, “these people seem to us to be so self-righteous. They think themselves right and nobody else.” Very well, Christian, if you are right, think yourself right! And if everybody else should call you self-righteous, that does not mistake you so. The Lord knows how we cling to the Cross and as poor sinners, look up to Christ and Jesus Christ alone. Our conscience is void of offense in this matter.

“Ah,” they say, “they are not worth noticing. They are all a pack of fools.” It is very remarkable that in the judgment of their own age good men always have been fools. Fools have been they who have turned the world upside down. Luther and Calvin, Wesley and Whitfield were all fools. But somehow or other God managed, by these fools, to get to Himself a glorious victory. And then they turn round and say, “It is only the poor—only the lower orders. Have they any of the *nobility* and *gentry* with them?” Well, this reproach we can pretty well bear because it is the old standard of Christ that the poor have the Gospel preached unto them. And it has ever been a sweet reflection that many who have been poor in this world have been made rich in faith!

Brethren, you must expect, if you follow Christ, to endure reproach of some sort or another. Let me just remind you what reproach your Master had to bear. The world’s Church said of Christ, “He is a deceiver! He deceives the people.” Incarnate Truth of God and yet a deceiver! Then they said, “He stirs up the people! He promotes rebellion. He is no friend of good order. He incites anarchy! He is a mere demagogue.” That was the world’s cry against Christ and, as that was not enough, they went further

and said, “He is a blasphemer!” They put Him to death on the charge that He was a blasphemer! They whispered to one another, “Did you hear? He said such-and-such last Sunday in His sermon. What a shocking thing he did in such a place! He is a blasphemer!”

Then came the climax. They all said He had a devil and was mad. Surely they could go no further than this! But they supplemented it by saying when He cast out devils that He did it through Beelzebub, the prince of the devils! A sorry life your Master had, you see. All the filth in earth’s kennels was thrown at Him by sacrilegious hands. No epithet was thought coarse enough! No terms hard enough—He was the song of the drunkard and they that sat in the gate spoke against Him. This was the reproach of Christ. And we are not to marvel if we bear as much. “Well,” says one, “I will not be a Christian if I am to bear that.” Skulk back, then, you Coward, to your own damnation! But oh, men and women that love God and who seek after the eternal reward, I pray you do not shrink from this Cross! You must bear it!

I know you may live without it if you will fawn and cringe and keep back part of the price. But do not do this—it is unworthy of your manhood—much more is it unworthy of your Christianity! God and for Christ are so holy and so truthful that you compel the world to give its best acknowledgment of your goodness by railing at you—it can do no more, it will do no less. Be content to take this shame for there is no Heaven for you if you will not—no crown without the Cross—no jewels without the mire. You must stand in the pillory if you would sit in Glory! You must be spit upon and be treated with shame if you would receive eternal honor! And if you reject the one you reject the other.

IV. We close by noticing THE CHRISTIAN’S REASON FOR BEARING HIS REPROACH AND GOING WITHOUT THE CAMP. It is in the text, “Let us go forth therefore”—*there* is the reason. Why then? First, because Jesus did. Jesus Christ came into the world pure and holy. His life and His testimony were a witness against sin. Jesus Christ would not conform. If He would but have done so He might have been King of the Jews. But no, the most loving spirit that ever lived was also the most firm. Nobody shall say that Christ was either self-willed or harsh, or that He hated other men—nothing of the kind! Never was there such pure generosity, such overflowing affection for men as you find in Christ.

But yield the truth, yield holiness? No, never! Not a grain of it! Be silent? No, He rebukes the Pharisees. And when the lawyer pulls His coat and says, “Master, in so doing, you rebuke us,” then Jesus Christ begins, “Woe unto you lawyers!” All classes have their portion from His mouth. The Herodians come to Him. Does He for a moment yield to them? Or when the opposite party tempts does He side with them? Does He side with either the Sadducee or with the Pharisee? No, Christ’s course was ever an independent one—He committed himself unto no man—for He knew what was in man. The whole of His life through you cannot mistake Him for a Pharisee, or a Sadducee, or any one of the other teachers. He stands out like a lone mount of light, separate and apart from the chain of

dark mountains. And so must the Christian. Christ was separate. And so must you be! Christ was pure, holy, truthful. So must you be! I pray you either renounce your profession or else seek Grace to carry it out.

Moreover, the connection of the text tells us that Christ set apart His people by going outside the camp, that He might sanctify His people. He suffered outside the camp. Christ’s separation was in order that His People might be separated. The Head is not of the world and shall the members be of it? The Head is despised and rejected—shall the members be honored? “If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” The world rejects Christ—shall the world receive us? No, if we are truly one with Him, we must expect to be rejected, too. Christ’s separation is the type and symbol of the separateness of all the elect.

Again, Christ would have His people separate for their own sanctification. You cannot grow in Grace to any high degree while you are conformed to the world. The path of separation may be a path of sorrow, but it is the path of safety. And though it may cost you many pangs and make your life like a long martyrdom and every day a battle, yet it is a happy life after all. There is no such life as that which the soldier of Christ leads—for though men frown upon him—Christ so sweetly smiles upon him that he cares for no man! Christ reveals Himself as a sweet refreshment to the warrior after the battle and so blessed is the vision that the warrior feels more calm and peace in the day of strife than in his hours of rest.

Believe me, the highway of holiness is the highway of communion! A blot on your conscience will certainly separate Christ from you as to communion. Be pure, be clear, be chaste as before the Lord and you may walk as on the mountaintops—having Christ for your Companion—enjoying *with* Him a Heaven on earth! The Covenanters and martyrs tell us in their diaries that they were never so happy as when they were in the dungeon alone with Christ for company! Their best days were often their days of burning—they called them their wedding days and went to Heaven singing and chanting the triumphal Psalm as they mounted in their chariots of fire!

Let us close with this last thought and reason. Thus we shall hope to win the crown if we are enabled, by Divine Grace, faithfully to follow Christ in all respects. Oh, the crown! The crown! The crown! Come, let me hold it up to you! Is not this a treasure? Eternal life! Likeness to Christ! Sitting at His right hand! Do you not hear them—the harps of angels—the songs of the redeemed? Do you not hear them, I say, as in one perpetual Psalm of joyfulness they salute the Lord their God with thanksgiving?

It is but a flea-bite here—and then an *eternity* of bliss! A moment’s shame and then an *eternal* honor! A little while of witness-bearing, a little while of suffering, a little while to be rebuked and then “forever with the Lord!” This reward is so great that it transcends the light affliction which is but for a moment. I will not put so little shame in contrast with it all. Why, in this age we suffer *nothing*—a few hard words, a jeer, a sneer—now and then a friend who leaves us because we speak the Truth. But what is that? O Brethren, we are denied the honor of those favored saints who

died for Jesus! Our weak spirits love these softer times! The *real* days of honor were the days of *persecution*. The times when saints won brightest crowns were when they suffered most.

I fear the Church of Christ is growing sleepy. Men of God have lost muscle and nerve. Our fathers died for half a Truth and we will not bear rebuke for a whole one. Two women were tied to the stake at Wigton and drowned in the rising tide—do you know what for? Simply because they would not say, “God save the king.” You say, “What does that matter?” Well, it was comparatively a theological trifle. They held a certain theory concerning the bearing of the Headship of Christ upon the political position of the king. Because they thought the thing was wrong—though I, for my part, would say, “God save the king” a thousand times—yet they would not say it once and died in constancy to their belief.

The two women were actually tied to stakes by the seaside. The tide came up and when the elder woman of the two was drowned they asked the younger whether she would say it now. But no, she would not. She believed it to be a Truth concerning Christ and His kingdom. And though it only touched one of the smallest jewels of His crown, yet she would not do it and therefore the gurgling waters came up to her chin and at last rolled over one who had faithfully borne witness to a portion of Truth which seems very trifling to us nowadays, but which to her seemed to be worth dying for!

Nowadays, I say, we would not die for the whole Bible though in other ages saints would have died for the dot of an i, or the cross of a t. We turn tail and are frightened because somebody has said a hard thing to us for defending the Truth which concerns Jesus and has the salvation of man wrapped in it. I say *we* will not fight for the *great* and *they* would fight for the *little*. O may God restore to us, dear Friends, more Grace, more piety, more love for souls, more care for the kingdom of Christ—a sterner prizing of the Truth of God and a determination solemnly avowed before the Lord of hosts, that come what may, we will contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints!

We stand upon the Rock of Ages confident that God will defend the right and that right in the end shall come off victorious! God give you Grace—especially you members of my charge—to, from this day, more than ever you have done, take your place outside the camp and cheerfully and joyfully to bear Christ’s reproach! Some of you cannot do this. You cannot bear His reproach. You cannot go outside the camp for you have no vital faith—you have not believed in Jesus. O Sinner, you are not to *carry* Christ’s Cross first—but *look* to that Cross for salvation! And when He has saved you, as He will if you trust in Him, then take up your cross and carry it and praise the name of God from this time forth, even forever!

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A LIFE-LONG OCCUPATION

NO. 2048

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 14, 1888,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.”
Hebrews 13:15.***

IT is instructive to notice where this verse stands. The connection is a golden setting to the gem of the text. Here we have a description of the Believer's position before God. He has done with all carnal ordinances and has no interest in the ceremonies of the Mosaic Law. Brethren, as Believers in Jesus, who is the substance of all the outward types, we have, henceforth, nothing to do with altars of gold or of stone—our worship is spiritual and our altar spiritual—

***“We rear no altar, Christ has died;
We deck no priestly shrine.”***

What then? Are we to offer no sacrifice? Very far from it. We are called upon to offer to God a continual sacrifice. Instead of presenting in the morning and the evening a sacrifice of lambs and on certain holy days bringing bullocks and sheep to be slain, we are to present to God continually the sacrifice of praise. Having done with the outward, we now give ourselves entirely to the inward and to the spiritual. Do you see your calling, Brethren?

Moreover, the Believer is now, if he is where he ought to be, like his Master, “without the camp.” “Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.” What then? If we are without the camp, have we nothing to do? Are we cut off from God as well as from men? Shall we fume and fret because we are not of the world? On the contrary, let us the more ardently pursue higher objects and yield up our disentangled spirits to the praise and glory of God.

Do we come under contempt, as the Master did? Is it so, that we are “bearing His reproach”? Shall we sit down in despair? Shall we be crushed beneath this burden? No, verily—while we lose honor ourselves, we will ascribe honor to our God. We will count it all joy that we are counted worthy to be reproached for Christ's sake. Let us now praise God continually. Let the fruit of our lips be a still bolder confession of His name. Let us more and more earnestly make known His Glory and His Grace. If reproach is bitter, praise is sweet—we will drown the drops of gall in a sea of honey.

If to have our name cast out as evil should seem to be derogatory to us, let us all the more see to it that we give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name. While the enemy reproaches us continually, our only reply shall be to offer the sacrifice of praise continually unto the Lord our God.

Moreover, the Apostle says that, "Here we have no continuing city." Well, then, we will transfer the continuance from the city to the praise—"Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually." If everything here is going, let it go. But we will not cease to sing. If the end of all things is at hand, let them end. But our praises of the living God shall abide world without end.

Set free from all the hamper of citizenship here below, we will begin the employment of citizens of Heaven. It is not ours to arrange a new Socialism, nor to set up to be dividers of heritages. We belong to a kingdom which is not of this world, a city of God eternal in the heavens. It is not ours to pursue the dreams of politicians but to offer the sacrifices of God-ordained priests. As we are not of this world, it is ours to seek the world to come and press forward to the place where the saints in Christ shall reign forever and ever.

You see then, Brethren, that the text is rather an unexpected one in its connection. But when properly viewed, it is the fittest that could be. The more we are made to feel that we are strangers in a strange land, the more should we addict ourselves to the praises of God, with whom we sojourn. Crucified to the world and the world crucified to us, let us spend and be spent in the praises of Him who is our sole trust and joy. Oh, to praise God, and still to praise Him—and never to be taken off from praising Him—let the world do what it may!

This morning my great business will be to stir you up, dear Friends, as many of you as have been made kings and priests unto God by Jesus Christ, to exercise your holy office. I shall, to that end, first, concerning the Christian, describe his sacrifice. Secondly, examine its substance. Thirdly, commend its exercise. And fourthly, commence it at once.

I. First, then, concerning a Believer, let me DESCRIBE HIS SACRIFICE. "By Him, therefore," See, at the very threshold of all offering of sacrifice to God, we begin with Christ. We cannot go a step without Jesus. Without a Mediator we can make no advance to God. Apart from Christ there is no acceptable prayer, no pleasing sacrifice of any sort. "By Him, therefore"—we cannot move a lip acceptably without Him who suffered without the gate. The great High Priest of our profession meets us at the sanctuary door and we place all our sacrifices into His hands, that He may present them for us.

You do not wish it to be otherwise, I am quite sure. If you could do anything without Him, you would feel afraid to do it. You only feel safe when He is with you and you are "accepted in the Beloved." Be thankful that at the beginning of your holy service your eyes are turned towards your Lord. You are to offer continual sacrifice, looking unto Jesus. Behold our great Melchizedek meets us! Let us give Him tithes of all and receive His blessing which will repay us a thousand-fold. Let us never venture upon a sacrifice apart from Him, lest it be the sacrifice of Cain, or the sacrifice of fools. He is that Altar which sanctifies both gift and giver—by Him, therefore, let our sacrifices both of praise and of almsgiving be presented unto God.

Next, observe that this sacrifice is to be presented continually. “By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually.” Attentively treasure up that word. It will not do for you to say, “We have been exhorted to praise God on the Sabbath.” No, I have not exhorted you to such occasional duty. “Continually,” says the text and that means seven days in a week. I would not have you say, “He means that we are to praise God in the morning when we awake and in the evening before we fall asleep.”

Do that, my Brethren, unflinchingly. But that is not what I have to set before you. “Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually”—“continually”—that is to say, without ceasing. Let us make an analogous precept to that which says, “pray without ceasing,” and say, “praise without ceasing.” Not only in this place or that place but in every place, we are to praise the Lord our God. Not only when we are in a happy frame of mind but when we are cast down and troubled. The perfumed smoke from the altar of incense is to rise towards Heaven both day and night, from the beginning of the year to the year’s end.

Not only when we are in the assembly of the saints are we to praise God, but when we are called to pass through Vanity Fair, where sinners congregate. Bless the Lord at all times. Not alone in your secret chamber, which is aromatic with the perfume of your communion with God. But yonder in the field and there in the street. Yes, and in the hurry and noise of the Exchange, offer the sacrifice of praise to God. You cannot always be speaking His praise but you can always be living His praise. The heart once set on praising God will, like the stream which leaps down the mountain’s side, continue still to flow in its chosen course.

A soul saturated with Divine gratitude will continue, almost unconsciously, to give forth the sacred odor of praise which will permeate the atmosphere of every place and make itself known to all who have a spiritual nostril with which to discern sweetness. There is no moment in which it would be right to suspend the praises of God—let us, therefore, offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually. This should be done, not only by some of us—pastor, elders, deacons and special workers—but by *all* of you.

The Apostle says, “Let us.” And therein he calls upon all of us who have any participation in the great sacrifice of Christ to go with Him without the camp, and then and there to stand with Him in our places and continually offer the sacrifice of praise unto God. You see, then, that the two important points are—*always* and *always through Christ*.

The Apostle goes on to tell us what the sacrifice is—the sacrifice of praise. Praise, that is, heart-worship, or adoration. Adoration is the grandest form of earthly service. We ascribe unto Jehovah, the one living and true God, all honor and glory. When we see His works, when we hear His Word, when we taste His Grace, when we mark His Providence, when we think upon His name, our spirit bows in the humblest reverence before Him and magnifies Him as the all-glorious Lord. Let us abide continually in the spirit of adoration, for this is praise in its purest form.

Praise is heart-trust and heart-content with God. Trust is adoration applied to practical purposes. Let us go into the world trusting God, believing that He orders all things well, resolving to do everything as He commands, for neither His Character, nor His decrees, nor His Commandments are grievous to us. We delight in the Lord as He is pleased to reveal Himself, let that Revelation be what it may. We believe not only that God is but that He is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek Him—let us so praise Him that we shall not be baffled if our good work brings us no immediate recompense. Let us praise Him for we are satisfied that He is not unrighteous to forget our work of faith.

Let us praise Him by being perfectly satisfied with anything and everything that He does or appoints. Let us take a hallowed delight in Him and in all that concerns Him. Let Him be to us “God, our exceeding joy.” Do you know what it is to delight yourselves in God? Then, in that continual satisfaction, offer Him continual praise. Life is no longer sorrowful, even amid sorrow, when God is in it, its soul and crown. It is worth while to live the most afflicted and tried life, so long as we know God and taste His love. Let Him do what seems Him good, so long as He will but be a God to us and permit us to call Him our Father and our God.

Praise is heart-enjoyment. The indulgence of gratitude and wonder. The Lord has done so much for me that I must praise Him, or feel as if I had a fire shut up within me. I may speak for many of you, for you also are saying, “He has done great things for us.” Brethren, the Lord has favored you greatly—before the earth was, He chose you and entered into Covenant with you—He gave you to His Son and gave His Son to you. He has manifested Himself to you as He does not to the world. Even now He breathes a child-like spirit into you, whereby you cry, “Abba, Father.”

Surely you must praise Him! How can you ever satisfy the cravings of your heart if you do not extol Him? Your obligations rise above you as high as the heavens above the earth. The vessel of your soul has foundered in this sea of love and gone down fifty fathoms deep in it. High over its masthead the main ocean of eternal mercy is rolling with its immeasurable billows of Divine Grace. You are swallowed up in the fathomless abyss of infinite love. You are absorbed in adoring wonder and affection. Like Leah when Judah was born, you cry, “Now will I praise the Lord.”

Have you not, in addition to this, the praise of heart-feeling, while within you burns an intense love to God? Could you love anyone as you love God? After you have poured out the stream of your love upon the dearest earthly ones, do you not feel you have something more within which all created vessels could not contain? The heart of man yields love without stint and the stream is too large for the lake into which it flows so long as we love a created being. Only the infinite God can ever contain all the love of a loving heart. There is a fitness for the heart and a fullness for its emotions when Jehovah is the heart’s one object of love.

My God, I love You! You know all things—You know that I love You. Instead of quibbling at the Lord because of certain stern truths which we read concerning Him, we are enabled in these to worship Him by bowing

our reason to His Revelation. That which we cannot understand we nevertheless believe and believing, we adore. It is not ours to arraign the Almighty but to submit to Him. We are not His censors but His servants. We do not legislate but love. He is good, supremely good in our esteem—and infinitely blessed of our hearts. We do not consider what He ought to be. But we learn what He is and as such we love and adore Him. Thus have I gone roundabout the shell of praise. But what it really is you must each one know for himself.

The text evidently deals with spoken praise—“Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.” Or, as the Revised Version has it, “the fruit of lips which make confession to His name.” So, then, we are to utter the praises of God and it is not sufficient to feel adoring emotions. The priesthood of Believers requires them to praise God with their lips. Should we not sing a great deal more than we do? Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs should abound in our homes. It is our duty to sing as much as possible. We should praise as much as we pray.

“I have no voice!” says one. Cultivate it till you have. “But mine is a cracked voice!” Ah, well, it may be cracked to human ears, and yet be melodious unto God. To Him the music lies in the heart, not in the sound. Praise the Lord with song and Psalm. Some few godly men whom I have known have gone about the fields and along the roads humming sacred songs continually. These are the troubadours and minstrels of our King. Happy profession! May more of us become such birds of Paradise! Hear how the ungodly world pours out its mirth! Oftentimes their song is so silly as to be utterly devoid of meaning. Are they not ashamed? Then let us not be ashamed. Children of God, sing the songs of Zion and let your hearts be joyful before your King. “Is any merry? Let him sing Psalms.”

But if we cannot sing so well or so constantly as we would desire, let us talk. We cannot say that we cannot talk. Perhaps some might be better if they could not talk quite so much. As we can certainly talk continually, let us as continually offer to God the sacrifice of praise by speaking well of His name. Talk of all His wondrous works. Let us abundantly utter the memory of His great goodness. Let us praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men. Many whom you judge to be irreligious would be greatly interested if you were to relate to them the story of God’s love to you.

But if they are not interested, you are not responsible for that—only tell it as often as you have opportunity. We charge you, as Jesus did the healed man, “Go home to your friends and tell them how great things the Lord has done for you.” Speak, and speak, and speak again, for the instruction of others—for the confirmation of those who have faith and for the routing of the doubts of those who believe not. Tell what God has done for you. Does not our conversation want more flavoring with the praise of God? We put into it too much vinegar of complaint and forget the sugar of gratitude.

This year, when the harvest seems to have been snatched from between the jaws of the destroyer, our friends say, "Well, things look a shade better." And I am glad to get them up even as high as that. Hear the general talk—"Things are very bad. Business is dreadful. Trade never was so bad." When I was a boy things were very bad, never were so bad. And I think ever since they have been so bad that they could not be worse and yet somehow people live and even farmers are not all turned to skin and bone. Surely, surely, we had better mend our talk and speak more brightly and cheerily of what God does for us!

How can we offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually if we perpetually rail at His Providence? Christian men, if you are ever driven to a murmur, let it be the momentary mistake of your extremity. But come back again to contentment and gratitude which is your proper and acceptable condition. Hear the word of the Lord, which says, "Neither murmur you, as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer." Praise means this—that you and I are appointed to tell of the goodness of God just as the birds of spring wake up before the sun and begin singing and singing and singing, all of them, with all their might.

Become the choristers of God. Praise the Lord evermore, even as they do who with songs and choral symphonies, day without night, circle His Throne rejoicing. This is your office and it is a holy and a privileged one.

"Well," says one, "I cannot force myself to praise." I do not want you to force yourself to it—this praise is to be natural. It is called the fruit of the lips. In the Book of Hosea, from which the Apostle quotes, our version reads, "The calves of our lips." Whether the word is "calves" in the Hebrew original or not, is a matter in dispute. But the translators of the Septuagint certainly read it "fruit," and this seems more clear and plain. The Apostle, quoting it from the Greek translation, has endorsed it as being correct. These lips of ours must produce fruit. Our words are leaves—how soon they wither!

The praise of God is the fruit which can be stored up and presented to the Lord. Fruit is a natural product—it grows without force—the free outcome of the plant. So let praise grow out of your lips at its own sweet will. Let it be as natural to you, as regenerated men and women, to praise God as it seems to be natural to profane men to blaspheme the sacred name of Jesus Christ.

This praise is to be sincere and real. The next verse tells us we are to do good and communicate and joins this with praise to God. Many will give God a waterfall of words but scarce a drop of true gratitude in the form of substance consecrated. When I am pressed with many cares about the Lord's work I often wish that some of my Brethren would be a little more mindful of its pecuniary needs. I should be much relieved, if those who can spare it, would help different portions of our home service. It should be the joy of a Christian to use his substance in his Master's service. When we are in a right state of heart we do not want anybody to call upon us to extract a subscription from us but we go and ask, "Is there anything that needs help?"

Is any part of the Lord's business in need just now? The great works, such as the Orphanage and College, are provided for. But I often sigh as I see lesser agencies left without help, not because friends would not aid if they were pressed to do so, but because there is not a ready mind to look out for opportunities. Yet that ready mind is the very fat of the sacrifice. I long to see everywhere Christian friends who will not need to be asked, but will make the Lord's business their business, and take in hand some branch of work in the Church, or among the poor, or for the spread of the Gospel.

Brothers and Sisters, let your gift be an outburst of a free and gracious spirit which takes delight in showing that it does not praise God in word only but in deed and in truth. In this Church let us excel in generous gifts. As the year ripens to its close, see that everything is provided in the house of the Lord and that there is no lack in any quarter. This practical praising of the Lord is the life-office of every true Believer. See you to it.

II. We will, secondly, for a few minutes EXAMINE THE SUBSTANCE OF THIS SACRIFICE. "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually." To praise God continually will need a childlike faith in Him. You must believe His Word, or you will not praise His name. Doubt snaps the harp-strings. Question mars all melody. Trust Him, lean on Him, enjoy Him—you will never praise Him otherwise. Unbelief is the deadly enemy of praise. Faith must lead you into personal communion with the Lord. It is to Him that the praise is offered and not to our fellow men.

The most beautiful singing in the world, if it is intended for the ears of musical critics, is worth nothing. Only that is praise which is meant for God. O my Lord, my song shall find You! Every part of my being shall have its attribute to sing. I will sing unto the Lord, and unto the Lord, alone. You must live in fellowship with God, or you cannot praise Him. You must have also an overflowing content, a real joy in Him. Dear Brothers and Sisters, be sure that you do not lose your joy. If you ever lose the joy of religion, you will lose the *power* of religion.

Do not be satisfied to be a miserable Believer. An unhappy Believer is a poor creature. And he who is resigned to being so, is in a dangerous condition. Depend upon it, greater importance attaches to holy happiness than most people think. As you are happy in the Lord you will be able to praise His name. Rejoice in the Lord, that you may praise Him.

There must also be a holy earnestness about this. Praise is called a sacrifice because it is a very sacred and solemn thing. People who came to the altar with their victims came there with the hush of reverence, the trembling of awe. We cannot praise God with levity. He is in Heaven and we are upon the earth—He is thrice holy and we are sinful—we must put off our shoes in lowly reverence and worship with intense adoration or else He cannot be pleased with our sacrifices. When life is real, life is earnest—and it must be both real and earnest when it is spent to the praise of the great and ever-blessed God.

To praise God continually, you need to cultivate perpetual gratitude, and surely it cannot be hard to do that! Remember, every misery averted

is a mercy bestowed. Every sin forgiven is a favor granted. Every duty performed is also a grace received. The people of God have an inexhaustible treasury of good things provided for them by the infinite God and for all this they should praise Him. I pray you, be not only a little grateful but overflow with it. Let your praises be like the fountains of waters which are abundantly supplied. Let the stream leap up to Heaven in bursts of enthusiasm. Let it fall to earth again in showers of beneficence. Let it fill the basin of your daily life and run over into the lives of others and from there again in a waterfall of glittering joy, let it still descend.

In order for this kind of praise you will need a deep and ardent admiration of the Lord God. Admire the Father—think much of His love—acquaint yourself with His perfections. Admire the Son of God, the altogether lovely One. And as you mark His gentleness, self-denial, love and Grace, suffer your heart to be wholly enamored of Him. Admire the patience and condescension of the Holy Spirit, that He should visit you and dwell in you and bear with you. It cannot be difficult to the sanctified and instructed heart to be filled with a great admiration of the Lord God.

This is the raw material of praise. An intelligent admiration of God, kindled into flame by gratitude and fanned by delight and joy, must ever produce praise. Living in personal converse with God and trusting Him as a child trusts its father, it cannot be difficult for the soul continually to offer the sacrifice of praise to God through Jesus Christ.

III. I have been very brief upon that point because I want, in the third place, to COMMEND THIS BLESSED EXERCISE.

“Offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually,” because in so doing you will answer the end of your being. Every creature is happiest when it is doing what it is made for. A bird that is made to fly abroad pines in a cage. An eagle would die in the water, even as a fish that is made to swim perishes on the river’s bank. Christians are made to glorify God. And we are never in our element till we are praising Him. The happiest moments you have ever spent were those in which you lost sight of everything inferior and bowed before Jehovah’s throne of light with reverent joy and blissful praise.

I can say it is so with me and I doubt not it is so with you. When your whole soul is full of praise you have at last reached the end that your heart is aiming at. Your ship is now in full sail—your car is on the tram-lines. Your life moves smoothly and safely on. This is the groove along which it was made to slide. Before, you were trying to do what you were not made to do. But now you are at home. For the praise of God your new nature was fashioned and it finds rest therein. Keep to this work. Do not degrade yourself by a less Divine employment.

Praise God again, because it is His due. Should Jehovah not be praised? Praise is the rent which He asks of us for the enjoyment of all things—shall we be slow to pay? Will a man rob God? When it is such a happy work to give Him His due, shall we deny it? It blesses us to bless the Lord. Shall we limit God in the measure of His Glory? He does not limit us in His goodness. Come, my Brother, my Sister, if you have be-

come sorrowful of late, shake off your gloom and awake all your instruments of music to praise the Lord! Let not murmuring and complaining be so much as mentioned among saints. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name. Shall not the Lord be praised? Surely the very stones and rocks must break their everlasting silence in indignation if the children of God do not praise His name.

Praise Him, dear Brethren, continually, for it will help you in everything else. A man full of praise is ready for all other holy exercises. Such is my bodily pain and weakness that I could not have forced myself to preach this morning if I had not felt that I must come here to bid you praise God. I thought that my pain might give emphasis to my words. I do praise the Lord—I must praise Him. It is a duty which I hope to perform in my last moments, the Holy Spirit helping me. So you see praise helps me to preach. Whenever you go forth to any service, even though it be not better than taking down the shutters and waiting behind the counter, you will do it all the better for being in the spirit of praise and gratitude.

If you are a domestic servant and can praise God continually, you will be a comfort in the house. And if you are a master and are surrounded with the troubles of life—if your heart is always blessing the Lord, you will keep up your spirits and you will not be sharp and ill-tempered with those around you. Come, Brethren, this is both food and medicine—this praising the Lord. You birds of Heaven, strange to say, this singing will plume your wings for flight! The praises of God put wings upon pilgrims' heels, so that they not only run but fly.

This will preserve us from many evils. When the heart is full of the praise of God it has not time to find fault and grow proudly angry with its fellows. Somebody has said a very nasty thing about us. Well, well. We will answer him when we have got through the work we have in hand, namely, praising God continually. At present we have a great work to do and cannot come down to wrangle. Self-love and its natural irritations die in the blaze of praise. If you praise God continually, the vexations and troubles of life will be cheerfully borne. Praise makes the happy man the strong man. The joy of the Lord is your strength.

Praising God makes us to drink of the brook by the way and lift up the head. We cannot fear while we can praise. Neither can we be bribed by the world's favor, nor cowed by its frown. Praise makes men, yes, angels of us—let us abound in it. Brethren, let us praise God because it will be a means of usefulness. I believe that a life spent in God's praise would in itself be a missionary life. That matronly sister who never delivered a sermon, nor even a lecture in all her days, has lived a quiet, happy, useful, loving life—and her family has learned from her to trust the Lord.

Even when she shall have passed away, they will feel her influence, for she was the angel of the house. Being dead, she yet will speak. A praiseful heart is eloquent for God. Mere verbiage—what is it but as autumn leaves—which will be consumed in smothering smoke? But praise is golden fruit to be presented in baskets of silver unto the dresser of the vineyard.

Praise God, Brethren, because this is what God loves. Notice how the next verse puts it—“With such sacrifices God is well pleased.” Would we not do anything and everything to please God? It seems too good to be true that we can impart any pleasure to the ever-blessed One. Yet it is so, for He has declared that He is well pleased with the praises and the gifts of His children. Therefore let us withhold nothing from our dear Father, our blessed God. Can I please Him? Tell me what it is, I will do it straight away. I will not deliberate but without reserve make haste. If I deliberate, it shall be that I may make the service twice as large, or perform it in more careful style. For if I may praise Him, it shall be an honor, yes, it shall be Heaven to me.

To close this commendation, remember that this will fit you for Heaven. Our hymn expresses a frequent aspiration—“I would begin the music here and so my soul should rise.” You can begin the music here—begin the hallelujahs of glory by praising God here below. Think of how you will praise Him when you see His face and never, never sin. Exceedingly magnify the Lord even now and rehearse the music of the skies. In Glory you may rise to a higher key but let the song be the same even here. Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him more and more! Rise on rounds of praise up the ladder of His Glory till you reach the top and are with Him to praise Him better than ever before.

Oh, that our lives may not be broken but may be all of one piece—one Psalm, forever rising, verse by verse, into the eternal hallelujahs!

IV. I have brought you thus far and so I come to the closing point, which is, LET US COMMENCE AT ONCE. What does the text say? It says, “Let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually.” The Apostle does not say, “By-and-by get to this work, when you are able to give up business and have retired to the country, or when you are near to die.” But now, at once, he says, “Let us offer the sacrifice of praise.”

Listen! Who is speaking? Whose voice do I hear? Ah, I know, it is the Apostle Paul. He says, “Let us offer the sacrifice of praise”! Where are you, Paul? His voice sounds from within a low place. I believe he is shut up in a dungeon. Lift up your hand, O venerable Paul! I can hear the clanking of a chain. Yes, Paul cries, “Let us offer the sacrifice of praise. I, Paul the aged, in prison in Rome, wish you to join with me in a sacrifice of praise to God.” Amen. We will do so.

O Paul, we are not in prison and we are not all aged and none of us are galled with chains on our wrists. But we can join heartily with you in praising God this morning. And we do so. Come, let us praise God—

***“Stand up and bless the Lord,
You people of His choice;
Stand up and bless the Lord your God,
With heart and soul and voice.”***

You have heard Paul’s voice, now hear mine. Join with me and let us offer the sacrifice of praise. Brothers and Sisters, we have known each other for many a year and we have worked together in different ways for the Lord. As a Church and people we have received great favors from the

Lord's hand. Come, let us join together with heart and hand to bless the name of the Lord and worship joyfully before Him. With words and with gifts let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually. If I were to select certain of the members and call upon them one by one, I should say, "Come, Brother So-and-So, let us offer the sacrifice of praise." I am sure that the Brother would get up and unite with me very cordially, as in a brotherly duet we praised the Lord our God.

I will not at this present call upon any of you—but if I did say, "Sister So-and-So, let us offer praise to God," many of you would reply, "Ah, Pastor! if nobody else can praise Him, we can and we will." Well, well, kindly take it as done, so far as the outward expression is concerned. But inwardly let us at once offer the sacrifice of praise to God by Jesus Christ. Let us stir one another up to praise. Let us spend today and tomorrow and all the rest of our days in praising God. If we catch one another a little grumbling, or coldly silent, let us, in kindness to each other, give the needful rebuke.

Grumbling and silence will not do. We must praise the Lord. Just as the leader of an orchestra taps his baton to call all to attention and then to begin singing, so I this morning beseech you and bestir you to offer the sacrifice of praise unto the Lord.

The Apostle has put us rather in a fix—he compels us to offer sacrifice. Did you notice what he said in the tenth verse? He says, "We have an altar." It is not a material altar but a spiritual one. Yet "we have an altar." May the priests of the old Law offer sacrifice on it? Answer—"Whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle." They ate of the sacrifices laid on the altars of the old Law but they have no right here. Those who keep to ritualistic performances and outward ceremonials have no right here. Yet we have an altar.

Brothers and Sisters, can we imagine that this altar is given us of the Lord to be never used? Is no sacrifice to be presented on the best of altars? We have an altar—what then? If we have an altar, do not allow it to be neglected, deserted, unused. It is not for spiders to spin their webs upon. It is not meet that it should be smothered with the dust of neglect. "We have an altar." What then? "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually." Do you not see the force of the argument. Practically obey it.

Beside the altar we have a High Priest. There is the Lord Jesus Christ, dressed in His robes of glory and beauty, standing within the veil at this moment, ready to present our offerings. Shall He stand there and have nothing to do? What would you think of our great High Priest waiting at the altar, with nothing to present which His redeemed had brought to God? No, "by Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually." Bring here abundantly, you people of God, your praises, your prayers, your thank offerings and present them to the Ever-blessed!

Well may you do so if you will read the connection. For the passage brings before you many things which should compel you to praise God. Behold your Savior in His passion, offered without the gate! Gaze upon His five bleeding wounds, His sacred head so wounded, His face so full of

anguish, His heart bursting with the agony of sin! Can you see that sight and not praise God? Behold redemption accomplished, sin pardoned, salvation purchased, Hell vanquished, death abolished and all this achieved by your blessed Lord and Master! Can you see all this and not praise Him? His precious blood falling on you and making you clean, bringing you near to God, making you acceptable before the infinite holiness of the Most High! Can you see yourself thus favored and behold the precious blood which did it and not praise His name?

Yonder in the distance, seen dimly, perhaps, but yet not doubtfully, behold “a city that has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.” White-robed, the purified are singing with their golden harps and you will soon be there. When a few more days or years are passed, you will be among the glorified. A crown and a harp are reserved for you. Will you not begin to praise God and glorify Him for the Heaven which is in store for you? With these two sights so wonderfully contrasted—the Passion and the Paradise—Jesus in His humiliation and Jesus in His Glory, and yourself a sharer in both these wondrous scenes—surely if you do not begin to offer the perpetual sacrifice of thanksgivings and praise unto God you must be something harder than stone. God grant us to commence this day those praises which shall never be suspended throughout eternity!

Oh, that you who have never praised God before, would begin now! Alas, some of you have no Christ to praise and no Savior to bless. Yet you need not so abide. By faith you may lay hold upon Jesus and He then becomes yours. Trust Him and He will justify your trust. Rest in the Lord and the Lord is your rest. When you have trusted, then waste no time but at once commence the business for which you were created and redeemed and called. Fill the censer with the sweet spices of gratitude and love, and lay on the burning coals of earnestness and fervency.

Then, when praise begins to rise from you like pillars of smoke, swing the censer to and fro in the presence of the Most High, and more and more laud, bless and magnify the Lord that lives forever. Let your heart dance at the sound of His name and let your lips show forth His salvation. The Lord anoint you this day to the priesthood of praise, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

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THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT NO. 277

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, OCTOBER 2, 1859,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

*“The blood of the Everlasting Covenant.”
Hebrews 13:20.*

ALL God’s dealings with men have had a covenant character. It has so pleased Him to arrange it, that He will not deal with us except through a covenant, nor can we deal with Him except in the same manner. Adam in the garden was under a covenant with God and God was in covenant with him. That covenant Adam speedily broke. There is a covenant still existing in all its terrible power—terrible I say, because it has been broken on man’s part and therefore God will most surely fulfill its solemn threats and sanctions. That is the Covenant of Works. By this He dealt with Moses and in this does He deal with the whole race of men as represented in the first Adam.

Afterwards when God would deal with Noah, it was by a covenant, And when in succeeding ages He dealt with Abraham, He was still pleased to bind himself to him by a covenant. That covenant He preserved and kept and it was renewed continually to many of his seed. God dealt not even with David, the man after His own heart, except with a covenant. He made a covenant with His anointed. And, Beloved, He deals with you and me this day still by covenant. When He shall come in all His terrors to condemn, He shall smite by covenant—namely, by the sword of the covenant of Sinai—and if He comes in the splendors of His grace to save, He still comes to us by covenant—namely, the Covenant of Zion. The covenant which He has made with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head and representative of His people.

And mark, whenever we come into close and intimate dealings with God, it is sure to be, on our part, also by covenant. We make with God, after conversion, a covenant of gratitude. We come to Him sensible of what He has done for us and we devote ourselves to Him. We set our seal to that covenant when in Baptism we are united with His Church. And day by day, so often as we come around the table of the breaking of the bread, we renew the vow of our covenant and thus we have personal communion with God. I cannot pray to Him except through the Covenant of Grace. And I know that I am not His child unless I am His, first, through the covenant whereby Christ purchased me and secondly, through the covenant by which I have given up myself and dedicated all that I am and all that I have to Him.

It is important, then, since the covenant is the only ladder which reaches from earth to Heaven—since it is the only way in which God has communion with us and by which we can deal with Him, that we should know how to discriminate between covenant and covenant. We should not be in any darkness or error with regard to what is the Covenant of Grace and what is not. It shall be our endeavor, this morning, to make as simple and as plain as possible, the matter of the covenant spoken of in our text and I shall thus speak—first upon the Covenant of Grace. Secondly, its everlasting character. And thirdly, the relationship which the blood bears to it. “The blood of the Everlasting Covenant.”

I. First of all, then, I have to speak this morning of THE COVENANT mentioned in the text. And I observe that we can readily discover at first sight what the covenant is *not*. We see at once that this is not the Covenant of Works, for the simple reason that this is the Everlasting Covenant. Now the Covenant of Works was not everlasting in any sense whatever. It was not eternal. It was first made in the garden of Eden. It had a beginning, it has been broken. It will be violated continually and will soon be wound up and pass away—therefore, it is not everlasting in any sense. The Covenant of Works cannot bear an everlasting title. But as the one in my text is the Everlasting Covenant, therefore it is not a Covenant of Works. God made a covenant first of all with the human race, which ran in this wise—“If you, O man, will be obedient, you shall live and be happy, but if you will be disobedient, you shall perish. In the day that you disobey Me you shall die. That covenant was made with all of us in the person of our representative, the first Adam.

If Adam had kept that covenant, we believe we should everyone of us have been preserved. But inasmuch as he broke the covenant, you and I—all of us—fell down and were considered henceforth as the heirs of wrath, as inheritors of sin as prone to every evil and subject to every misery. That covenant has passed away with regard to God’s people. It has been put away through the new and better covenant which has utterly and entirely eclipsed it by its gracious glory.

Again—I may remark that the covenant here meant is not the covenant of gratitude which is made between the loving child of God and his Savior. Such a covenant is very right and proper. I trust all of us who know the Savior have said in our very hearts—

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

We have given up everything to Him. But that covenant is not the one in the text, for the simple reason that the covenant in our text is an *everlasting* one. Now ours was only written out some few years ago. It would have been despised by us in the earlier parts of our life and cannot at the very utmost be so old as ourselves.

Having thus readily shown what this covenant is *not*, let us now observe what this covenant is. And here it will be necessary for me to subdivide this head again and to speak of it thus—to understand a covenant, you must know who are the contracting parties. Secondly, what are the

stipulations of the contract. Thirdly, what are the objects of it. And then, if you would go still deeper, you must understand something of the motives which lead the contracting parties to form the covenant between themselves.

1. Now, in this Covenant of Grace, or the Everlasting Covenant, we must first of all observe the high contracting parties between whom it was made. The Covenant of Grace was made *before* the foundation of the world between God the Father and God the Son. Or to put it in a yet more Scriptural light, it was made mutually between the three Divine Persons of the adorable Trinity. This covenant was not made mutually between God and man. Man did not at that time exist. But Christ stood in the covenant as man's representative. In that sense we will allow that it was a covenant between God and man, but not a covenant between God and any man personally and individually.

It was a covenant between God with Christ and through Christ indirectly with all the blood-bought seed who were loved of Christ from before the foundation of the world. It is a noble and glorious thought, the very poetry of that old Calvinistic doctrine which we teach, that long before the day-star knew its place, before God had spoken existence out of nothing, before angel's wing had stirred the unnavigated ether, before a solitary song had distributed the solemnity of the silence in which God reigned supreme, He had entered into solemn council with Himself, with His Son and with His Spirit and had in that council decreed, determined, proposed and predestinated the salvation of His people.

He had, moreover, in the Everlasting Covenant, arranged the ways and means and fixed and settled everything which should work together for the effecting of the purpose and the decree. My soul flies back now, winged by imagination and by faith and looks into that mysterious council chamber and by faith I behold the Father pledging Himself to the Son and the Son pledging Himself to the Father, while the Spirit gives His pledge to both and thus that Divine compact, long to be hidden in darkness, is completed and settled—the Covenant which in these latter days has been read in the light of Heaven and has become the joy and hope and boast of all the saints.

2. And now, what were the stipulations of this Covenant? They were somewhat in the wise. God has foreseen that man after creation would break the Covenant of Works. That however mild and gentle the tenure upon which Adam had possession of Paradise, yet that tenure would be too severe for him and he would be sure to kick against it and ruin himself. God had also foreseen that His elect ones, whom He had chosen out of the rest of mankind would fall by the sin of Adam, since they, as well as the rest of mankind, were represented in Adam. The Everlasting Covenant, therefore, had for its end the restoration of the chosen people.

And now we may readily understand what were the stipulations. On the Father's part, thus runs the Covenant—I cannot tell you it in the glorious celestial tongue in which it was written—I am glad to bring it down to the speech which suits the ear of flesh and to the heart of the mortal.

Thus, I say, runs the Covenant, in words like these—"I, the Most High Jehovah, do hereby give unto My only begotten and well-beloved Son, a people, countless beyond the number of stars, who shall be by Him washed from sin, by Him preserved and kept and led and by Him, at last, presented before My Throne, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. I covenant by oath and swear by Myself, because I can swear by no greater, that these whom I now give to Christ shall be forever the objects of My eternal love.

"Them I will forgive through the merit of His blood. To these will I give a perfect righteousness. These will I adopt and make my sons and daughters and these shall reign with Me through Christ eternally." Thus runs that glorious side of the Everlasting Covenant. The Holy Spirit, also, as one of the high contracting parties on this side of the Covenant, gave His declaration, "I hereby covenant," said He, "that all whom the Father gives to the Son, I will in due time quicken. I will show them their need of redemption. I will cut off from them all groundless hope and destroy their refuges of lies. I will bring them to the blood of sprinkling. I will give them faith whereby this blood shall be applied to them. I will work in them every grace. I will keep their faith alive. I will cleanse them and drive out all depravity from them and they shall be presented at last spotless and faultless." This was the one side of the Everlasting Covenant, which is at this very day being fulfilled and scrupulously kept.

As for the other side of the covenant, that was the part of it, engaged and covenanted by Christ. He thus declared and covenanted with His Father—"My Father, on My part I covenant that in the fullness of time I will become man. I will take upon Myself the form and nature of the fallen race. I will live in their wretched world and for My people I will keep the Law perfectly. I will work out a spotless righteousness which shall be acceptable to the demands of Your just and holy Law. In due time I will bear the sins of all My people. You shall exact their debts on Me. The chastisement of their peace I will endure and by My stripes they shall be healed. My Father, I covenant and promise that I will be obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. I will magnify Your Law and make it honorable. I will suffer all they ought to have suffered. I will endure the curse of Your Law and all the vials of Your wrath shall be emptied and spent upon My head. I will then rise again. I will ascend into Heaven. I will intercede for them at Your right hand. And I will make Myself responsible for every one of them, that not one of those whom You have given Me shall ever be lost, but I will bring all My sheep of whom, by My blood, You have constituted Me the Shepherd—I will bring every one safe to You at last."

Thus ran the Covenant of Grace. And now, I think, you have a clear idea of what it was and how it stands—the Covenant between God and Christ, between God the Father and God the Spirit and God the Son as the Covenant Head and representative of all God's elect. I have told you, as briefly as I could, what were the stipulations of it. You will please to remark, my dear Friends, that the Covenant is, on one side, perfectly fulfilled. God the Son has paid the debts of all the elect. He has, for us men

and for our redemption, suffered the whole of Divine wrath. Nothing remains now on this side of the question except that He shall continue to intercede, that He may safely bring all His redeemed to glory.

On the side of the Father this part of the Covenant has been fulfilled to countless myriads. God the Father and God the Spirit have not been behind-hand in their Divine contract. And mark you, this side shall be as fully and as completely finished and carried out as the other. Christ can say of what He promised to do. "It is finished!" and the like shall be said by all the glorious covenanters. All for whom Christ died shall be pardoned, all justified, all adopted. The Spirit shall quicken them all, shall give them all faith, shall bring them all to Heaven and they shall, every one of them, without obstruction or hindrance, stand accepted in the Beloved, in the day when the people shall be numbered and Jesus shall be glorified.

3. And now having seen who were the high contracting parties and what were the terms of the covenant made between them, let us see what were the objects of this covenant. Was this covenant made for every man of the race of Adam? Assuredly not. We discover the secret by the visible. That which is in the covenant is to be seen in due time by the eye and to be heard with the ear. I see multitudes of men perishing, continuing wantonly in their wicked ways, rejecting the offer of Christ which is presented to them in the Gospel day after day, treading under foot the blood of the Son of Man, defying the Spirit who strives with them. I see these men going on from bad to worse and at last perishing in their sins. I have not the folly to believe that they have any part in the Everlasting Covenant. Those who die impenitent, the multitudes who reject the Savior, are clearly proved to have no part and no lot in the sacred Covenant of Divine Grace. For if they were interested in that, there would be certain marks and evidences which would show us this.

We should find that in due time in this life they would be brought to repentance, would be washed in the Savior's blood and would be saved. The covenant—to come at once straight to the matter, however offensive the doctrine may be—the covenant has relationship to the *elect* and none besides. Does this offend you? Be you offended ever more. What said Christ? "I pray for *them*: I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me: for they are Yours." If Christ prays for none but for the chosen, why should you be angry that you are also taught from the Word of God that in the Covenant there was provision made for the same persons—that they might receive eternal life? As many as shall believe, as many as shall trust in Christ, as many as shall persevere unto the end, as many as shall enter into the eternal rest, so many and no more are interested in the Covenant of Divine Grace.

4. Furthermore, we have to consider what were the motives of this Covenant. Why was the Covenant made at all? There was no compulsion or constraint on God. As yet there were no creatures. Even could the creature have an influence on the Creator, there was none existing in the period when the Covenant was made. We can look nowhere for God's motive

in the Covenant except it is in Himself, for of God it could be said literally in that day, "I AM, and there are none beside Me." Why then did He make the Everlasting Covenant? I answer, absolute Sovereignty dictated it. But why were certain men the objects of it and why not others? I answer, Sovereign Grace guided the pen. It was not the merit of man, it was nothing which God foresaw in us that made Him choose many and leave others to go on in their sins. It was nothing in them, it was sovereignty and grace combined that made the Divine choice. If you, my Brothers and Sisters, have a good hope that you are interested in the Covenant of Grace, you must sing that song—

***"What was there in me to merit esteem,
Or give the Creator delight?
'Twas even so Father I ever sing,
For so it seemed good in Your sight."***

"He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy," "for it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy." His sovereignty elected and His Grace distinguished and immutability decreed. No motive dictated the election of the individuals, except a motive in Himself of love and of Divine Sovereignty. Doubtless the grand intention of God in making the Covenant at all was His own glory—any motive inferior to that would be beneath His dignity. God must find His motives in Himself—He has not to look to moths and worms for motives for His deeds. He is the "I AM."—

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

He does as He wills in the armies of Heaven. Who can stay His hand and say unto Him, "What are You doing?" Shall the clay ask the potter for the motive for his making it into a vessel? Shall the thing formed before its creation dictate to its Creator? No, let God be God and let man shrink into his native nothingness and if God exalts him, let him not boast as though God found a reason for the deed in man. He finds His motives in Himself. He is self-contained and finds nothing beyond nor need anything from any but Himself. Thus have I, as fully as time permits this morning, discussed the first point concerning the Everlasting Covenant. May the Holy Spirit lead us into this sublime Truth of God.

II. But now, in the second place, we come to notice ITS EVERLASTING CHARACTER. It is called the Everlasting Covenant. And here you observe at once its antiquity. The Everlasting Covenant is the oldest of all things. It is sometimes a subject of great joy to me to think that the Covenant of Grace is older than the Covenant of Works. The Covenant of Works had a beginning, but the Covenant of Grace had not. And blessed be God, the Covenant of Works has its end, but the Covenant of Grace shall stand fast when Heaven and earth shall pass away. The antiquity of the Covenant of Grace demands our grateful attention. It is a Truth of God which tends to elevate the mind. I know of no doctrine more grand than this. It is the very soul and essence of all poetry and in sitting down and meditating upon it, I do confess my spirit has sometimes been ravished with delight.

Can you conceive the idea that before all things God thought of *you*? That when as yet He had not made His mountains, He had thought of you, poor puny worm? Before the magnificent constellations began to shine and before the great center of the world had been fixed and all the mighty planets and many worlds had been made to revolve around it, then had God fixed the center of His covenant and ordained the number of those lesser stars which should revolve round that blessed center and derive light from there. Why, when one is taken up with some grand conceptions of the boundless universe, when with the astronomers we fly through space, when we find it without end and the starry hosts without number, does it not seem marvelous that God should give poor insignificant man the preference beyond even the whole universe besides?

Oh this cannot make us proud, because it is a Divine Truth, but it must make us feel happy. Oh Believer, you think yourself nothing, but God does not think so of you. Men despise you but God remembered you before He made anything. The Covenant of Love which He made with His Son on your behalf is older than the hoary ages. If you fly back when as yet time had not begun, before those massive rocks that bear the marks of gray old age upon them, had begun to be deposited—He had loved and chosen you and made a Covenant on your behalf. Remember well these ancient things of the eternal hills.

Then, again, it is the Everlasting Covenant from its sureness. Nothing is everlasting which is not secure. Man may erect his structures and think they may last forever, but the Tower of Babel has crumbled and the very Pyramids bear signs of ruin. Nothing which man has made is everlasting, because he cannot ensure it against decay. But as for the Covenant of Grace, well did David say of it, “It is ordered in all things and sure.” It is—

***“Signed and sealed and ratified,
In all things ordered well.”***

There is not an “if” or a “but” in the whole of it from beginning to end. Free will hates God’s “shalls” and “wills,” and likes man’s “ifs” and “buts,” but there are no “ifs” and “buts” in the Covenant of Grace. Thus the tenure runs—“I will” and “they shall.” Jehovah swears it and the Son fulfills it. It is—it must be true. It must be sure, for “I AM” determines it.

“Has He said and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken and shall He not make it good?” It is a sure Covenant. I have sometimes said if any man were about to build a bridge or a house if he would leave me just one single stone or one timber to put where I liked, I would undertake that his house would fall down. Let me, if there is anyone about to construct a bridge, have just simply the placing of one stone—I will select which stone it shall be and I will defy him to build a bridge that shall stand. I should simply select the keystone and then he might erect whatever he pleased and it should soon fall.

Now, the Arminian’s covenant is one that cannot stand because there are one or two bricks in it (and that is putting it in the slightest form—I might have said, “because every stone in it,” and that would be nearer the mark) that are dependent on the will of man. It is left to the will of the

creature whether he will be saved or not. If he wills not, there is no constraining influence that can master and overcome his will. There is no promise that any influence shall be strong enough to overcome him, according to the Arminian. So the question is left to man—and God, the mighty Builder, though He puts stone on stone massive as the universe—yet may be defeated by this creature. Away with such blasphemy!

The whole structure, from beginning to end, is in the hand of God. The very terms and conditions of that Covenant are become its seals and guarantees, seeing that Jesus has fulfilled them all. Its full accomplishment in every jot and tittle is sure and must be fulfilled by Christ Jesus, whether man will or man will not. It is not the creature's covenant, it is the Creator's. It is not man's covenant, it is the Almighty's Covenant and He will carry it out and perform it, the will of man notwithstanding. For this is the very glory of Grace—that man hates to be saved—that he is enmity to Him, yet God will have him redeemed—that God's consensus is, "You *shall*," and man's intention is "I will not," and God's "shall" conquers man's "I will not." Almighty Grace rides victoriously over the neck of free will and leads it captive in glorious captivity to the all-conquering power of irresistible grace and love. It is a sure Covenant and therefore deserves the title of Everlasting.

Furthermore, it is not only sure, but it is immutable. If it were not immutable, it could not be everlasting. That which changes passes away. We may be quite sure that anything that has the word "change" in it, will sooner or later die and be put away as a thing of nothing. But in the Everlasting Covenant, everything is immutable. Whatever God has established must come to pass and not word, or line, or letter, can be altered. Whatever the Spirit vows shall be done and whatever God the Son promised has been fulfilled and shall be consummated at the day of His appearing. Oh, if we could believe that the sacred lines could be erased—that the Covenant could be blotted and blurred, why then, my dear Friends, we might lie down in despair. I have heard it said by some preachers that when the Christian is holy, he is in the Covenant. That when he sins, he is crossed out again—that when he repents, he is put in again and if he fails he is scratched out once more.

And so he goes in and out of the door, as he would in and out of his own house. He goes in at one door and out of another. He is sometimes the child of God and sometimes the child of the devil—sometimes an heir of Heaven and now and then an heir of Hell. And I know one man who went so far as to say that although a man might have persevered through grace for sixty years, yet should he fall away the last year of his life—if he should sin and die so, he would perish everlastingly and all his faith and all the love which God had manifested to him in the day's gone by would go for nothing!

I am very happy to say that such a notion of God is just the very notion I have of the *devil*. I could not believe in such a god and could not bow down before him. A god that loves today and hates tomorrow. A god that gives a promise and yet foreknows, after all, that man shall not see the

promise fulfilled. A god that forgives and punishes—that justifies and afterwards executes—is a god that I cannot endure. He is not the God of the Scriptures, I am certain. The God of Scripture is *immutable*, just, holy and true and having loved His own, He will love them to the end. And if He has given a promise to any man, the promise shall be kept and that man, once in grace, is in grace *forever* and shall without fail by-and-by enter into glory.

And then to finish up this point. The Covenant is everlasting because it will never run itself out. It will be fulfilled but it will stand firm. When Christ has completed all and brought every Believer to Heaven. When the Father has seen all His people gathered in—the Covenant—it is true, will come to a consummation, but not to a conclusion, for thus the Covenant runs—the heirs of grace shall be blessed forever and as long as “forever” lasts, this Everlasting Covenant will demand the happiness, the security, the glorification, of every object of it.

III. Having thus noticed the everlasting character of the Covenant, I conclude by the sweetest and most precious portion of the doctrine—the relation which the blood bears to it—THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT. The blood of Christ stands in a fourfold relationship to the Covenant. With regard to Christ, His precious blood shed in Gethsemane, in Gabbatha, and Golgotha, is the fulfillment of the Covenant. By this blood sin is canceled. By Jesus’ agonies justice is satisfied—by His death the Law is honored. And by that precious blood in all its mediatorial efficacy and in all its cleansing power, Christ fulfills all that He stipulated to do on the behalf of His people towards God.

Oh, Believer, look to the blood of Christ and remember that there is Christ’s part of the Covenant carried out. And now, there remains nothing to be fulfilled but God’s part, there is nothing for *you* to do—Jesus has done it all. There is nothing for free will to supply—Christ has done everything that God can demand. The blood is the fulfillment of the debtor’s side of the Covenant and now God becomes bound by His own solemn oath to show grace and mercy to all whom Christ has redeemed by His blood. With regard to the blood in another respect, it is to God the Father the *bond* of the Covenant. When I see Christ dying on the Cross, I see the everlasting God from that time, if I may use the term, of Him who ever must be free, bound by His own oath and covenant to carry out every stipulation.

Does the Covenant say, “A new heart will I give you and a right spirit will I put within you”? It must be done, for Jesus died and Jesus’ death is the seal of the Covenant. Does it say, “I will sprinkle pure water upon them and they shall be clean; from all their iniquities will I cleanse them”? Then it must be done, for Christ has fulfilled His part. And, therefore, now we can present the Covenant no more as a thing of doubt—but as our claim on God through Christ and coming humbly on our knees, pleading that Covenant, our heavenly Father will not deny the promises contained therein, but will make every one of them yes and amen to us through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Then, again, the blood of the Covenant has relation to us as the *objects* of the Covenant and that is its third light. It is not only a fulfillment as regards Christ and a bond as regards His Father, but it is an evidence as regards *ourselves*. And here, dear Brothers and Sisters, let me speak affectionately to you. Are you relying wholly upon the blood? Has His blood—the precious blood of Christ—been laid to your conscience? Have you seen your sins pardoned through His blood? Have you received forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus? Are you glorying in His sacrifice and is His Cross your only hope and refuge?

Then you are in the Everlasting Covenant. Some men want to know whether they are elect. We cannot tell them unless they will tell us this. Do you believe? Is your faith fixed on the precious blood? Then you are in the Covenant. And oh, poor Sinner, if you have nothing to recommend you. If you are standing back and saying, “I dare not come! I am afraid! I am not in the Covenant!” still, Christ bids you come. “Come unto Me,” He says. “If you cannot come to the Covenant Father, come to the Covenant Surety. Come unto Me and I will give you rest.” And when you have come to Him and His blood has been applied to you, doubt not—the red roll of election contains your name! Can you read your name in the bloody characters of a Savior’s atonement? Then shall you read it one day in the golden letters of the Father’s election. He that believes is elected!

The blood is the symbol, the token, the earnest, the surety, the seal of the Covenant of Grace to you. It must ever be the telescope through which you can look to see the things that are afar off. You cannot see election with the naked eye, but through the blood of Christ you can see it clear enough. Trust in the blood, poor Sinner and then the blood of the Everlasting Covenant is a proof that you are an heir of Heaven.

Lastly, the blood stands in a relationship to all three, and here I may add that the blood is the glory of all. To the Son it is the fulfillment, to the Father the bond, to the sinner the evidence and to all—to Father, Son and sinner—it is the common glory and the common boast. In this the Father is well pleased. In this the Son also, with joy, looks down and sees the purchase of His agonies. And in this must the sinner ever find his comfort and his everlasting song—“Jesus, Your blood and righteousness are my glory, my song, forever and ever!”

And now, my dear Hearers, I have one question to ask and I have done. Have you the hope that you are in the Covenant? Have you put your trust in the blood? Remember—though you imagine, perhaps, from what I have been saying, that the Gospel is restricted—the Gospel is freely preached to all. The decree is limited, but the good news is as wide as the world. The Gospel, the good news, is as wide as the universe. I tell it to every creature under Heaven, because I am told to do so. The secret of God, which is to deal with the application—that is restricted to God’s chosen ones, but not the *message*—for that is to be proclaimed to all nations.

Now you have heard the Gospel many and many a time in your life. It runs thus—“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Do you believe that?

And this is your hope—something like this—“I am a sinner. I trust Christ has died for me. I put my trust in the merit of His blood and sink or swim, I have no other hope but this—

**“Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Your Cross I cling.”**

You have heard it. Have you received it in your heart and laid hold on it? Then you are one of those in the Covenant! And why should election frighten you? If you have chosen Christ, depend upon it, He has chosen you. If your tearful eyes are looking to Him, then His omniscient eyes have long looked on you. If your heart loves Him, His heart loves you more than ever you can love, and if now you are saying, “My Father, You shall be the guide of my youth,” I will tell you a secret—He has been your Guide and has brought you to be what you now are—a humble seeker—and He will be your guide and bring you safe at last.

But are you a proud, boastful, free willer, saying, “I will repent and believe whenever I choose. I have as good a right to be saved as anybody, for I do my duty as well as others and I shall doubtless get my reward”? If you are claiming an universal atonement which is to be received at the option of *man’s will*, go and claim it and you will be disappointed in your claim. You will find God will not deal with you on that ground at all, but will say, “Get away from Me, I never knew you. He that comes not to Me through My Son comes not at all.” I believe the man who is not willing to submit to the electing love and Sovereign Grace of God has great reason to question whether he is a Christian at all—for the spirit that kicks against that is the spirit of the *devil* and the spirit of the unhumiliated, unrenewed heart.

May God take away the enmity out of your heart to His own precious Truth and reconcile you to Himself through THE BLOOD of His Son, which is the bond and seal of the Everlasting Covenant.

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THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

NO. 1186

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 2, 1874,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”
Hebrews 13:20-21.***

WHAT we ask others to do we should be prepared to do ourselves. Precept fails unless it is followed up by example. The Apostle had exhorted the Hebrew Believers to pray for him in the words, “Pray for us.” And then, as if to show that he did not ask of them what he was not himself willing to give, he utters this most wonderful prayer for them. He may confidently say to his congregation, “Pray for me” who does unfeignedly from his soul pray for them! The prayer of the Apostle, as you observe, is tinged with the subject upon which he had been writing. This Epistle to the Hebrews is full of distinctions between the Old Covenant and the New, the gist of it being to show that the former Covenant was only typical of that abiding dispensation which followed it. It had only the shadow—not the very image of heavenly things.

His subject had been the Covenant and when he prayed, his garments were sweet with the myrrh and aloes and cassia among which his meditations had conducted him. According to the manner of his thoughts was the expression of his desires. He weaved into the texture of his prayer the meditations of his heart. And this is a very right method, especially when the prayer is public, for it ensures variety, it assists others to unite with us and it tends to edification. In fact, as the bee gathers honey from many flowers, and the honey is often flavored with wild thyme or some other special flower which abounds in the region from which it collects its sweets, so does our soul gather dainty stores of the honey of devotion from all sources—but that upon which she longest tarries in her meditations yields a paramount savor and flavor to the expression and the spirit of her prayer.

What was more natural than that a discourse upon the Covenant should be followed by this Covenant prayer—“The God of peace, that brought from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will”? The subject of the Epistle to the Hebrews is deep, for it passes on from the superficial rudiments to those underlying Truths of God which are more mysterious and profound. It is a book for the higher classes in Christ's school and therefore this prayer is not for babes, but for men of understanding. We could not say to all the saints,

“after this manner you should pray,” for they would not know what we were asking. They have need to begin with something simpler, such as that sweet, “Our Father, which are in Heaven,” which suits all Believers.

Full grown men feed on strong meat, think sublime thoughts and offer mighty prayers. As we may admire in the prayer of the babe its simplicity, and in the prayer of the young man its vivacity, so in the prayer of one who has become a father in Christ and feeds upon the Covenant, we rejoice in its depth, compass and sublimity. All these we find here. I invite those who would understand the deep things of God to ask the Holy Spirit’s assistance while we follow the Apostle in this, his Covenant prayer, a prayer of which the Covenant is the thread, the substance and the plea.

I. The subject of our discourse this morning, therefore, is the Covenant of Grace, as it is here spoken of. And I shall begin by noticing, first, THE COVENANT NAMES which the Apostle uses. He calls the ever-blessed Father, “*the God of Peace.*” And to the Redeemer who has taken the other side of the Covenant, he gives the title, “*Our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep.*” Dear Friends, as many of us as have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are *in Christ*—and He is our Head and Representative, our Shepherd and Sponsor. On our behalf He made a Covenant with the Father upon this tenor—that we, having sinned, a full recompense should be made to injured Justice—and the Law of God should be fully honored. The Father, on His part, agreeing to grant full pardon, acceptance, adoption and eternal life to us.

Now, the Covenant has been kept on Christ’s side. The text assures us of that, for Jesus has, according to His promise, shed His blood. And now the Covenant stands only to be fulfilled on the side of the eternal Father—and under that aspect of the Covenant the Apostle calls the Father, “the God of Peace.” What a precious name! Under the Covenant of Works He is the God of Vengeance. To sinners He is the Thrice Holy God, terrible out of His holy places. Even our God is a consuming fire! And yet to *us*, seeing that the Covenant has been fulfilled on our side by our great Head and Representative, He is “the God of Peace.”

All is peace between you and God, Christian! There is no past ground of quarrel remaining, nor any fear that a new one can arise! The Everlasting Covenant secures everlasting peace! He is not the God of a hollow truce, not the God of a patched-up forgetfulness of unforgiven injuries—He is the God of Peace in the very deepest sense—He is, Himself, at peace, for there is a peace of God that passes all understanding. And, moreover, by reason of His mercy, His people are made to enjoy peace of conscience within themselves, for you feel that God is reconciled to you. Your hearts rest in Him. Your sins, which separated you, have been removed—and perfect love has cast out the fear which was torment. While the Lord is at peace with Himself and you are made to enjoy inward peace through Him, He is also at peace with *you*, for He loves you with a love unsearchable!

He sees nothing in you but that which He delights in, for in the Covenant He does not look at you as you are in yourself, but in your Head, Christ Jesus—and to the eyes of God there is no sight in the universe so

lovely as His own dear Son—and His people in His Son. There is beauty enough in Jesus to make Him forget our deformities! There are merits enough in Jesus to swallow up our demerits and efficacy sufficient in the atoning blood of our great High Priest to wash away all our transgressions! As for us, our soul recognizing that blood and perceiving the love of God towards us, feels, now, no war with God. We did rebel once, for we hated Him. And even now, when the old nature champs the bit, and the Lord's will runs cross to our desires, we do not find it easy to bow before Him and say, "I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because it seemed good in Your sight."

But yet the new nature which comes to the front does rule and govern, and all heart-contest between our soul and God is at an end. To us the Lord is in the widest and most perfect sense, the God of Peace! Oh, how I love that name! He is the peaceful, happy God! He is unruffled, undisturbed! We, within ourselves, are made to enjoy a peace that passes all understanding, which keeps our hearts and minds. God at peace with us, declaring that He will never be angry with us, nor rebuke us! And we, rejoicing in Him, delighting in His Law and living for His Glory. Therefore let us, in every troubled hour, look to the Lord under this cheering name, "the God of Peace," for as such the Covenant reveals Him!

The Apostle had a view of the other great party to the Covenant, and he names Him, "Our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep." We must view our Redeemer in the Covenant, first, as *Jesus* the Savior who leads us into the Canaan which has been given to us by a Covenant of Salt, even the rest which remains to the people of God. He is also *the Lord Jesus* in all the dignity of His Nature, exalted far above all principalities and powers—to be obeyed and worshipped by us. And He is *our Lord Jesus*—ours because He has given Himself to us—and we have accepted and received Him with holy delight to be the Lord whom we cheerfully serve.

He is our Lord *Jesus* because He saves us. Our *Lord Jesus* because, by bringing us under His kingdom, He rescues us. And *our Lord Jesus* because we have a special relation both to His sovereignty and His salvation. We are not generally observant of the appropriateness of our Lord's names. We do not notice the instruction which is intended by the writers who use them, nor do we exercise discretion, enough, ourselves, in the employment of them. Yet there is great force in these titles when appropriately employed. Other names may have small significance, but in the titles of Jesus there is a wealth of meaning.

Further, our Lord is called, "that great Shepherd of the sheep." In the Covenant we are the sheep, the Lord Jesus is the Shepherd. You cannot make a covenant with sheep—they have not the ability to covenant. But you can make a covenant with the Shepherd *for* them, and so, glory be to God, though we had gone astray like lost sheep, we belong to Jesus, and He made a Covenant on our behalf—and He stood for us before the living God. Now, I have already explained to you that our Lord Jesus, in His death is the *good* Shepherd—the good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep, and so shows His goodness. In His rising again, He is the *great* Shepherd, as we have it in the text, for His Resurrection and return to

Glory display His greatness. But in His Second Advent He is the *chief* Shepherd—“when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you, also, shall appear with Him in Glory”—there He shows His superior sovereignty.

Our Lord was *good* in laying down His life for the sheep—and there are other shepherds whom He makes good—who, in His name, feed His lambs and sheep. When He comes, again, the second time, He will appear with others, the *Chief* among them all. But in His Resurrection for our justification, in connection with the Covenant, He is alone, and bears the name of *the* or “*that* great Shepherd”—that great Shepherd of whom all prophecy was spoken, in whom all the Divine decrees are fulfilled, before whom all others shrink away, who stands alone, as in that Covenant capacity, the sole and only Shepherd of the sheep.

It is very beautiful to trace the shepherds through the Old Testament and to see Christ as Abel, the *witnessing* shepherd, pouring out that blood which cries from the ground. As Abraham, the *separating* shepherd, leading out his flock into the strange country where they dwelt alone. As Isaac, the *quiet* shepherd, digging wells for his flock and feeding them in peace in the midst of the enemies. As Jacob, the shepherd who is *surety* for the sheep, who earns them all by toil and weariness, who separates them and walks in the midst of them to Canaan, preserving them by his own lone midnight prayers. There, too, we see our Lord as Joseph, the shepherd who is head over Egypt for the sake of Israel, of whom his dying father said, “From thence is the Shepherd, the stone of Israel.” He is Head over all things for His Church, the King who governs all the world for the sake of His elect, the great Shepherd of the sheep, who, for their sakes, has all power committed unto His hands.

Then follows Moses, the *chosen* shepherd who led his people through the wilderness up to the Promised Land, feeding them with manna and giving them drink from the smitten Rock—what a wide theme for meditation here! And then there is David, the type of Jesus, as reigning in the covenanted inheritance over his own people, as a glorious king in the midst of them all. All these together enable us to see the varied glories of “that great Shepherd of the sheep.” Beloved, this is a great subject and I can only hint at it. Let us rejoice that our Shepherd is *great*, because He, with His great flock, will be able to preserve them all from the great dangers into which they are brought—and to perform for them the great transactions with the great God which are demanded of a Shepherd of such a flock as that which Jesus calls His own.

Under the Covenant, Jesus is Prophet, Priest and King—a shepherd should be all this to his flock—and He is great in each of these offices. While we rest in the Covenant of Grace we should view our Lord as our Shepherd and find solace in the fact that sheep have nothing to do with their own feeding, guidance, or protection—they have only to follow their Shepherd unto the pastures which He prepares—and all will be well with them. “He makes me to lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside the still waters.”

II. Secondly, the Apostle mentions THE COVENANT SEAL. “The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shep-

herd of the sheep, *through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant.*” The seal of the Covenant is the blood of Jesus. In olden times when men made covenants with each other, they generally used some ceremony to bind the bargain, as it were. Now, under the old dispensation, Covenants with God were always confirmed with blood. As soon as ever blood was shed and the victim died, the agreement made was established.

When our heavenly Father made a Covenant with Jesus Christ on our behalf, that Covenant was true and firm, “according to the sure mercies of David.” But to make it stand fast there must be blood. Now, the blood ordained to seal the Covenant was not the blood of bulls or of goats, but the blood of the Son of God, Himself! And this has made the Covenant so binding that sooner may Heaven and earth pass away than one tittle of it fail. God must keep His own promises. He is a free God, but He binds Himself—by two immutable things in which it is impossible for Him to lie—He has bound Himself to bestow Covenant blessings upon the flock which the great Shepherd represented.

Brethren, you and I, as honest men, are bound by our word. If we took an oath, which I trust we would not, we should certainly feel doubly bound by it. And if we had lived in the old times, and blood had been sprinkled on an agreement which we had made, we should regard the solemn sign and never dream of running back from it. Think, for a moment, how impossible it is that the Lord should ever break that Covenant of Grace which He spontaneously made with His own Son—and with us *in* Him. Now that it has been sprinkled with blood from the veins of His own well-beloved Son, the Covenant is *everlasting*. It stands fast, forever, because it is confirmed by blood which is none other than the blood of the Son of God!

Remember, too, that in our case that blood not only *confirmed* the Covenant, but actually *fulfilled* it because the Covenant stipulation was on this wise—Christ must suffer for our sins and honor the Divine Law. He had kept the Law in His life, but it was necessary for the complete fulfilling of the Covenant on His part, that He should also be obedient to death, even the death of the Cross. The shedding of His blood, therefore, was the carrying out of His promised obedience to its extremity. It was the actual fulfillment of Christ’s side of the Covenant on our behalf, so that now the whole Covenant must stand firm, for that upon which it depended is finished forever. It is not only ratified with that bloody signature, but by that blood it is actually carried out on Christ’s part. And it cannot be that the Eternal Father should start back from His side of the compact since our side of it has been carried out to the letter by that great Shepherd of the sheep who laid down His life for us.

By the shedding of the blood, the Covenant is turned into a Testament. In some Bibles, the margin puts it, “testament,” and often in other cases we scarcely know how to translate the word, whether to say the New Testament, or the New Covenant. Certainly it is now a Testament, for since Christ has kept His part of the Covenant, He wills to us what is due to Him from God and He makes over to us, by His death, all that comes to Him as His reward—making us His heirs by a Testament which is ren-

dered valid by His death. So you may say, “testament,” if you please, or, “covenant,” if you will—only never forget that the blood has made both Testament and Covenant sure to all the sheep of whom Jesus is the shepherd.

Dwell with pleasure upon that word, “*Everlasting Covenant*.” Certain men in these days declare that “everlasting” does not mean everlasting, but indicates a period to which an end will come sooner or later. I have no sympathy with them and feel no inclination to renounce the everlastingness of Heaven and other Divine blessings in order to gratify the tastes of wicked men by denying the eternity of future punishment. Human nature leans in that direction, but the Word of God does not. And following its unerring track we rejoice in the *Everlasting Covenant* which will abide forever and ever! The Covenant of Works is gone. It was based on human strength and it dissolved as a dream. In the nature of things it could not be everlasting. Man could not keep the condition of it and it fell to the ground.

But the Covenant of Grace depended only upon the power, love and faithfulness of Christ who has kept His part of the Covenant and, therefore, the Covenant now rests only upon God, the faithful and true, whose Word cannot fail—

**“As well might He His Being quit,
As break His promise, or forget.”**

“His mercy endures forever, and His Truth throughout all generations.” He has said, “I will make an Everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good,” and therefore do them good He must, for He is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent. So, then, the Covenant seal makes all things sure.

III. We have now to notice THE COVENANT FULFILLMENT, for the Lord has commenced to fulfill it. “The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant.” See, then, Jesus Christ has been brought back from the dead through the blood of the Covenant! Here is the story. He was the Covenantor on our behalf. He took our sin upon Himself and undertook to suffer for it. Having been crucified, He yielded up His life, and from the Cross He was taken to the grave and there He lay in vile duration.

Now, it was a part of the Covenant, on God the Father’s part, that He would not leave Christ’s soul in Hades, nor suffer His Holy One to see corruption. This agreement has been faithfully kept. Christ on the Cross represented all of us who believe in Him—we were crucified in Him. Jesus in the tomb also represented us, for we are buried with Him. Whatever happened to Him happened, also, to the flock. Now, then, what will occur to the body of Jesus? Will God keep His Covenant? Will the worm devour that lovely frame, or will it defy corruption? Will it come to pass that He who has descended into the earth shall never return? Wait. It is the third morning! The promised time has come. As yet no worm has dared to feed upon that God-like form—yet it lies among the dead.

But on the third morning the Slumberer awakes like one that has been refreshed with sleep. He rises! The stone is rolled away. Angels escort Him to liberty. He comes into the open air of the garden and speaks to His disciples. Jesus, who bled, has left the dead, no more to die! He waits for 40 days that He may let His friends see that He is really risen. But He has to rise higher, yet, to be fully brought back to His former honors. Will God be faithful to Him and bring Him back from the dead all the way He once descended? Yes, for on the Mount of Olives, when the time is come, He begins to ascend! Cleaving the ambient air, He mounts from amidst His worshipping disciples till a cloud receives Him! But will He rise fully to the point from which He came?

Will He, in His own Person, gain for His Church a full recovery from all the ruin of the Fall? Ah, see Him as He enters the gates of pearl! How He is welcomed by the Father! See how He climbs aloft and sits upon the Father's Throne, for God, also, has highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. Now note by what means our Lord returned from the dead to all this Glory. It was because He had presented the blood of the Everlasting Covenant! When the Father saw that Jesus had kept all His part of the Covenant, even to death, then He began to fulfill His portion of the contract by bringing back His Son from the grave to life, from shame to honor, from humiliation to Glory, from death to immortality!

See where He now sits till His enemies are made His footstool. And, what has been done to Jesus has been virtually done to all His people, because, you observe, the Lord, "brought again from the dead," not the Lord Jesus as a private Person only, but, "Our Lord Jesus," as "that great Shepherd of the sheep." The sheep are with the Shepherd! Shepherd of the sheep, where is Your flock? We know that You have loved them even to the end. But You are gone! Have You left them in the wilderness? It cannot be, for it is written, "Who can separate us from the love of Christ?" Hear the Shepherd say, "I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am." "Because I live, you shall live, also." "Where I am there, also, shall My servant be."

Beloved, the sheep never are away from that great Shepherd of the sheep! They are always in His hand and none can pluck them out of it! They were on earth with Him and they are risen with Him. If Jesus had remained in the grave, there must all His sheep have perished. But when the Father brought Him back by the blood, He brought *us* back by the blood and gave us a lively hope that for our souls they shall never die—and for our bodies the expectation of resurrection—

***"For though our inbred sins require
Our flesh to see the dust,
Yet as the Lord our Shepherd rose,
So all His followers must."***

Jesus in Heaven is only there as our Representative—His flock is following Him! I wish you could get a picture in your eyes of the hills of Heaven rising up from these lowlands. We are feeding here, awhile, under His watchful eye, and yonder is a river which runs at the foot of the celestial hills and parts us from heavenly pasturage. One by one our beloved ones are

being called across the flood by the Good Shepherd's voice—and they cross the river pleasantly at His bidding, so that a long line of His sheep may be seen going over the stream and up the hillside to where the Shepherd stands and receives them.

This line joins the upper flock to the lower and makes them all one company. Do you not see them continually streaming up to Him and passing, again, under the hand of Him that tells them to be fed by the Lamb and made to lie down forever where wolves can never come? Thus the one flock is even, now, with the Shepherd, for it is all one pasture to Him, though to us it seems divided by Jordan's torrent. Every one of the sheep is marked with the blood of the Everlasting Covenant! Every one of them has been preserved because Jesus lived—and as He was brought, again, from the dead by the blood, even so must they be, for so the Covenant stands. Remember, then, dear Friends, that the punishment of the flock was borne by the Shepherd, that the flock died in the Shepherd and that the flock now live because the Shepherd lives!

Consequently their life is a new life and He will bring all His sheep that, as yet, are not called, out of their death in sin, even as He has been brought out of His own death. He will lead onward and upward those that are called, even as He went onward and upward from the grave to the Throne. He will preserve them all their journey through, even as He was preserved by the blood of the Everlasting Covenant. And finally He will perfect them even as He is perfect. Even as the God of Peace has glorified His Son, so also will He bring all His chosen to eternal Glory with Him!

IV. Fourthly, we will view THE COVENANT BLESSING. What is one of the greatest of all the Covenant blessings? The writer of this Epistle here pleads for it. "Now," says he, "the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, *make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight.*" Notice that one of the chief blessings of the Covenant is power and will to *serve* God.

The Old Covenant said, "There are the tables of stone, mind that you obey every word that is written thereon: if you do you shall live, and if you do not you shall die." Man never did obey and consequently no one ever entered Heaven or found peace by the Law. The New Covenant speaks on this wise, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. I will write My law in their hearts, and on their minds will I write them. I will put My fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from Me." The Prophets enlarge most instructively upon this New Covenant. It is not a Covenant of, "if you will I will," but it runs thus, "I will and you shall." As a Covenant this exactly suits me! If there were something to be performed by *me* I could never be sure—but as it is finished I am at rest!

God sets us working and we work—but the Covenant, itself, depends wholly upon that great promise, "I will not turn away from them to do them good." So that it was right of Paul to pray that God would make us meet in every good work to do His will, because of old this was the master promise—that those for whom Jesus died should be sanctified, purified

and made meet to serve their God. Great as the prayer is, it is asking what the Covenant guarantees! Taking the text, word by word, I perceive that the first blessing asked for by the Apostle is *meetness for the Divine service*, for the Greek word is not, “Make you *perfect*,” but *meet*—“fit,” “prepared,” “able for.” I have no reference to the discussion upon the doctrine of perfection in this observation. No one text would decide that controversy—I simply make the observation because it is matter of fact.

The expression should be rendered, “Make you fully complete,” or, “fully fitted,” to do His will. We ought to request earnestly that we may be qualified, adapted and suited to be used of God for the performance of His will. After the man once dead in sin, is made alive again, the question arises, who shall be his master? We, having died in our great Shepherd, and having been brought again from the dead—to whom shall we yield ourselves? Certainly unto God alone! Our prayer is that we may be made meet to do His will. Our Shepherd did His Father’s will, for He cried, “I delight to do Your will, O God.” “By which will we are sanctified,” and sanctified to the doing of that will, each one of us. It is a grand desire, but it burns in every Christian heart—that now he may be fit to serve his God, he may be a vessel such as God can use—an instrument fit for the Divine hand! We desire that, though weak and feeble, we may not be impure. Unsuitable by reason of lack of native strength, but suitable through having been cleansed by the blood of the Covenant!

Dear Brothers and Sisters, ask for meetness for service! Pray day and night that you may be fully fitted for every good work. But the Apostle asked for *an inward work of Divine Grace*—not merely meetness for service—but an operation felt. “Working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight.” I long above everything to possess in myself the working of the Holy Spirit more and more clearly. There is so much superficial religion and we are so apt to be content with it that it becomes us to pray for deep heart-work! We need to have our affections elevated, our will subdued, our understanding enlightened and our whole nature deeply spiritualized by the Presence of the Holy Spirit. Now this is the promise of the Covenant—“I will dwell in them and walk in them.”

Remember, God worked in Christ in the grave by quickening His body into life. And He must work in us according to the working of that mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. Ask the Lord to do it! Do not be satisfied with a little, weak, almost imperceptible pulse of religion, of which you can hardly judge whether it is there or not! Ask to feel the Divine energies working within you, the eternal Omnipotence of God struggling and striving mightily in your spirit until sin shall be conquered and Grace shall gloriously triumph! This is a Covenant Blessing. Seek it! But we need *outward* as well as inward work. Working *in* you that which is well-pleasing in His sight—no small matter when you remember that nothing but perfect holiness can please God! Paul would have us made fit for every good work. He wanted us to be many-sided men and women who could do every good work, just as Jesus did.

He wished us to be qualified for any station and every position. When Jesus Christ rose from the dead He was seen—there was not merely a se-

cret quickening in Him—but a *visible* life! He was seen of angels and of men! And here, below, He lived, for a period of time, the *observed* of all observers. So, dear Brothers and Sisters, there ought to be in us not only an inner resurrection which we *feel*, but such a quickening that we shall be *manifestly* alive to newness of life. We must know the power of our Lord's Resurrection and exhibit it in every action of our lives. May God grant us this! There is much upon this point which time does not permit me to enlarge upon. May you know it all by *experience*.

Observe, once more, the *completeness* of this Covenant blessing. Just as Jesus is fully restored to the place from which He came and has lost no dignity nor power by having shed His blood, but rather is exalted higher than ever, so God's design is to make us pure and holy as Adam was at the first—and to *add* to our characters a force of love which never would have been there if we had not sinned and been forgiven—an energy of intense devotion, an enthusiasm of perfect self-sacrifice which we never could have learned if it had not been for Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. God means to make us the princes of the blood royal of the universe, or, if you will, the bodyguards of the Lord of Hosts. He desires to fashion an order of creatures who will come very near to Him and yet will feel the loveliest reverence for Him.

He will have them akin to Himself, partakers of the Divine Natures and yet the most obedient of servants—perfectly free agents and yet bound to Him by bonds which will never let them disobey in thought, or word, or deed. And this is how He is fashioning this central battalion who shall wait upon His eternal marching orders forever—He is forgiving us great sins! He is bestowing upon us great blessings! He is making us one with His dear Son! And when He has entirely freed us from the cerements of our spiritual death, He will call us up to where Jesus is and we shall serve Him with an adoration superior to all the rest of His creatures!

Angels cannot love so much as we shall, for they have never tasted redeeming Grace and dying love! This high devotion is the Lord's aim. He did not bring up the Lord Jesus from the dead that He might live a common life. He lifted Him up that He might be Head over all things to His Church and that all things might be under His feet. Even so the destiny of Christians is mysteriously sublime—they are not lifted up from their native death to a mere morality. They are destined to be something more than philanthropists and men esteemed by their fellows. They are to exhibit to angels and principalities, and powers, the wonderful Grace of God, showing in their own persons what God can do with His creatures through the death of His Son!

I do but touch, like a swallow, with my wing where it is delightful to dive.

IV. We conclude with THE COVENANT DOXOLOGY, "*To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*" If anything in the world can make a man praise his God it is the Covenant and the knowledge that he is in it. I will leave off preaching and ask you to think over the love of God in the Covenant. It does not belong to all of you. Christ is not the Shepherd of the whole herd of men—He is only the Shepherd of the *sheep*—and He has not entered

into any Covenant for all mankind, but for His sheep, alone. The Covenant is for His own people. If you believe in Him, it is a Covenant for you. But if you reject Him, you can have no participation in this Covenant—for you are under the Covenant of Works, which condemns you.

But now, Believer, just sit down for a moment and think over this exceeding mercy. Your God, the everlasting Father, has entered into a solemn Covenant with Christ, on your behalf, that He will save you, keep you and make you perfect. He has saved you! He has performed a large part of the Covenant in you already, for He has placed you in the way of life and kept you to this day, And if, indeed, you are His, He will keep you to the end. The Lord is not as the foolish man who began to build and was not able to finish. He does not commence to carry out a design and then turn from it. He will push on His work till He completes it in you. Can you really believe it? With you, a poor puny mortal, who will soon sleep in the grave—with *you* He has made an Everlasting Covenant! Will you not say with our text, “To whom be glory”?

Like dying David you can say, “Though my house is not so with God, yet has He made with me an Everlasting Covenant ordered in all things and sure”? I am sure you will joyfully add, “Glory be to His name!” Our God deserves *exclusive* Glory! Covenant theology glorifies God, alone! There are other theologies abroad which magnify *men*—they give him a finger in his own salvation and so leave him a reason for throwing up his cap and saying—“Well done, I!” But Covenant theology puts man aside and makes him a debtor and a receiver. It does, as it were, plunge him into the sea of infinite Grace and unmerited favor—and it makes him give up all boasting! It stops the mouth that could have boasted by filling it with floods of love—so that it cannot utter a vainglorious word! A man saved by the Covenant must give all the Glory to God’s holy name, for to God all the Glory belongs! In salvation worked by the Covenant, the Lord has exclusive Glory. He also has *endless* Glory. “To whom be glory forever and ever.”

Have you glorified God a little, dear Brothers and Sisters, because of His Covenant mercy? Go on glorifying Him! Did you serve Him well when you were young? Ah, not so well as you wish you had? Then serve Him better now in these riper days. Throw yourself into the glorifying of God! The task of saving yourself is not yours—Jesus has done it all! You may sing—

**“A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify!”**

But you will never need to add—

**“A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky,”**

For that soul of yours *is* saved—“He has saved us and called us with a holy calling”—and you are fitted for the sky by the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, for Paul says, “Thanks be unto the Father who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” All you have to do is to glorify the Lord who has saved you, set your feet upon a Rock and established your goings.

Now, go at it with all your might! Are you getting gray, dear Brothers and Sisters? With all your experience you ought, now, to glorify the Lord more than ever! You will soon be up yonder in the land of the living! Since you have but a short time to tarry, here, do not praise the Redeemer any longer at a poor *dying* rate! And, oh, when we ascend above these clouds, how we will magnify our Covenant God! I am sure I shall not feel my powers large enough, even in Heaven, to express my gratitude for His amazing love! I do not wonder that the poet says—

***“Eternity’s too short
To utter half His praise.”***

People find fault with that expression, and say it is an exaggeration. How would you have the poets talk? Is not hyperbole allowable to them? I might even plead that it is *not* an hyperbole, for neither time nor eternity can utter all the praises of the infinite Jehovah!—

***“On, for a thousand tongues to sing
Our great Redeemer’s praise.”***

This shall be the sweetest note of all our music—*the Covenant*—“The Covenant made with David’s Lord, in all things ordered well.” The Covenant with that great Shepherd of the sheep by which every sheep was preserved and kept—and brought into the rich pastures of eternal Glory! We will sing of Covenant love in Heaven! This shall be our last song on earth and the first in Paradise—“The Covenant, the Covenant sealed with blood.” How I wish Christ’s ministers would spread more and more of this Covenant doctrine throughout England! He who understands the two Covenants has found the marrow of all theology! But he who does not know the Covenants knows next to nothing of the Gospel of Christ! You would think, to hear some ministers preach, that salvation was *all* of works, that it was still uncertain who would be saved, that it was all a matter of, “ifs,” and, “buts,” and “perhaps.”

And if you begin to give them, “shalls,” and, “wills,” and purposes, and decrees, and pledges, and oaths, and blood—they call you Calvinistic! Why, this doctrine was true before Calvin was born or thought of! Calvin loved it as we do, but it did not come from *him*! Paul had taught it long before—no, the *Holy Spirit* taught it to us in the Word of God—and therefore we hold it! The bringing back of this Truth of God to the front will be a grand thing for the Church. From the mouth of this cannon the Lord will blow the Pope and all his myrmidons into a thousand shivers! No other doctrine will do it!

By God’s good Grace we must live this doctrine as well as preach it, and may He that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will. THEN will He have Glory through the Covenant and through you, both now and forever. Amen and amen!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Hebrews 13.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—412, 1054, 317.**

THE GOD OF PEACE AND OUR SANCTIFICATION NO. 1368

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 5, 1877,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

“Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”
Hebrews 13:20, 21.

THE Apostle, in the 18th verse, had been earnestly asking for the prayers of the Lord's people. On the behalf of all his Brethren he said, “Pray for us.” And for himself he added, “I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.” If the Apostle needed the prayers of his Brethren, how much more do we who are so greatly inferior to him in all respects? We may, indeed, even with tears, appeal to you who are our Brothers and Sisters in Christ and entreat you to be earnest in your supplications to God on our behalf. What can we do without your prayers? They link us with the Omnipotence of God! Like the lightning rod, they pierce the clouds and bring down the mighty and mysterious power from on high.

But what the Apostle was anxious to receive, he was careful to bestow and, therefore, he proceeded in the words of our text to plead for his Brothers and Sisters, from which we learn that if we desire others to pray for us we must set the example by praying for them! We cannot expect to be benefited by other men's prayers unless the spirit of supplication dwells in us, also. In this matter the Lord will give us good measure pressed down and running over according as we give unto others. Other hearts shall be stirred up to intercede for us if we are, ourselves, diligent in intercession. Pray, if you would be prayed for!

The prayer before us was an exceedingly great one, for Paul had learned to ask great things of the Lord. The Holy Spirit had filled him with much love to the Hebrews and with a strong desire for their welfare and, therefore, he asks for that which is the greatest of all blessings to the people of God—that they may be fit for every good work and that God may work in them to do that which is well-pleasing in His sight. When we plead for God's own beloved people, we are safe in asking for the best of blessings! If we feel straitened in pleading for ourselves, there can be no reason in being so in reference to them, since we know that the Lord loves them and abounds towards them in Grace through Christ Jesus.

It is noteworthy that this prayer or benediction comes at the close of the Epistle, even as in Christian assemblies the benediction is pronounced at the end of the worship. Let the end of all our acts be a blessing to men and a doxology to God! As long as you live, dear Brothers and

Sisters, endeavor to bless others—and when you die, conclude life with a blessing, even as your Lord and Master did, who, as He ascended to Heaven, was seen with outstretched hands blessing His people. As Jacob would not let the angel go until He blessed him, so we should not cease from preaching or writing in the name of the Lord until we have a comfortable persuasion that a blessing has come upon our Brethren.

This prayerful benediction is an exceedingly instructive one. It has, within itself, the whole compass of the Gospel, as one might show if this were our objective at this season. It is condensed spiritual meat! Much in little—all things in one blessing. Every word is as a pearl of value and as the deep as the sea. It is *not* the objective of prayer to instruct our fellow men. A decided distinction ought always to be drawn between praying and preaching—and those err greatly who, under the name of prayer, not only instruct, but argue and exhort! Yet it is a remarkable fact that there is no inspired prayer in Scripture but what is full of teaching to those who are willing to study it.

Take any one of the Psalms—though they are addressed to God, yet within them the preacher finds a thousand texts from which to inculcate the doctrines and the precepts of the Lord. As for the prayers of our Lord Jesus, they drop fatness—that which is commonly called, “The Lord’s Prayer,” contains a world of doctrine! And that glorious prayer in the 17th of John is as honey from the honeycomb! Now, since the same Spirit that worked of old, works, also, in us, I conclude that He will lead us, also, to pray to the edification of those who hear us. Though the foremost objective of prayer is not the instruction of our fellow men, yet prayer ought to be full of good matter and worthy of the consideration of those whom we invite to join in it!

Public prayer would be a far better means of Grace to the people if those who utter petitions in public would seek preparation of heart from the Lord and enter upon the exercise with careful thought. Surely it is not sufficient to repeat a round of godly expressions which have become current in the Church, but we ought to speak with the Spirit and with the understanding in our approaches to God, so that the thoughts of our fellow Christians may be excited and their hearts united with us in our public devotions. He who prays a dull prayer in public, devoid of all thought and meditation, dampens the flame of devotion, whereas it was his duty to have added fuel to it. I invite those who take part in our Prayer Meetings to lay this matter to heart.

We must, however, further note that though the prayer of Paul for the Hebrew Believers is full of doctrine, yet the whole of it tends to the end which he had in view. He did not garnish his prayer with extraneous ornament, nor drag in needless doctrinal statements—every word was meant to support his plea for personal, practical holiness—which was the one objective of his prayer. While he shows us from where holiness must come and *how* it must come, and how it is worked in us and what it is like when it is worked in us, he is, all along, bringing forth his strong arguments with the Lord that in the Hebrew Believers this holiness might be worked abundantly.

I am sure I shall have your earnest attention while I endeavor to weigh the very words of the text, since each one is full of meaning. I cannot hope, in the short space of one sermon, to bring out the whole fullness of its meaning, for who can hold the sea in the hollow of his hand, or compass the fullness of such a text in one brief address? Yet I would labor to give you sufficient insight into it to let you see that its lengths and breadths and depths and heights are not easily to be measured by mortal mind.

I. I call your attention to THE PECULIAR TITLE UNDER WHICH GOD IS ADDRESSED IN THIS PRAYER—"Now, the God of Peace." The names of God employed in prayer in Holy Scripture are always significant. Holy men of old were not so poverty-stricken in language as always to address God under one name, nor were they so careless as to speak with Him under such a title as might first come to hand. In their approaches to the Most High they carefully regarded that attribute of the Divine Nature from which they expected the blessing which they desired. If they needed that their enemies should be overthrown, they pleaded with the arm of His strength. If they were wrongfully entreated, they prayed to the God of Righteousness. If they needed pardon for their sins, they pleaded with the God of Mercy.

And such names as Jehovah, Elohim, Shaddai, are not used indiscriminately in the prayers of the saints of old, but always with selection and judgment. Why, then, did the Apostle here call God, "the God of Peace"? He had a reason. What was it? It is a Pauline expression. You find that title *only* in the writings of Paul. It is a name of Paul's own coinage by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. There were reasons in Paul's experience which led him to dwell upon this peculiar trait of the Divine Character. Each man, seeing with his own eyes, sees something peculiar in the name of the Lord. And the Apostle of the Gentiles, when writing to Hebrew Believers, saw with special clearness, "the God of Peace," who had made both Jew and Gentile to be one in Christ, so making peace.

If you look in the Epistle to the Romans, the 15th Chapter and 33rd verse, you find him praying, "Now, the God of Peace be with you all." In the same Epistle, Chapter 16, verse 20, he says, "The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Again, in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, 13:11, he says, "Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace and the God of Love and Peace shall be with you." In Philippians 4:9, he concludes his exhortation with, "Those things, which you have both learned, and received, and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of Peace shall be with you." But especially in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, there is a passage strikingly parallel to our text. He there prays, "And the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly."

Sanctification is the subject of the present prayer. Just as in our text he prays, "Perfect you in every good work to do His will," so in Thessalonians he says, "And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is evident, not only that the Apostle delighted in the expression peculiar to himself, but that he saw a close connection between the peace of God and the sanctifying of Believers. And for this reason, both in the Thessalonians

and in the Hebrews, his prayer for their sanctification is addressed to the God of Peace. The title is a Gospel one.

God is not spoken of as the God of Peace in the Old Testament—but *there* He is, “a man of war, the Lord is His name.” “He shall cut off the spirit of princes; He is terrible to the kings of the earth.” He is frequently spoken of in the Psalms and the Prophets as, “the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle,” and it is a part of Israel’s praise of Him that He slew mighty kings, “for His mercy endures forever.” Constantly, in the older volume of Inspiration, do we read of, “the Lord of Hosts,” and of this title an old Divine says, “It has the sound of hostility in it.” But now we no longer speak of the Lord of Hosts, but of the God of Peace, for, since Jesus is our Peace, the enmity is slain.

Messiah’s reign began with songs in Heaven of, “peace on earth, goodwill towards men.” His errand was peace! His spirit was peace! His teaching was peace! His last testament was peace and, through His atonement, from the opened heavens, the God of Peace and Consolation looks down upon the sons of men! The appropriateness of the title to the particular prayer will readily strike you, for *holiness* is peace. “May the God of Peace make you holy,” for He Himself is peace and holiness. When holiness reigned over the whole universe peace reigned also. There was no war in Heaven till one who had been an angel became a devil and fomented a rebellion against the thrice holy God!

Sin brings forth strife, but holiness is the mother of peace. In perfection there is peace and, therefore, Paul prays the God of Peace to make His children perfect. Holiness is well-pleasing to Him and when He is pleased, all is peace. Therefore Paul prays Him to work in them that which is well-pleasing in His sight. The God of Peace has, also, graciously restored peace and reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ. But it has been by the putting away of sin, for while sin remained, peace was impossible. “The blood of the Everlasting Covenant,” of which the text speaks, was the sealing of a Covenant of Peace which God made between Himself and man. Of old there were thoughts of peace in the mind of God towards His chosen.

In the fullness of time the gift of Christ and His atoning death was the actual establishment of peace, for He has made peace by the blood of His Cross. He is the ambassador of God to us and by His substitutionary Sacrifice peace was effectually made, “for He is our Peace.” By the blood of the Everlasting Covenant there was a treaty made between God and His elect which shall stand fast forever and ever. As for our Lord’s Resurrection and Ascension, of which the text speaks—“The God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus”—that was the open proclamation of peace. So long as Jesus was in the grave peace was not openly declared—it was assuredly established—but not publicly announced. But when the Mediator rose and especially when He ascended on high and received gifts for men and sat down at the right hand of God, even the Father, then, before the whole universe, it was declared that God was at peace with the sons of men.

Jesus is in all things the Adam, the model man, the representative of His people and peace with Him means peace with all who are in Him. He

died for our sins, but He rose again for our justification, which is none other than the replacing of us in a condition of reconciliation with God. He went into Heaven to take possession of our inheritance and what better evidence could there be that we are reconciled to God? If our Representative sits at His right hand, we may be confident that the Lord is reconciled unto us. Beloved, if you pursue the subject, you will see more and more clearly the significance of the title, “the God of Peace,” for, to make us perfect in every good work to do His will is to give us peace!

Although every Christian is justified by faith in Christ and so has a judicial peace with God, yet we never can enjoy perfect peace with our own consciences so long as any sin is committed by us, or dwells in us. So long as there shall remain a solitary tendency to sin within these members, we shall be disturbed. Sin will contend with Grace and newborn Grace will war with inbred sin. Sin and Grace can no more agree than fire and water. Even the God of Peace never tries to establish a peace between good and evil, for it would be monstrous even if it were possible! The way to peace is the way of holiness. Cast out sin and you cast out contention. Subdue iniquity and peace wins the victory.

Beloved, it is of no use for us to seek happiness in life except by the way of holiness of *conversation*. I have already declared that we have peace with God through the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ—but for deep calm of heart and quiet of conscience there must be a work of *sanctification* within us worked by the power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Sin is our enemy and the new life within us is heartily at enmity with evil and, therefore, peace can never be proclaimed in the triple kingdom of our nature until we always do that which is well-pleasing in the sight of the Lord, through Jesus Christ.

Nor is this all. When the Apostle, praying for our sanctification, prays to the God of Peace, it is as much as to say to us that we must view God as the God of Peace if we are to be led to do His will. O man, is God your enemy? Then you will never serve Him, nor do that which is well-pleasing in His sight! Do you, at this moment, feel a horror of God, a dread at the mention of His name? Then you can never do that which will please Him, for without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith is the reverse of horror! You must, first of all, know that there is peace between you and your God, and then you can please Him. This knowledge can only come to you through Christ Jesus, for peace is made only by “the blood of the Everlasting Covenant.”

When once you know that the Lord has made with you an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure, then you have leverage to work with. Then are you founded upon a rock whereon you may be built up in every form of obedience, but not till then. Peace with God is the root of virtue! Reconciliation by the death of His Son is the door to conformity to the life of His Son. May we know our Great Shepherd both in His dying Atonement and living example as the Lord and Giver of peace.

I think, also, that the Apostle, in thus praying to “the God of Peace,” had in His mind’s eye the entire Church of the Hebrews, or, if you will, any one Christian Church. Brethren, it is essential that we have peace in the Church! Whatever is the enmity on the outside, we must love one an-

other! If we do not walk in love, we certainly cannot have prosperity. God, alone, can give peace to a Church and He only gives it by sanctifying its members, stirring them up to good works, keeping them in sacred activity, making them fit to labor for Him and working in them to do that which is well-pleasing in His sight.

When you hear of disturbances in Churches you need not so much seek to compose the differences among the members as to amend the members, themselves! We would not gather so many thorns if the plants were fig trees. Wars and fights would never spring up among us if we were not carnal and unsanctified. If we were more spiritually-minded we would be more ready to forgive and less likely to offend or to be offended. "Are you not carnal?" asks the Apostle, "because one says, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Cephas," and the like. But once let the God of Peace sanctify each Believer and then will every man seek his brother's good and the things which make for peace. When you *pray* for the peace of Jerusalem, remember that you can *promote* it by laboring after holiness.

Before leaving this first head, I would call to your notice the fact that the title, the "God of Peace," sheds a light over the whole passage and is beautifully in harmony with every word of the prayer. Let us read it line by line. "Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus." War drives men down to the dead and is the great jackal of the grave. Ah, how sadly the nations see this exemplified in the East at this moment. War brings down death, but the God of Peace brings back from the dead. The restoration of the Lord Jesus from the grave was a *peaceful* act and was meant to be the guarantee of peace accomplished forever!

"That Great Shepherd of the sheep"—sheep are peaceful creatures—and a shepherd's occupation has not to do with blood-red fields of strife. We always couple with the idea of peace the quietness and repose of the sheepfold and the simple restfulness of flocks in green pastures. Peace is the very atmosphere of pastoral scenes. "Through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant." The very word, "Covenant," is, also, full of peace and especially is it so when we remember that it is a Covenant of peace which Eternal Love has established between Himself and man. Where no Covenant or league exists, war may break out at any time, but where a Covenant is once established there is peace and rest.

The Apostle goes on to pray, "Make you perfect in every good work to do His will." If God's will is done by us, then there must be peace, for no ground of difference can exist. "Working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight." Oh, the soft music of these words! When all in us is well-pleasing to God, then, indeed, is He the God of Peace to us! The final doxology is, also, very significant, for, in effect, it proclaims the universal and eternal reign of peace—"To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." What can there be to disturb the universe when the Lord God Omnipotent shall reign and all nations shall glorify and extol the Ever Blessed, world without end? Not without reason, therefore, did our Apostle select the title, "The God of Peace."

II. We have now briefly to consider THE SPECIAL ACT DWELT UPON IN THIS PRAYER. "That brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Cove-

nant.” Here I would have each one of you, for himself, read the passage of Scripture which I think the Apostle had in mind when he wrote these words. Turn to Isaiah 63:11—“Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is He that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of His flock? Where is He that put His Holy Spirit within them? That led them by the right hand of Moses with His glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make for Himself an everlasting name?”

See how this making to Himself an everlasting name tallies with the last clause—“To whom be glory forever and ever”? But let us proceed—“Who led them through the deep as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble.” Truly, those do not stumble in whom the Lord works “that which is well-pleasing in His sight.” “As a beast goes down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest”—there is the God of Peace—“so You lead Your people, to make Yourself a glorious name”—there again is the doxology, “To whom be glory forever and ever.” The historical event to which he alludes is the deliverance from Egypt and the coming up from the Red Sea!

Having saved His people by the blood of the Covenant which was smeared upon their doorposts, He led them to the Red Sea, their foes pursuing them. Into the Red Sea they descended—not to its banks, alone, did they go, but into its very depths they passed and there were they buried—the sea was as the place of death to them. Between its liquid walls and beneath the cloudy pillar which hung over the passage, they were baptized unto Moses and buried in Baptism as in a liquid tomb! But lo, they come up out of it again, led safely up from what became the grave of Pharaoh, with songs and shouts and rejoicing!

The parallel is this—“That Great Shepherd,” who is far greater than Moses and Aaron, must go down into the place of death on behalf of His people. He must, as the Representative of His flock, descend into the sepulcher. This He did, for He bowed His head and died. But lo, the Lord led Him up, again, from the deeps and He arose to life and glory—and all His people with Him! On that day the song might have been jubilant as that of Miriam when she chanted, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously. Your right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power.” But now, in this greater deliverance by “the blood of the Everlasting Covenant” the Psalm is not to the Lord who is a man of war, but to “the God of Peace.” The honor is ascribed to the same Lord, but under a gentler name and to Him be glory forever and ever.

I have no doubt that Paul, in part, borrowed his imagery from the Red Sea which is, of all deliverances, the most instructively typical. Is it not even in Heaven the chosen type, for there they sing the song of Moses the servant of God and of the Lamb? With that illustration to help us, we shall notice that the bringing back of the Lord Jesus from the dead was the seal of His perfected work and, consequently, of our peace and ultimate perfection in holiness. The Lord Jesus could no more be held by the bands of death but might justly return to His Throne. Because He had finished all His work, the Word of authority declared His freedom and He was brought back to His former Glory. Because He had worked all righteousness He

stood among living men—and because He had merited a crown of glory He rose even to the Throne of Jehovah, to sit there till His enemies are made His footstool. His work is finished and, therefore, God acknowledges the fact by bringing Him, again, from the dead!

Most wisely does the Apostle pray that He who thus owned Christ's finished work would finish His Spirit's work in us. Christ is perfected, therefore, O Lord, perfect Your saints! Jesus has done Your will, help *us* to do it! May He that brought Jesus from the dead in token of His completed righteousness bring up, also, His people from all relics of their death of sin and make them complete in holiness to the glory of His name! Beloved, we go further. The bringing, again, of Christ from the dead was, in effect, the leading back of all His people! Not without the sheep did the Shepherd come, for that were to return defeated. He went down into the grave to seek the lost sheep and, finding them, He flung them on His shoulders and, as He came up from the grave, He bore upon His mighty shoulders the sheep for whom He died.

The text speaks of, "Our Lord Jesus." Did you notice that? *Ours* in His offices of Shepherd and Savior—altogether *ours* as brought, again, from the dead! What He did was for us! He is the Great Shepherd of the sheep and, therefore, what He did was for the sheep. We can give many reasons why the Lord Jesus is the Great Shepherd. He is the Shepherd, not of one congregation, but of all the saints in all ages and because the sheep are His own and He who owns the sheep is far greater than He who only feeds the flock for another. But the reason which just now attracts my attention is this—if there is a Great Shepherd, there must be a great flock.

You cannot truly call any man a shepherd if he has no sheep, nor call him a great shepherd if he has not a great flock. So He "that brought again from the dead that Great Shepherd of the sheep," did, by that act and deed, bring up the *great flock* from the dead, too, for so long as our Lord Jesus can truly be called a shepherd, He must have a living flock—they are inseparable from Him and essential to Him. The Church is the fullness of Christ. A king is no king without subjects. A head is no head without a body and a shepherd is no shepherd without sheep. The idea of the Great Shepherd involves the chosen flock—His bringing, again, from the dead, as a Shepherd, involves their coming up in Him.

The Resurrection and the Glory of Christ are thus the resurrection and the glory of all His flock for whom He laid down His life! Glory be to His name for this! Now you see the force of the petition which may be interpreted thus—Lord, You have brought Your people up from the dead in Christ, therefore bring them up from all the death of sin. Quicken them to fullness of life. Perfect them in every good work to do Your will. Work in them that which is well-pleasing in Your sight because this is their spiritual resurrection, this is the giving to them what you did give to Christ on their behalf—therefore fulfill it unto them.

Beloved, it needs the same power to make us holy that it needed to bring our Savior from the dead! That same power which raised the dead body of Christ must raise us from our death in sin. The same power which enabled the living Christ to climb from earth to Heaven and take His Throne, must be exercised in living saints to make them rise from one de-

gree of holiness to another, till they shall be presented without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, before the Father. Yes, and that power comes to us because Christ has risen! “Because I live,” He says, “you shall live, also.” And because He lives to intercede, therefore His people are preserved from evil. Satan desires to have us, that he may sift us as wheat. But the Great Shepherd, who was brought, again, from the dead, is daily watching over us and pleading for us! And the power of His life, of His Kingdom and of His pleas are manifested in us so that we conquer temptation and advance from strength to strength in our pilgrimage to Heaven.

The text is all of one piece and each word is necessary and important. We have not here pious expressions strung together without reason, but every single syllable adds to the weight of the whole. The work described in this text must be worked in us by the Spirit of God. Jesus is the Model to which we are to be conformed. Beloved, you must go down to death as Jesus did and be buried with Him that you may rise with Him! There must be in you the death of all carnal power and strength or the power of God cannot be revealed in you! You must know the depths as Moses did—even the depths wherein proud self-sufficiency is drowned! You must be baptized in the cloud and in the sea—you must have, over you, the sentence of condemnation.

You must acknowledge in your own soul that in your flesh there dwells no good thing and that you are condemned under the Law—and then there must be worked in you a quickening, a coming to life, a coming up out of the place of condemnation and death! Happy is he who has come forth from the tomb of his former vain conversation, leaving the grave clothes of worldliness and sin behind—coming up to be clothed with a heavenly mind and to lead a new life, secret and Divine as that of the risen Savior! Yes, like that of the ascended Lord, “for He has raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.” “You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

Have you realized this? You have been buried in Baptism, many of you, but were you, at that time, partakers of your Lord’s death? You had no right to be buried if you were not dead! Did you really know that death had passed upon you before you were buried with your Savior? And now do you feel the life of God within you, quickening you to newness of life? If so, it will daily lift you to something nobler and better till you shall be ultimately raised to dwell where you shall never again be defiled by sin—where Satan shall be bruised under your feet and the God of Peace shall reign! When you shall dwell in perfect holiness, then shall you reign in perfect peace! May He who brought our Lord Jesus from the grave to Glory, bring you, also, along the upward way till you are with Him and like He forever!

III. Thirdly, let us notice THE VERY REMARKABLE MANNER IN WHICH THE HOLINESS PRAYED FOR IS DESCRIBED in the text. “Make you perfect in every good work to do His will.” That is the first clause, but the translation is not strictly accurate. The passage would be better rendered, “make you *fit* in every good work to do His will,” and the original Greek word, (though I have not noticed that expositors observe it, yet any-

one turning to the lexicon will see it), properly means to reset a bone that is dislocated.

The meaning of the text is this—by the Fall, all our bones are out of joint for the doing of the Lord's will. And the desire of the Apostle is that the Lord will set the bones in their places and thus make us able with every faculty and in every good work to do His will. If we take the arm-joint for our illustration, He would have it so well set that it may be capable of every movement for which an arm was at first constructed by Infinite Wisdom. A dislocated bone may be so badly set as only to be capable of a part of the motions natural to it—there may be a flaw in the surgery so that certain movements cannot be performed. There may be a stiffness and an awkwardness and even a positive inability for certain movements—this may be seen in some men's minds, but it is by no means desirable.

The Apostle would have every bone in us to be well set and our whole manhood fitted for performing every form of good work to thoroughly do the will of the Lord. What a blessed prayer! O Lord, You have raised Your Son up in perfection, not a bone of His was broken. And now we, who are His body, need to be set together and fixed, every joint in its own place, and the whole Church compactly knitted together by its bands and sinews, so that it may be in perfect order for performing Your Divine will.

I apprehend that our text refers not so much to any one Believer as to the entire Church, for the Apostle speaks of the Great Shepherd of the sheep, by which he must mean the whole Church. The Apostle prays that the Lord would perfectly joint His Church, put it into harmonious union and so make it fit to do all that God meant the Church to do here below. When shall we see our Churches in such a state? Alas, the disjointed members of our Churches cause great pain and weakness to the body—and only holiness can put them into their proper position. If I must take the text as applying to each individual, the prayer is that you and I may be fitted to do the Divine will everywhere—fitted to suffer, fitted to labor, fitted for the meanest office in the Church, (which requires a great deal of fitness, by the way), fitted for the highest work in the Church and fitted for anything that God wishes us to do.

The prayer, therefore, asks that we may not be competent for only one set of duties, but may be ready for all things. We shall greatly glorify God if we have a complete character in which every Grace shall be manifested and in which no single sin is seen to mar its consistency. Such is the prayer. Who can work this, good Lord? Who can work this in us? You can, O God of Peace, for You did bring up Your Son from the grave to the Throne! And You can bring up our mangled nature and perfect it till it shall be ready to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light, world without end. The first part of the prayer, then, is for fitness for holiness. The next is for actual service—"Working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight."

And here I ask you to notice how all things are of God. We might have thought that the Apostle would have said, "Lord, when You have made us fit to work for You, then help us to serve You." But he does not say so. He puts his prayer into a humbler form and asks the *Lord* to work in us.

What a heavy blow at all self-glory! How instructive to us! Dear Brothers and Sisters, when the Lord makes you fit for every good work, you will still do no good work unless He works it in you! Even he who is best adapted for the performance of virtue and holiness does not perform these things till the Lord works in him to will and to do of His own good pleasure!

Over and above this mode of securing all the Glory to God, notice the next clause—"through Jesus Christ." That which we do, even when the Lord works in us, we only do through Jesus Christ! We are nothing without our Lord and though we do what is acceptable in the Lord's sight, it is only acceptable through Jesus Christ! What nothings and nobodies we are! Even when the Lord does the most for us that can be done, so that we dwell in His sight and our actions become well-pleasing to Him and He looks upon us with delight—yet even then we are nothing! It is the Lord that has worked all in us, even the God of Peace, who is All in All!

To each fruitful bough He says, "From Me is your fruit found." When your garments sparkle like the sun, it is He that transfigures you! When your face shines like Moses' through secret communion upon the mountain, it is God's brightness which illuminates your brow! Our goodness is none of ours, "for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them."

IV. Our fourth point drops into its place very naturally, for we have already seen that THE WHOLE OF IT COMES TO A MOST APPROPRIATE CONCLUSION OF PRAISE—"To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." To glorify God is the objective of it all. We too much forget this. Praise is the flower for which the stalk of prayer exists. Praise to God is the essence of all the flowers of holiness, the motto of all the roses in the garden of the Church. God's Glory is the harvest for which all the plowing and sowing of ministry and evangelizing must be done. Glory to God in the highest and glory to His only begotten Son forever and ever—this is the pure gold for which we dig the mines of godly service.

It would be a very difficult question to decide to whom the last clause alludes, whether to, "the God of Peace," or to, "Our Lord Jesus" and, therefore, I think the safer way is to take them both together, for they are one. "To whom," that is to God. "To whom," that is to the Lord Jesus, "be glory forever and ever. Amen." Let it be so. It ought to be so, it must be so, it shall be so. Amen. Amen! Tarry just a minute while we give glory unto the Three in One God. O you hearts that love Him, glorify Him, first, as the God of Peace who had thoughts of peace and designs of peace and executed a Covenant of Peace on your behalf!

Glorify Him who is at peace with all His believing ones today. He lays His thunder by. He hangs His bow in the cloud as the token of His love. He puts aside His javelin and His buckler—He loves, He smiles, He speaks in tenderness. He is the God of Peace! Approach Him with holy delight! Adore Him! Glorify His name evermore! Then magnify Him, next, because He found for us a Shepherd. We were as sheep going astray and He sent His Son to shepherd us. He took from His own dear bosom His equal and eternal Son and sent Him here to gather us from the wilds and save us from the wolves. Glory be to You, You Shepherd of Israel, and to Your Father who sent You to this end!

Glorify Him, next, for the Covenant. What mercy is this, that God should enter into Covenant with man! Adore Him for the blood of the Covenant, that He gave His Only-Begotten to die to make that Covenant sure! Adore Him that the purchased, blood-begotten possession might never be alienated from one of those for whom He laid down His glorious life! Glory be to Father, Son and Holy Spirit! Praise Him, praise Him, praise Him, you blood-bought sons of men! Lift up your hearts with gratitude and joy, and bless the Lord who brought back the dying Shepherd to live and reign for you!

And then adore Him because the power which He exerted upon Christ He is now exerting upon you. You are not perfect, yet, but still, in your measure you are fitted for every good work. In many ways the Lord is qualifying you for service. In some of you He is working to do and in others to suffer the good pleasure of His will. Bless Him for every Grace received, for faith, however little. Bless Him for love, even though it burns not as you would desire. Bless Him for every conquered sin. Bless Him for every implanted Grace. Bless Him evermore! Bless Him that He deals with you through Jesus Christ. Through the Mediator all good has come to us and through the Mediator it will still come until that day when He shall deliver up the Throne to God, even the Father, and God shall be All in All!

Meanwhile we will glorify the mediatorial Lord and extol the Father and the consoling Spirit. Even now we join with cherubim and seraphim and adore Him to whom all worship belongs.

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