

# SERMONS

## THE NEW PARK STREET PULPIT

### VOLUME 2

*Published in 1856  
by Charles Spurgeon*

[When Exeter Hall could no longer be secured for services while New Park Street was being enlarged, the Music Hall of Royal Surrey Gardens was engaged for services. This was a popular amusement center in that day, and it was quite unusual for religious services to be held in such a place. During the first service, there was a disruption which evidently had been planned by evil men. At an appropriate time, cries of, "Fire," began to go out over the building, and a rush made toward the exits. Seven people were trampled to death, and Mr. Spurgeon suffered a mental and emotional shock that distraught his mind for several weeks before he was able to return to the pulpit again. But he did return and he drew even larger crowds to hear him at the Music Hall.]

## ~PREFACE~

EBENEZER! Hitherto the Lord has helped me. Truly may the writer say this; in fact he is compelled before he proceeds to write a few words of preface to express his hearty thanks that he is able to write at all! Great and sore troubles have rolled over his head' he has been exceedingly cast down. His mournful song was for a time—

*"Turn, turn You to my soul,  
Bring Your salvation near—  
When will Your hand release my feet  
Out of the deadly snare?  
The tumult of my thoughts  
Does but enlarge my woe.  
My spirit languishes, my heart  
Is desolate and low."*

But now, by merciful restoration, he can again sing of the loving-kindness of the Lord, and make known His faithfulness unto all generations! Renewed health and vigor demand new exertion and fresh gratitude; may divine grace compel us to the one, and divine love drive us to the other. Reader, it is no egotism on our part when we say, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together."

It is a source of great thankfulness that the Lord has spared us to see another year, and has allowed us to complete a second volume. To His

upholding grace be glory world without end! How shall the lips of unworthy men be able to show forth the wondrous grace of the Lord Jesus in preserving His people from year to year? And especially when they are exposed to perils from friends and foes, from without and within, from success and from sadness? To Him be all glory given, that His servants are kept in His right hand, and are not given over to the will of their enemies. Let feeble saints take courage—He who has helped us will not desert us in our future times of need.

The same doctrines which we taught last year are repeated in these sermons. We have met with nothing which has shaken our faith in the “good old paths,” but with many things which have compelled us to cleave unto the word of the Lord with fixed heart and determined spirit. Would that the time were come when the pure truth of the gospel would be more fully received among us. Our ministry is a testimony that no new theology is needed to stir the masses and save souls. We defy all the negative Theologians in England to give such proof of their ministry as we can. If we must be fools in glorying—we must boast that the old doctrines are victorious, and that the Lord, the Spirit, has most signally honored them! We do not cite the overwhelming and ever-increasing multitudes who listen to us as a proof in this matter, but we do and will glory in the power of the gospel, in that it has brought so many to the arms of Christ, and raised so many from the dunghill! In every place where the old gospel has been proclaimed, it has had its trophies from the worst of men, and we are no exception to the rule. The slain of the Lord have been many; His arrows have found out the hearts of His enemies—many have been overthrown by His Spirit, and have been ultimately brought to find life and healing in the blood of Jesus! The best evidences of the truth of our holy religion are to be found in the marvelous effects it produces. Drunkards, harlots, swearers, thieves, liars, and such like, when reclaimed and regenerated, are the jewels in the crown of the truth of God! Of such we must say in confidence, “What has God worked?” If these fruits were only found united with a learned and eloquent ministry, they would be imputed to *the man*, and *not to the truth of God*. But in this case—our enemies themselves are willing witnesses that they cannot so be accounted for—God has put His measure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power might be ascribed wholly to Himself! We would confess the truth of all that is uttered to our disparagement, for therein we do but magnify the grace of God, who works by the least of instruments, the greatest acts of His love. O for the days of pure doctrine preached with emphasis of earnestness, and demonstration of the Spirit—for these we look and wait. May the Lord send them in His own time.

The form in which these sermons are published, while it insures a wide circulation, has the disadvantage of preventing such a revision as the author would desire. Frequently they are issued with little more than

a momentary glance from his eyes, consequently errors in grammar and even expression are not infrequent. Nevertheless, we trust to the reader's judgment, and hope that the mistakes are not such as to obscure the sense, or to mislead him in cardinal points. We had rather send them forth with all errors than withhold them, seeing that the Lord has acknowledged them for good.

The talented reporters, Messrs. Reed & Robeson, are worthy of praise for the excellent manner in which for the most part they are able to retain the words of a rapid and abrupt speaker. And for the printers we can say no more than this—that they do the work speedily, at a cheap cost—and considering the difficulties which they have to encounter from our constant journeys here and there, they manage to effect it as free from errors as is possible to mortals.

The sermons of last year have enjoyed a very wide circulation in America—a volume having been reprinted in the United States. It has reached the number of 20,000 in a short time. With the divine blessing, how much may be accomplished, but without it, how terrible the waste of effort and opportunity.

And now, reader, if you are a renewed soul, may our covenant God feed you, keep you, and perfect you; and may the words of your brother in Christ be the means of some little comfort and edification to you. It is the same Lord who has loved us both, and we hope that He will unite us all in the unity of the Spirit, and in the bonds of love.

But if you are ungodly, look at the last words of the volume, and consider them, and may Jesus the Savior give you grace to turn to Him and be saved!

***This is the fervent prayer of,  
Yours to serve in the gospel,***

**C. H. SPURGEON**

London, January, 1857.

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# CHRIST OUR PASSOVER

## NO. 54

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, DECEMBER 2, 1855,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”  
1 Corinthians 5:7.***

THE more you read the Bible and the more you meditate upon it, the more you will be astonished with it. He who is but a casual reader of the Bible does not know the height, the depth, the length and breadth of the mighty meanings contained in its pages. There are certain times when I discover a new vein of thought and I put my hand to my head and say in astonishment, “Oh, it is wonderful! I never saw this before in the Scriptures.” You will find the Scriptures enlarge as you enter them—the more you study them, the less you will appear to know of them—for they widen out as we approach them. Especially will you find this the case with the typical parts of God’s Word. Most of the historical books were intended to be types either of dispensations, or experiences, or offices of Jesus Christ. Study the Bible with this as a key and you will not blame Herbert when he calls it, “not only the book of God, but the God of books.” one of the most interesting points of the Scriptures is their constant tendency to display Christ. And perhaps one of the most beautiful figures under which Jesus Christ is ever exhibited in Sacred Writ is the Passover Paschal Lamb. It is Christ of whom we are about to speak tonight!

Israel was in Egypt in extreme bondage. The severity of their slavery had continually increased till it was so oppressive that their incessant groans went up to heaven. God, who avenges His own elect, though they cry day and night unto Him, at last determined that He would direct a fearful blow against Egypt’s king and Egypt’s nation and deliver His people. We can picture the anxieties and the anticipations of Israel, but we can scarcely sympathize with them, unless we, as Christians, have had the same deliverance from spiritual Egypt. Let us, brothers and sisters, go back to the day in our experience when we lived in the land of Egypt, working in the brick-kilns of sin, toiling to make ourselves better and finding it to be of no avail. Let us recall that memorable night, the beginning of months, the commencement of a new life in our spirit and the beginning of an altogether new era in our soul. The Word of God struck the blow at our sin. He gave us Jesus Christ, our sacrifice! And in that night we went out of Egypt. Though we have passed through the wilderness since then and have fought the Amalekites, have trod on the fiery serpent, have been scorched by the heat and frozen by the snows, yet we have never, since that time, gone back to Egypt—although our hearts may sometimes have desired the leeks, the onions and the flesh-pots of

Egypt—we have never been brought into slavery since then! Come, let us keep the Passover this night and think of the night when the Lord delivered us out of Egypt. Let us behold our Savior Jesus as the Paschal Lamb on which we feed. Let us not only look at Him as such, but let us sit down, tonight, at His table. Let us eat of His flesh and drink of His blood—His flesh is meat, indeed, and His blood is drink, indeed! In holy solemnity let our hearts approach that ancient supper. Let us go back to Egypt's darkness and by holy contemplation behold, instead of the destroying angel, the Angel of the covenant at the head of the feast—"The Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world."

I shall not have time, tonight, to enter into the whole history and mystery of the Passover. You will not understand me to be, tonight, preaching concerning *the whole of it*, but a few prominent points therein as a part of them. It would require a dozen sermons to do so—in fact a book as large as Caryl upon Job—if we could find a divine equally wordy and equally sensible. But we shall first of all look at the Lord Jesus Christ and show how He corresponds with the Paschal Lamb—and endeavor to bring you to the two points of having His blood sprinkled on you and having fed on Him.

**I.** First, then, JESUS CHRIST IS TYPIFIED HERE UNDER THE PASCHAL LAMB and should there be one of the seed of Abraham here who has never seen Christ to be the Messiah, I beg his special attention to that which I am to advance when I speak of the Lord Jesus as none other than the Lamb of God slain for the deliverance of His chosen people. Follow me with your Bibles and open, first, at the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Exodus.

We commence, first of all, with the victim—*the lamb*. How fine a picture of Christ; no other creature could so well have typified Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. Being also the emblem of sacrifice, it most sweetly portrayed our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Search natural history through and through and you will find other emblems which set forth different characteristics of His nature and admirably display Him to our souls, yet there is none which seems so appropriate to the person of our beloved Lord as that of the Lamb. A child would at once perceive the likeness between a lamb and Jesus Christ, so gentle and innocent, so mild and harmless, neither hurting others, nor seeming to have the power to resent an injury—

***"A humble man before His foes,  
A weary man and full of woes."***

What tortures the sheepish race have received from us! How are they, though innocent, continually slaughtered for our food! Their skin is dragged from their backs, their wool is shorn to give us a garment. And so the Lord Jesus Christ, our glorious Master, does give us His garments that we may be clothed with them. He is torn in sunder for us—His very blood is poured out for our sins—harmless and holy, a glorious sacrifice for the sins of all His children. Thus the Paschal Lamb might well convey

to the pious Hebrew, the person of a suffering, silent, patient, harmless Messiah.

Look further down. It was a lamb *without blemish*. A blemished lamb—if it had the smallest speck of disease, the least wound—would not have been allowed for a Passover. The priest would not have allowed it to be slaughtered, nor would God have accepted the sacrifice at his hands. It must be a lamb without blemish. And was not Jesus Christ even such from His birth? Unblemished, born of the pure virgin Mary, begotten of the Holy Spirit, without a taint of sin. His soul was pure and spotless as the driven Snow—white, clear, perfect. And His life was the same. In Him was no sin. He took our infirmities and bore our sorrows on the cross. He was in all points tempted as we are, but there was that sweet exception, “yet without sin.” A lamb without blemish; you who have known the Lord, who have tasted of His grace, who have held fellowship with Him—does not your heart acknowledge that He is a lamb without blemish? Can you find any fault with your Savior? Have you anything to lay to His charge? Has His truthfulness departed? Have His words been broken? Have His promises failed? Has He forgotten His engagements? And, in any respect, can you find in Him any blemish? Ah, no! He is the unblemished Lamb, the pure, the spotless, the immaculate—“The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”—and in Him there is no sin.

Go on further down the chapter. Your lamb shall be without blemish, “*a male of the first year*.” I need not stop to consider the reason why the male was chosen. We only note that it was to be a male of the first year. Then it was in its prime, then its strength was unexhausted, then its power was just ripened into maturity and perfection. God would not have an untimely fruit. God would not have that offered which had not come to maturity. And so our Lord Jesus Christ had just come to the ripeness of manhood when He was offered! At 33 years of age was He sacrificed for our sins; He was then hale and strong, although His body may have been emaciated by suffering and His face more marred than that of any other man—yet was He then in the perfection of manhood. I think I see Him then; His goodly beard flowing down upon His breast. I see Him with His eyes full of genius, His form erect, His manner majestic, His energy entire, His whole frame in full development—a real man, a magnificent man—fairer than the sons of men, a lamb not only without blemish but with His powers fully brought out! Such was Jesus Christ—a Lamb of the first year—not a boy, not a lad, not a young man, but a full man, that He might give His soul unto us. He did not give Himself to die for us when He was a youth, for He would not, then, have given all He was to be. He did not give Himself to die for us when He was in old age, for then would He have given Himself when He was in decay. But just in His maturity, in His very prime, then Jesus Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us! And, moreover, at the time of His death, Christ was full of life, for we are informed by one of the Evangelists that, “He cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost.” This is a sign that Jesus did not die through weak-

ness, nor through decay of nature. His soul was strong within Him! He was still the Lamb of the first year. Still was He mighty. He could, if He pleased, even on the cross, have unlocked His hands from their iron bolts—and descending from the tree of infamy—have driven His astonished foes before Him like deer scattered by a lion! Yet did He meekly yield obedience unto death.

My soul, can you not see your Jesus, here, the unblemished Lamb of the first year, strong and mighty? And, O my heart! Does not the thought rise up—if Jesus consecrated Himself to you when He was thus in all His strength and vigor, should not I, in youth, dedicate myself to Him? And if I am in manhood, how am I doubly bound to give my strength to Him? And if I am in old age, still should I seek while the little remains to consecrate that little to Him! If He gave His all to me, which was much, should I not give my little all to Him? Should I not feel bound to consecrate myself entirely to His service, to lay body, soul and spirit, time, talents—all—upon His altar? And though I am not an unblemished lamb, yet I am happy that as the leavened cake was accepted with the sacrifice, though never burned with it—I, though a leavened cake—may be offered on the altar with my Lord and Savior, the Lord's burnt offering! And so, though impure and full of leaven, I may be accepted in the beloved, an offering of a sweet savor, acceptable unto the Lord, my God. Here is Jesus, beloved, a Lamb without blemish, a Lamb of the first year!

The subject now expands and the interest deepens. Let me have your very serious consideration to the next point which has much gratified me in its discovery and which will instruct you in the relation. In the 6<sup>th</sup> verse of the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Exodus we are told that this lamb which should be offered at the Passover was to *be selected four days before its sacrifice and to be kept apart*. Beginning at the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse, we read, "In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house—and if the household is too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls, every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb." The 6<sup>th</sup> verse says, "And you shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month." For four days this lamb, chosen to be offered, was taken away from the rest of the flock and kept alone by itself: for two reasons—partly that by its constant bleating they might be put in remembrance of the solemn feast which was to be celebrated. And moreover, that during the four days they might be quite assured that it had no blemish, for during that time it was subject to constant inspection in order that they might be certain that it had no hurt or injury that would render it unacceptable to the Lord.

And now, brothers and sisters, a remarkable fact flashes before you—just as this lamb was separated four days, the ancient allegories used to say that Christ was separated four years! Four years after He left His father's house, He went into the wilderness and was tempted of the devil.

Four years after His Baptism, He was sacrificed for us. But there is another, better than that—about four days before His Crucifixion, Jesus Christ rode in triumph through the streets of Jerusalem! He was thus openly set apart as being distinct from mankind. He, on the donkey, rode up to the Temple, that all might see Him to be Judah's Lamb, chosen of God and ordained from the foundation of the world! And what is more remarkable, still, during those four days, you will see, if you turn to the Evangelists, at your leisure, that as much is recorded of what He did and said as through all the other parts of His life! During those four days He upbraided the fig tree and straightway it withered. It was then that He drove the buyers and sellers from the Temple. It was then that He rebuked the priests and elders by telling them the similitude of the two sons, one of whom said he would go and did not—and the other who said he would not go and did. It was then that He narrated the parable of the husbandmen who slew those who were sent to them. Afterwards He gave the parable of the marriage of the king's son. Then comes His parable concerning the man who went unto the feast, not having on a wedding garment. And then, also, the parable concerning the ten virgins, five of whom were wise and five of whom were foolish. Then comes the chapter of very striking denunciations against the Pharisees—"Woe unto you, O you blind Pharisees! Cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter." And then, also, comes that long chapter of prophecy concerning what should happen at the siege of Jerusalem and an account of the dissolution of the world—"Learn a parable of the fig tree: when his branch is yet tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near." But I will not trouble you by telling you, here, that at the same time He gave them that splendid description of the Day of Judgment when the sheep shall be divided from the goats. In fact, the most splendid utterances of Jesus were recorded as having taken place within these four days! Just as the lamb separated from its fellows did bleat more than ever during the four days, so did Jesus during those four days speak more! And if you want to find a choice saying of Jesus, turn to the account of the last four days' ministry to find it. There you will find that chapter, "Let not your hearts be troubled," there also His great prayer, "Father, I will." And so on. The greatest things He did, He did in the last four days, when He was set apart.

And there is one more thing to which I beg your particular attention. During those four days, I told you that the lamb was subject to the closest scrutiny, so, also, during those four days it is singular to relate that Jesus Christ was examined by all classes of persons. It was during those four days that the lawyer asked Him which was the greatest commandment. And he said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might and you shall love your neighbor as yourself." It was then that the Herodians came and questioned Him about the tribute money. It was then that the Pharisees tempted Him. It was then, also, the Sadducees tried Him upon the sub-

ject of the Resurrection. He was tried by all classes and grades—Herodians, Pharisees, Sadducees, lawyers and the common people. It was during these four days that He was examined—and how did He come forth? An immaculate Lamb! The officers said, “Never man spoke like this man.” His foes found none who could even bear false witness against Him such as agreed together. And Pilate declared, “I find no fault in Him.” He would not have been fit for the Paschal Lamb had a single blemish have been discovered, but, “I find no fault in Him,” was the utterance of the great chief magistrate who thereby declared that the Lamb might be eaten at God’s Passover, the symbol and the means of the deliverance of God’s people! O beloved, you have only to study the Scriptures to find out wondrous things in them! You have only to search deeply and you will stand amazed at their richness! You will find God’s Word to be a very precious word. The more you live by it and study it, the more will it be endeared to your minds.

But the next thing we must mark is *the place where this lamb was to be*, which peculiarly sets forth that it must be Jesus Christ. The first Passover was held in Egypt, the second Passover was held in the wilderness, but we do not read that there were more than these two Passovers celebrated until the Israelites came to Canaan. And then, if you turn to a passage in Deuteronomy, the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter you will find that God no longer allowed them to slay the Lamb in their own houses but appointed a place for its celebration. In the wilderness, they brought their offerings to the tabernacle where the lamb was slaughtered. But at its first appointment in Egypt, of course they had no special place to which they took the lamb to be sacrificed. Afterwards, we read in the 16<sup>th</sup> of Deuteronomy and the 5<sup>th</sup> verse—“You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates, which the Lord your God gives you. But at the place which the Lord your God shall choose to place His name in, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that you came forth out of Egypt.” It was in Jerusalem that men ought to worship, for salvation was of the Jews. There was God’s palace, there His altar smoked and there, only, might the Paschal Lamb be killed. So was our blessed Lord led to Jerusalem; the infuriated throng dragged Him along the city. In Jerusalem our Lamb was sacrificed for us. It was at the precise spot were God had ordained that it should be! Oh, if that mob who gathered round Him at Nazareth had been able to push Him headlong down the hill, then Christ could not have died at Jerusalem. But as He said, “A prophet cannot perish out of Jerusalem,” so was it true that the King of all prophets could not do otherwise—the prophecies concerning Him would not have been fulfilled. “You shall kill the lamb in the place the Lord your God shall appoint.” He was sacrificed in the very place! Thus, again you have an incidental proof that Jesus Christ was the Paschal Lamb for His people.

The next point is *the manner of his death*. I think the manner in which the lamb was to be offered so peculiarly sets forth the Crucifixion of

Christ that no other kind of death could by any means have answered all the particulars set down here.

First, the lamb was to be slaughtered and its blood caught in a basin. Usually the priest stood at the altar. The Levites, or the people slaughtered the lamb and the blood was caught in a golden basin. Then, as soon as it was taken, the priest, standing by the altar on which the fat was burning, threw the blood on the fire or cast it at the foot of the altar. You may guess what a scene it was. Ten thousand lambs sacrificed and the blood poured out in a purple river. Next, the lamb was to be roasted, but it was not to have a bone of its body broken. Now I do say there is nothing but crucifixion which can answer all these three things. Crucifixion has in it the shedding of blood—the hands and feet were pierced. It has in it the idea of roasting, for roasting signifies a long torment. And as the lamb was, for a long time, before the fire, so Christ, in Crucifixion, was for a long time exposed to a broiling sun and all the other pains which Crucifixion engenders. Moreover not a bone was broken—which could not have been the case with any other punishment. Suppose it had been possible to put Christ to death in any other way. Sometimes the Romans put criminals to death by decapitation. But by a such death the neck is broken. many martyrs were put to death by having a sword pierced through them. While that would have been a bloody death and not a bone broken, necessarily, the torment would not have been long enough to have been pictured by the roasting. So that, take whatever punishment you will—take hanging, which sometimes the Romans practiced in the form of strangling—that mode of punishment does not involve shedding of blood and consequently the requirements would not have been answered. And I do think any intelligent Jew, reading through this account of the Passover and then looking at the Crucifixion must be struck by the fact that the penalty and death of the cross by which Christ suffered must have taken in all these three things. There was blood-shedding. The long continued suffering—the roasting of torture and then added to that, singularly enough, by God's providence not a bone was broken! The body was taken down from the cross intact. Some may say that burning might have answered the matter but there would not have been a shedding of blood in that case and the bones would have been virtually broken in the fire. Besides, the body would not have been preserved entire. Crucifixion was the only death which could answer all of these three requirements. And my faith receives great strength from the fact that I see my Savior not only as a fulfillment of the type, but the only one! My heart rejoices to look on Him whom I have pierced and see His blood, as the lamb's blood, sprinkled on my lintel and my doorpost and see His bones unbroken and to believe that not a bone of His spiritual body shall be broken hereafter. And I rejoice, also, to see Him roasted in the fire, because thereby I see that He satisfied God for that roasting which I ought to have suffered in the torment of hell forever and ever.

Christian! I would that I had words to depict in better language—but, as it is, I give you the undigested thoughts which you may take home and live upon during the week. For you will find this Paschal Lamb to be an hourly feast, as well as supper—you may feed upon it continually, till you come to the mount of God where you shall see Him as He is!

**II. HOW WE DERIVE BENEFIT FROM THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.** Christ our Passover is slain for us. The Jew could not say that. He could say a lamb, but “The *Lamb*,” even, “Christ our Passover,” was not yet become a victim. And there are some of my hearers within these walls, tonight, who cannot say, “Christ our Passover is slain for us.” But glory be to God, some of us can! There are not a few here who have laid their hands upon the glorious scapegoat and now they can put their hands upon the Lamb, also, and they can say, “Yes. It is true. He is not only slain, but Christ our Passover is slain for us.” We derive benefit from the death of Christ in two modes—first, by having His blood sprinkled on us for our *redemption*; secondly, by our eating His flesh for food, *regeneration* and *sanctification*. The first aspect in which a sinner views Jesus is that of a lamb slain, whose blood is sprinkled on the doorpost and on the lintel. Note the fact that the blood was never sprinkled on the threshold. It was sprinkled on the lintel, the top of the door, but never on the threshold, for woe unto him who tramples under foot the blood of the Son of God! Even the priest of Dagon trod not on the threshold of his god. Much less will the Christian trample under foot the blood of the Paschal Lamb. But His blood must be on our right hand to be our constant guard and on our left to be our continual support. We need to have Jesus Christ sprinkled on us. As I told you before, it is not alone the blood of Christ poured out on Calvary that saves a sinner. It is the blood of Christ sprinkled on the heart. Let us turn to the land of Zoan. Do you not think you behold the scene tonight! It is evening. The Egyptians are going home—little thinking of what is coming. But just as soon as the sun is set, a lamb is brought into every house. The Egyptian strangers passing by, say, “These Hebrews are about to keep a feast tonight,” and they retire to their houses utterly careless about it. The father of the Hebrew house takes his lamb. He examines it once more with anxious curiosity. He looks it over from head to foot, to see if it has a blemish. He finds none. “My son,” he says to one of them, “Bring here the basin.” It is held. He stabs the lamb and the blood flows into the basin. Do you not think you see the sire, as he commands his matronly wife to roast the lamb before the fire! “Take heed,” he says, “that not a bone is broken.” Do you see her intense anxiety as she puts it down to roast, lest a bone should be broken? “Now,” says the father, “bring a bunch of hyssop.” A child brings it. The father dips it into the blood. “Come here, my children, wife and all and see what I am about to do.” He takes the hyssop in his hands, dips it in the blood and sprinkles it across the lintel and the doorpost. His children say, “What mean you by this ordinance?” He answers, “This night the Lord God will pass through to smite the Egyptians

and when He sees the blood upon the lintel and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the Destroyer to come into your houses to smite you.” The thing is done. The lamb is cooked. The guests are set down to it, the father of the family has supplicated a blessing. They are sitting down to feast upon it. And mark how the old man carefully divides joint from joint, lest a bone should be broken. And he is particular that the smallest child of the family should have some of it to eat, for so the Lord has commanded. Do you not think you see him as he tells them, “It is a solemn night—make haste—in another hour we shall all go out of Egypt.” He looks at his hands, they are rough with labor. Clapping them, he cries, “I am not to be a slave any longer!”

His eldest son, perhaps, has been smarting under the lash and he says, “Son, you have had the task-master’s lash upon you this afternoon. But it is the last time you shall feel it.” He looks at them all, with tears in his eyes—“This is the night the Lord God will deliver you.” Do you see them with their hats on their heads, with their loins girt and their staves in their hands? It is the dead of the night. Suddenly they hear a shriek! The father says, “Keep within doors, my children. You will know what it is in a moment.” Now another shriek—another shriek—shriek succeeds shriek—they hear perpetual wailing and lamentation! “Remain within,” he says, “the angel of death is flying abroad.” A solemn silence is in the room and they can almost hear the wings of the angel flap in the air as he passes their blood-marked door. “Be calm,” says the sire, “that blood will save you.” The shrieking increases. Eat quickly, my children,” he says again. And in a moment the Egyptians coming, say, “Get out of here! Get out of here! We care not for the jewels that you have borrowed. You have brought death into our houses.” “Oh,” says a mother, “Go! For God’s sake, go! My eldest son lies dead!” “Go!” says a father “Go! And peace go with you. It were an ill day when your people came into Egypt and our king began to slay your first-born, for God is punishing us for our cruelty.” Ah, see them leaving the land. The shrieks are still heard. The people are busy about their dead. As they go out, a son of Pharaoh is taken away unembalmed, to be buried in one of the pyramids. Presently they see one of their task-master’s sons taken away. A happy night for them—when they escape! And do you see, my hearers, a glorious parallel? They had to sprinkle the blood and also to eat the lamb. Ah, my soul, have you ever had the blood sprinkled on you? Can you say that Jesus Christ is yours? It is not enough to say, “He loved the world and gave His Son,” you must say, “He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*.” There is another hour coming, dear friends, when we shall all stand before God’s bar. And then God will say, “Angel of Death, you once did smite Egypt’s first-born. You know your prey. Unsheathe your sword.” I behold the great gathering. You and I are standing among them. It is a solemn moment. all men stand in suspense. There is neither hum nor murmur. The very stars cease to shine lest the light should disturb the air by its motion! all is still. God says, “Have you sealed those that are Mine?” “I

have,” says Gabriel, “they are sealed by blood, every one of them.” Then He next says, “Sweep with your sword of slaughter! Sweep the Earth! And send the unclothed, the unpurchased, the unwashed ones to the pit of hell.” Oh, how shall we feel, beloved, when for a moment we see that angel flap his wings? He is just about to fly. “But,” will the doubt cross our minds, “perhaps he will come to me”? Oh, no! We shall stand and look the angel full in his face—

**“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.”**

If we have the blood on us, we shall see the angel coming and we shall smile at him. We shall dare to come even to God’s face and say—

**“Great God! I’m clean!  
Through Jesus’ blood, I’m clean!”**

But, my hearer, if your unwashed spirit shall stand before its Maker; if your guilty soul shall appear with all its black spots upon it, unsprinkled with the purple tide—how will you speak when you see the flash from the scabbard—the angel’s sword swift for death, and winged for destruction when it shall cleave you asunder? I think I see you standing now. The angel is sweeping away a thousand there. There is one of your drinking companions. There one with whom you did dance and swear. There another, who after attending the same chapel, like you, was a despiser of religion! Now death comes nearer to you, just as when the reaper sweeps the field and the next ear trembles because its turn shall come next. I see a brother and a sister swept into the pit of hell! Have I no blood upon me? Then, O rocks, it were kind of you to hide me! You have no benevolence in your arms. Mountains let me find in your caverns some little shelter! But it is all in vain, for vengeance shall cleave the mountains and split the rocks open to find me out! Have I no blood? Have I no hope? Ah, no! He smites me. Eternal damnation is my horrible portion! The depth of the darkness of Egypt for you and the horrible torments of the pit of hell from which none can escape! Ah, my dear hearers, could I preach as I could wish, could I speak to you without my lips and with my heart, then would I bid you seek that sprinkled blood and urge you, by the love of your own soul—by everything that is sacred and eternal—to labor to get this blood of Jesus sprinkled on your souls. It is the blood sprinkled that saves a sinner!

But when the Christian gets the blood sprinkled, that is not all he needs. *He needs something to feed upon.* And, O sweet thought! Jesus Christ is not only a Savior for sinners, but He is food for them after they are saved! The Paschal Lamb by faith we eat. We live on it. You may tell, my hearers, whether you have the blood sprinkled on the door by this—do you eat the Lamb? Suppose for a moment that one of the old Jews had said in his heart, “I do not see the use of this feasting. It is quite right to sprinkle the blood on the lintel or else the door will not be known. But what good is all this inside? We will have the lamb prepared

and we will not break his bones, but we will not eat of it.” And suppose he went and stored the lamb away. What would have been the consequence? Why, the angel of death would have killed him as well as the rest, even if the blood had been upon him! If they had not consumed the lamb but had reserved some of it, then the sword of the angel would have found the heart out as well as that of any other man! Oh, dear hearer, you may think you have the blood sprinkled. You may think you are just. But if you do not live *on* Christ as well as *by* Christ, you will never be saved by the Paschal Lamb! “Ah,” say some, “we know nothing of this.” Of course you don’t. When Jesus Christ said, “Except you eat My flesh and drink My blood, you have no life in you,” there were some that said, “This is a hard saying, who can bear it?” And many from that time went back—and walked no more with Him. They could not understand Him. But, Christian, do you not understand it? Is not Jesus Christ your daily food? And even with the bitter herbs, is He not sweet food? Some of you, my friends, who are true Christians, live too much on your changing frames and feelings, on your experiences and evidences. Now, that is all wrong! That is just as if a worshipper had gone to the tabernacle and began eating one of the coats that were worn by the priest. When a man lives on Christ’s righteousness it is the same as eating Christ’s garment. When a man lives on his frames and feelings, that is as much as if the child of God should live on some tokens that he received in the sanctuary that never were meant for food, but only to comfort him a little. What the Christian lives on is *not* Christ’s righteousness, but CHRIST! He does not live on Christ’s pardon, but on Christ! And on Christ he lives daily! Oh, I do love Christ-preaching. It is not the doctrine of justification that does my heart good, it is Christ, the justifier! It is not pardon that so much makes the Christian’s heart rejoice, as it is Christ the pardoner. It is not election that I love half as much as my being chosen in Christ before worlds began! Yes, it is not final perseverance that I love as much as the thought that in Christ my life is hid and that since He gives unto His sheep, eternal life, they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of His hand! Take care, Christian, to eat the Paschal Lamb and nothing else. I tell you man, if you eat that alone, it will be like bread to you—your soul’s best food! If you live on anything else but the Savior, you are like one who seeks to live on some weed that grows in the desert, instead of eating the manna that comes down from heaven! Jesus is the manna! *In* Jesus as well as *by* Jesus we live. Now, dear friends, in coming to this table, we will keep the Paschal Supper. Once more, by faith, we will eat the Lamb. By holy trust we will come to a Crucified Savior and feed on His blood.

And now, in concluding, let me ask you, are you hoping to be saved, my friends? One says, “Well, I don’t hardly know. I hope to be saved, but I do not know how.” Do you think I tell you a fiction when I tell you that people are hoping to be saved by works? It is not so, it is a reality! In traveling through the country, I meet with all sorts of characters, but

most frequently with self-righteous persons. How often do I meet with a man who thinks himself quite godly because he attends church once on a Sunday and who thinks himself quite righteous because he belongs to the establishment. As a churchman [Church of England member] said to me the other day, "I am a rigid churchman." "I am glad of that," I said to him, "because then you are a Calvinist, if you hold the 'Articles'." He replied "I don't know about the 'Articles,' I go more by the 'Rubric.'" And so I thought he was more of a formalist than a Christian! There are many persons like that in the world. Another says, "I believe I shall be saved. I don't owe anybody anything. I have never been a bankrupt. I pay everybody twenty shillings in the pound. I never get drunk. And if I wrong anybody at any time, I try to make up for it by giving a pound a year to such-and-such a Society. I am as religious as most people. And I believe I shall be saved." That will not do! It is as if some old Jew had said, "We don't want the blood on the lintel, we have got a mahogany lintel. We don't want the blood on the doorpost, we have a mahogany doorpost." Ah, whatever it was, the angel would have smitten it, if it had not had the blood upon it! You may be as righteous as you like—if you have not the blood sprinkled—all the goodness of your doorposts and lintels will be of no avail whatever.

"Yes," says another, "I am not trusting exactly there. I believe it is my duty to be as good as I can. But then I think Jesus Christ's mercy will make up the rest. I try to be as righteous as circumstances will allow and I believe that whatever deficiencies there may be, Christ will make them up." That is as if a Jew had said, "Child, bring me the blood," and then when that was brought, he had said, "bring me a pitcher of water." And then he had taken it and mixed it together and sprinkled the doorpost with it. Why the angel would have smitten him as well as anyone else, for it is *blood, blood, blood, blood* that saves! It is not blood mixed with the water of our poor works. It is *blood, blood, blood, blood* and nothing else! And the only way of salvation is by blood! For, without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Have precious blood sprinkled upon you, my hearers. Trust in precious blood! Let your hope be in a salvation sealed with an atonement of precious blood and you are saved! But having no blood, or having blood mixed with anything else, you are damned as you are alive—for the angel shall slay you, however good and righteous you may be! Go home, then and think of this—"Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."

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# THE EXODUS

## NO. 55

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 9, 1855  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years,  
even the same day it came to pass, that all the hosts  
of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.”  
Exodus 12:41.***

IT is our firm conviction and increasing belief that the historical books of Scripture were intended to teach us by types and figures, spiritual things. We believe that every portion of Scripture history is not only a faithful transcript of what did actually happen, but also a shadow of what happens *spiritually* in the dealings of God with His people, or in the dispensations of His grace towards the world at large. We do not look upon the historical books of Scripture as being mere rolls of history, such as profane authors might have written; we regard them as being most true and infallible records of the past, and also most bright and glorious foreshadowing of the future, as well as most wondrous metaphors, and marvelous illustrations of things which are verily received among us and most truly felt in the Christian heart. We may be wrong, but we believe we are not. At any rate, the very error has given us instruction, and our mistakes have afforded us comfort. We look upon the Book of Exodus as being a book of types of the deliverances which God will give to His elect people—not only as a history of what He *has done* in bringing them out of Egypt by smiting the first-born, leading them through the Red Sea, and guiding them through the wilderness, but also as a picture of His faithful dealings with all His people, whom by the blood of Christ He separates them from the Egyptians, and by His strong and mighty hand takes them out of the house of their bondage, and out of the land of their slavery!

Last Sabbath evening we had the type of the Passover—the Paschal Lamb. [See Sermon #54, Volume 2—CHRIST OUR PASSOVER—Read/download the entire sermon free of charge at [www.spurgeongems.org](http://www.spurgeongems.org).] And we showed you, then, how the sprinkled blood, and the eaten lamb were types of the blood applied for our justification and of the flesh received by inward communion with Jesus, the soul living and feeding upon Him. We now take the Exodus, or the going out of Egypt of the children of Israel, as being a type and picture of the going out of all the vessels of mercy from the house of their bondage—and as the deliverance of all the lawful captives from the chains of

their cruel taskmasters—by sovereign and omnipotent grace, through the Passover of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The land of Egypt is a picture of the house of bondage into which all God's covenant people will sooner or later be brought, on account of their sin. All those whom God means to give an inheritance in Canaan; He will first take down into Egypt. Even Jesus Christ, Himself, went into Egypt before He appeared publicly as a teacher before the world, that in His instance, as well as in that of every Christian, the prophecy might be fulfilled—"Out of Egypt have I called My Son." Everyone who enjoys the liberty wherewith Christ does make us free must first feel the galling bondage of sin! Our wrists must be made to smart by the fetters of our iniquity, and our backs must be made to bleed by the lash of the law—the taskmaster which drives us to Jesus Christ! There is no true liberty which is not preceded by true bondage; there is no true deliverance from sin unless we have first of all groaned and cried unto God, as did the people of Israel when in bondage in Egypt. We must all serve in the brick kiln; we must all be wearied with toiling among the pots, or otherwise we could never realize that glorious verse—"Though you have lain among the pots, yet shall you be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." We must have bondage before liberty! Before resurrection there must come death! Before life there must come corruption! Before we are brought out of the horrible pit, and the miry clay, we must be made to exclaim, "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing." And before like Jonah we can be fetched out of the whale's belly, and delivered from our sin, we must have been taken down to the bottoms of the mountains, with the weeds wrapped about our heads, shuddering under a deep sense of our own nothingness, and fearing that the earth with her bars might be about us forever! Taking this as a key, you will see that the deliverance out of Egypt is a beautiful picture of the deliverance of all God's people from the bondage of the law, and the slavery of their sins.

**I.** First, consider THE MODE OF THEIR GOING OUT. When the children of Israel went out of Egypt it is a remarkable thing that *they were forced out by the Egyptians*. Those Egyptians who had enriched themselves with their slavery said, "Get you hence, for we are all dead men." They begged and entreated them to go; yes, they hurried them forth, gave them jewels that they might depart, and made them quit the land. And it is a striking thing that the very sins which oppress the child of God in Egypt are the very things that drive him to Jesus! Our sins make slaves of us while we are in Egypt, and when God the Holy Spirit stirs them up against us, how they beat us with cruel lashes till our soul is worn with extreme bondage, and those very sins, by God's grace, are made the means of driving us to the Savior! The dove flees not to its cote unless

the eagle pursues it—so sins, like eagles, pursue the timid soul—making it fly into the clefts of the Rock, Christ Jesus, to hide itself. Once, beloved, our sins kept us from Christ; but now every sin drives us to Him for pardon! I had not known Christ if I had not known sin; I had not known a deliverer if I had not smarted under the Egyptians. The Holy Spirit drives us to Christ just as the Egyptians drove the people out of Egypt!

Again—the children of Israel went out of Egypt *covered with jewels, and arrayed in their best garments*. The Jews have always on their feast days been desirous of wearing jewels and all kinds of goodly apparel; and when they were too poor to possess them, they would borrow jewels for the purpose. So it was at this remarkable Passover—they had been so oppressed that they had kept no festival for many a year; now they all arrayed themselves in their best garments, and at the command of God did borrow from the Egyptians jewels of silver, gold, and raiment—“And the Lord gave them favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required, and they spoiled the Egyptians.” Let none say that this was robbery; it would have been, had it not been commanded of God, but as a king can set aside his own laws, so God is above His laws, and whatever He orders is right. Abraham would have been guilty of murder in taking up his knife to slay his son had not God commanded him to do so; but the fact of God having commanded the action made it justifiable and right. But, moreover, the word, “borrowed,” here is by the best translators said to mean nothing more than that the children of Israel asked them for their jewels, and had no intention whatever of returning them, and entered into no agreement to do so. And it was most just that they should do this, because they had toiled for the Egyptians for years, without having had any remuneration. Sometimes necessity has no law—how much more shall that God who is above all necessities be the master of His own laws? The great potentate, the only wise God, the king of kings has a right to make what laws He pleases—and let not vain man dare to question his Maker, when his Maker gives him a command! But the fact is very significant; the children of Israel did not go out of Egypt poorly clad; they went out with their best clothing on, and moreover they had borrowed jewels of gold, and jewels of silver and raiment—they went gladly out of the land!

Ah, beloved, that is just how a child of God comes out of Egypt! He does not come out of his bondage with his old garments of self-righteousness on—no, as long as he wears those, he will always be in Egypt; but he marches out with the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ upon him, and adorned with the goodly graces of the Holy Spirit. Oh, beloved, if you could see a child of Israel coming out of the bondage of sin, you would say, “Who is this that comes up from the wilderness? Is

this the poor slave who was making bricks without straw? Is this the wretch who had nothing but rags and tatters on him? Is this the poor creature whose whole person was soiled with the mud of Egypt's river, and who labored in Goshen's land without wage or pay?" Yes, it is he! And now he is arrayed like a king, and appareled as a prince; lo, each of these men of labor comes like a bridegroom decked for his wedding, and their wives seem like royal brides clad in their bridal robes! Every child of God, when he comes out of Egypt, is arrayed in goodly apparel—

***"Strangely, my soul, are you arrayed***

***By the great sacred Three.***

***In sweetest harmony of praise.***

***Let all your powers agree!"***

Note, moreover, that these people *obtained their jewels from the Egyptians*. God's people never lose anything by going to the house of bondage. They win their choicest jewels from the Egyptians. "Strangely true it is, sins do me good," said an old writer, "because they drive me to the Savior. And so I get good by them." Ask the humble Christian where he got his humility, and ten to one he will say that he got it in the furnace of deep sorrow on account of sin! See another who is tender in conscience—where did he get that jewel from? I'm sure it came from Egypt! We get more by being in bondage, under conviction of sin, than we often do by liberty; that bondage state under which you are now laboring, you poor way-worn child of sorrow, shall be good for you, for when you come out of Egypt, you will steal jewels from the Egyptians! You will have won pearls from your very convictions. "Oh," some say, "I have been for months and years toiling under a sense of sin, and cannot get deliverance." Well, I hope you will get it soon, but if you do not, you will have gained all the more jewels by stopping there—and when you come out, you will very likely make the best of Christians! What nobler preacher to sinners was there than John Bunyan, and who suffered more than he did? For years he was doubting and hesitating, sometimes thinking that Christ would save him; at other times thinking that he was never one of the elect, and continually bemoaning himself. But he got jewels while he was in bondage that he would never have obtained anywhere else! Who could have made a large collection of jewels like *Pilgrim's Progress* if he had not lived in Egypt? It was because he tarried so long in Egypt that he gathered so many jewels. And oh, beloved, let us be content to stop a little while in distress, for the jewels that we shall win there will adorn us all our lives long, and we shall one night come out of Egypt, not with weeping, but with songs and crowns of rejoicing! We shall have "the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness." The sackcloth shall be removed from our loins, and the ashes from our head—and we shall march forth decked with jewels, glittering with gold and silver!

But there is one more thought concerning the way of their coming out, and that is *they came out in haste*. I think a child of God, whenever he has the opportunity of coming out of bondage, will quickly avail himself of it. When a man comes to me and says, "I am under deep conviction of sin," and so on, and seems to be very well content talking about tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow saying, "I can repent when I please, and I can believe when I please," and always procrastinating. Ah, I think to myself that is not the Lord's deliverance, for when His people go forth out of Egypt, they are always in a hurry to get out! I never met with a poor sinner under a sense of sin, who was not *in haste* to get his burden off his back! No man has a broken heart unless he wants to have it bound up quickly. "*Today*, if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart," says the Holy Spirit. He never says *tomorrow*—TODAY is His continual cry, and every true-born Israelite will pant to get out of Egypt whenever he has the opportunity! He will not stop to knead his dough, and make his bread to carry with him; he will carry the unleavened bread on his shoulders; he will be in a great hurry to get away. He who hates the noisomeness of the dungeon, longs to hear the wards of the lock creak that he may find liberty! He who has been long in the pit hastens to escape; he who has suffered the task master's whip, flees like a dove unto his window that he may find peace and deliverance in Christ Jesus!

**II.** But having noticed three points of similarity in the emigration of the Israelites, and the deliverance of God's people, we would lead your attention, secondly, to a remark concerning THE MAGNITUDE OF THIS DELIVERANCE. Did it ever strike you what a wonderful exodus of the people of Israel this was? Do you know how many people went out? According to the very lowest calculations, there must have been two-and-a-half million, all assembled together in one place and all coming out of the country at one time! And then, besides these, there went out with them an exceedingly great company—a mixed multitude; the number must have been so large that it is impossible to imagine it. Suppose the people of London should all go out at once to march through a wilderness; it would be a marvelous thing in history, such as we can hardly conceive! But here were, to say the least, two million people all at one time coming out from the midst of Egypt, and going forth from the country. "They journeyed," it is said, "from Rameses to Succoth." Rameses was where they were employed in building a city for the king; they stayed in Succoth, or Booths, because such an immense multitude could not find houses; they therefore made booths, and hence the children of Israel ever afterwards kept "the feast of tabernacles," to commemorate their building of the booths at Succoth when they first came out of Egypt! What a mind Moses must have had to direct so great an army! Rather, what a Spirit

must that have been who rested on him, so that he could lead them all to one place, and then guide them all through the wilderness. If you bear in mind this mighty number, you will be astonished to think what a quantity of manna it must have required to feed them—and what a stream of water that must have been which followed them!

Talk of the armies of Xerxes, or the host of the Persians; speak of the mighty armies that kings and potentates have assembled; here was an army that outdid them all! But oh, beloved, how much grandeur is there in the thought of the multitudes Christ redeems with His blood! Christ did not die to save a few—“He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be abundantly satisfied.” “By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify *many*.” “A multitude which no man can number” shall stand before the throne of God and of the Lamb! Oh, wondrous emigration—the emigration of myriads of souls! Let us compare them neither with the stars of heaven, nor the dust of the earth, nor the sand of the sea; but let us remember that God has promised to Abraham—“As the sand upon the seashore, even so shall your seed be.” “Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?” They lick up the earth like water, and the land is utterly devoured before them. Oh, mighty God, how great is that deliverance which brings out a host of Your elect more countless than the stars, and as innumerable as the sands upon a thousand shores! All hail to Your power that does all this!

You will have another idea of the greatness of this work when you think of *the different stations which the children of Israel must have occupied*. I suppose they were not all equally destitute. They were not all toiling in the same brick kilns, but some of them would be in one place, some in another; some working in the king’s court, some for the meaner Egyptians—dispersed everywhere—but wherever they might be, they all came forward! If Pharaoh had slaves in his halls, they marched out the same day from his golden-gated palace at Memphis or at Thebes! They all came forth that same day from their different situations, and guided by God they all came to one spot where they built their booths, and called it Succoth. As when the autumn declines, and the winter approaches, we have seen the chattering swallows gather upon the housetop prepared for distant flights beyond the purple sea where they might find another summer in another land—so did these Israelites from all their countries thus assemble! And they stood together, about to take their flight across a trackless wilderness to that land of which God had told them saying, “Behold, I will bring you into a land that flows with milk and honey.” Oh, great and glorious works of God! “Great are Your works, O Lord, and marvelous are Your doings, and that my soul knows right well.”

I would have you, beloved, particularly remember one thing. And that is that great as this emigration was, and enormous as were the multi-

tudes that left Egypt, *it was only one Passover that set them all free*. They did not need two celebrations of the supper; they did not need two angels to fly through Egypt; it was not necessary to have two deliverances; but all in one night, all by the Paschal Lamb, all by the Passover supper, they were saved! Look at yonder host above! See you the blood-washed throng of souls, chosen of God and precious? Can you tell their number? Can you count the small dust of the beatified ones before the throne? Ah, no, but here is a thought for you—they did not need two Christs to save them—they did not require two Holy Spirits to deliver them; nor did it need two sacrifices to bring them there—

***“Ask them from where their victory came—  
They with united breath  
Ascribe their victory to the Lamb,  
Their triumph in His death!”***

One agonizing sacrifice, one death on Calvary, one bloody sweat on Gethsemane, one shriek of, “It is finished,” consummated all the work of redemption! Oh, the precious blood of Christ! I love it when I think it saves one sinner; but oh, to think of the multitude of sinners that it saves! Beloved, we do not think enough of our Lord Jesus Christ; we have not half such an estimation of His precious person as we ought to have; we do not value His blood at the right price. Why, poor sinner, you are saying this morning, “This blood cannot save me.” What? Not save you? When it is engaged to save thousands upon thousands, and myriads of myriads? Shall the Shepherd who gathers the whole flock together, and leads them unto the pastures lose a single lamb? You say, perhaps, “I am so little.” For that very reason then, you do not need as much of His power to take care of you! “But,” says one, “I am so great a sinner”; yes, then so much the better, for He “came to save sinners, of whom I am chief,” said Paul. And He came to save you! Ah, do not fear, you sons of God, He who brought the Israelites all out in one night can bring you all out, though you are in the strongest bondage! Perhaps there is one of you who not only has to make bricks without straw, but has to make twice as many bricks as anyone else, and your taskmaster has a whip which goes right round you, and cuts the flesh off you every time; you have worse bondage than anyone—your slavery is more intense, your oven hotter, your pots harder to make! Very well, I am glad of it—how sweet liberty will be to you! And I will tell you, you shall not be left in Egypt, for if you were, what would old Pharaoh say? “He said He would bring them all out, but He has not; there is one left!” And he would parade that poor Israelite through the streets—he would take him through Memphis and Thebes, and say, “Here is one that God would not deliver! Here is one I had so tight in my grasp that He could not get him out!” Ah, master devil, you shall not say that of one of the Lord’s people! They shall all be there, the great and the small; this unworthy hand shall take the hand of

the blessed Paul; they shall all be in heaven, shall all be redeemed, shall all be saved—but all, mark you, through *one* sacrifice, *one* covenant, *one* blood, *one* Passover!

**III.** This brings us to speak more fully of THE COMPLETENESS OF THEIR DELIVERANCE. Our text says—“It came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the same day it came to pass, that *all the hosts of the Lord* went out from the land of Egypt.” Our dear Arminian friends think that some of the Lord’s people will not come out of Egypt, but will be lost at last. Ah well, as good Hart says—

***“If one poor saint may fall away,  
It follows so all may!”***

Then none of us could be safe and secure! But we do not give way to that, for all the hosts came out of Egypt, *every one of them*. Not a soul was left behind. There is a poor man who was lame; ah, you see him throw away his crutches! There is a poor sick woman; yes, but she suddenly rises from her bed! There is another palsied, who can by no means lift himself up, but his frame, in a moment, becomes firm, “*for there was not one feeble person in all their tribes*”—Psalm 105:37. There is a poor little babe who knows nothing about it; but still it leaves Egypt, carried by its mother. The old gray-headed sire tottered not on his staff; though 80 years of age, yet he was a son of Israel, and out he came! There was a youth who had just begun to have his shoulders galled, but though he was young, the time was come for him, and out he came! They all came out, every one of them—there was not one left behind! I do not suppose they had any hospitals there, but if they had I am sure they did not leave any of them in the hospital, but all were healed in an instant! There was one Israelite, who had rebelled against the government of Moses, and said, “Who made you a judge and a divider over us?” But they did not leave him behind! Even he came out; all of them came out! Nor do we find that there was some poor shriveled creature whose arms and legs were almost useless, and who was half an idiot, and whose brain was nearly gone, left behind. So, beloved, if you are “the meanest lamb in Jesus’ fold,” you are “now one in Jesus”; though you have very little learning, and very little common sense, you will come out of Egypt! If the Lord has put you there in bondage, and you have been made to groan there, He will make you sing by-and-by, when you are redeemed from it! There is no fear of your being left behind, for if you were, Pharaoh would say, “He delivered the strong ones, but He was not able to fetch out the weak,” and then there would be laughter in Hell against the mighty omnipotence of God. They *all* came out.

But not only so; they *all had their cattle with them*. As Moses said, “Not a hoof shall be left behind.” They were to have all their goods, as well as their persons. What does this teach us? Why, not only that all God’s people shall be saved, but that they shall be restored! All that Jacob ever

took down to Egypt shall be brought out again. Have I lost a perfect righteousness in Adam? I shall have a perfect righteousness in Christ! Have I lost happiness on earth in Adam? God will give me much happiness here below in Christ! Have I lost heaven in Adam? I shall have heaven in Christ, for Christ came not only to seek and to save the people that were lost, but *that which* was lost. That is all the inheritance as well as the people, all their property! Not merely the sheep, but the good pasture that the sheep had lost—not only the prodigal son, but all the prodigal son's estates! Everything was brought out of Egypt; not even Joseph's bones were left behind! The Egyptians could not say that they had a scrap of the Israelites' property—not even one of their kneading troughs, or one of their old garments! And when Christ shall have conquered all things to Himself, the Christian shall not have lost one atom by the toils of Egypt, but shall be able to say, "O *death* where is your sting? O *grave* where is your victory?" O *Hell* where is your triumph? You have neither a flag nor a banner to show of your victory; there is not a helmet left upon the battlefield; there is not a single trophy which you may raise up in Hell in scorn of Christ; He has not only delivered His people, but they have gone out with flying colors, taking their shields with them! Stand and admire, and love the Lord who thus delivers all His people!

**IV.** This brings us to notice in the fourth place, THE TIME WHEN THE ISRAELITES CAME OUT OF EGYPT. "It came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years, even the same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." God had promised to Abraham that his people should be in bondage 430 years—and they were not in bondage one day more. As soon as God's bond became due, though it had been 430 years before, He paid the bill! He required no more time to do it in, but He did it at once. Christopher Ness says they had to tarry for the fulfillment of the promise till the night came, for though He fulfilled it the same day, He made them stay to the end of it, to prove their faith. Ness was wrong, there, because *Scripture* days begin at night. "The *evening* and the morning were the second day." So God did *not* make them wait, but paid them at once! As soon as the day came, beginning with our night, as the Jewish day does now, and the scriptural day *always* did—as soon as the clock struck—God paid His bond. We have heard of some landlords who come for their rent at precisely twelve o'clock. Well, we admire a man's honesty if he pays him exactly at that minute, but God is never behind in fulfilling His promises, not by the ticking of a clock. Though His promise seems to tarry, wait for it, for you may be mistaken as to the date. If He has promised anything on a certain day, He will not keep you waiting till the morrow; the same day that the Lord had promised, the Israelites came out! And so all the Lord's people shall come out of bondage at the predestined moment—and they cannot

possibly come out of bondage before the appointed time. O you poor distressed heir of heaven, groaning under sin, and seeking rest but finding none—believe that it is the Lord’s will that you should be a little longer where there is a smoking furnace. Wait a little; He is doing you good. Like Jesus of old, He is speaking harshly to you, to try your faith! He is telling you now that you are a dog, because He wants to hear you say, “Truth, Lord, but the dogs eat of the crumbs.” He would not keep you waiting if your eagerness did not thereby get fresh vigor; He would not keep you crying if He did not mean to make it a sign of better grace to you for the future; therefore wait, for you shall come out of Egypt, and have a joyous rescue in that day when they shall come with singing unto Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads!

But now, beloved, we must finish up in a very solemn manner by reminding you of *the companions that came out of Egypt with the children of Israel*. When the children of Israel came out of Egypt, there were certain persons in Egypt dissatisfied with the king—very likely culprits, condemned persons, debtors, bankrupts, and such like persons who were tired of their country, and who as is wittily said of those who are transported, “left their country for their country’s good.” But though these people went with the children of Israel, mark you, they were not *of them!* They escaped, but the door was not opened to let them out; it was only opened to let out the children of Israel, and these runaways were always a trouble to the children of Israel. It is said that the mixed multitude fell a lusting; it was the mixed multitude that taught them to worship the golden calf; it was the mixed multitude that always led them astray. And that mixed multitude have their representatives now! There are many men that came out of the land of Egypt who never were Israelites, and there are many that join with us in church fellowship, and eat that spiritual bread and drink of that spiritual rock that followed them. And yet with many of them, God is not well-pleased, just as there were many of old with whom He was not well-pleased, and who were overthrown in the wilderness. “Ah,” says one, “but I thought if they had been in Egypt, certainly if they came out, they must have been Christians, for you have used the metaphors.” Yes, but mark how these people were in Egypt; this mixed multitude was never *in bondage* in Egypt. It was *Israel* that had to feel the task-master’s whip and to make the bricks without straw; but these fellows had nothing to do. They were Egyptians—true-born Egyptians—“heirs of sin, and children of wrath.” They *never had any real bondage*, and therefore they could not rejoice as the true Israelite did when they were set free from the yoke of Pharaoh.

These people are represented among us by certain persons who will tell us, “Ah, I know I have been a sinner.” That is as much as to say you have been an Egyptian, but t that is all—“but I cannot say I have felt my

sin, and utterly abhorred it, and wept over it.” They come and say, “I am a sinner” hear something about Jesus Christ; catch at it with a fancied faith—not with the faith that unites with the Lamb, and brings us true salvation, but with a notional, pretended faith—and they think they get deliverance! And some of these people are marvelously happy; they do not have doubts and fears; they are at ease like Moab. They have not been emptied from vessel to vessel; they can tell us about Egypt, of course—they know as much about it as the child of God! If the child of God describes the brick kiln, and how they made bricks without straw, he has seen it, though he has not felt it; and he can talk about it perhaps, better than the poor Israelite, for the poor Israelite has sometimes been struck in the mouth, it may be, so that he stammers, and cannot speak as well as the other, who never had a blow. He knows all about the bondage—perhaps he has invented some of it in order to try the poor Israelite, and he can describe very accurately the going out of Egypt, and the journey through the wilderness, but here is the difference, mark you, between the Israelites and the Egyptians. The Egyptians did not sprinkle the blood on the doorposts, and we do not read of the mixed multitude eating the Paschal lamb, for it is written, “No stranger shall eat thereof.” Some persons are continually saying, “I believe I am going to heaven”; but they have never sprinkled the blood, never eaten the Paschal Lamb, never had fellowship with Christ, and never had vital union with Him.

O you members of Christian churches, there are many of you who have a fictitious experience and a made-up religion! There are many of you who have merely the *externals* of godliness; you are white-washed sepulchers outwardly fair and beautiful, like the garnished gardens of a cemetery, but inwardly you are full of dead men’s bones and rottenness! Be persuaded, I beseech you, to get no deliverance any way except by the blood of the Lamb, and by really feasting on Christ. Many a man gets deliverance by stifling his conscience: “Ah,” says one of these mixed multitudes, “here am I in prison, and this is the night when the children of Israel go out of Egypt; oh, If I might go out!” What does he do? Why, the keeper is frightened; he has lost his eldest son, and the prisoner says, “Let me out!” And he bribes the keeper to let him go. And there is many a man that gets out of Egypt by bribing his conscience. “There, master conscience,” he says, “I will never get drunk again; I will always go to church. There is my shop that is always open on Sunday—I will put two shutters up, and that is almost as good as closing it entirely! And I will not do the business myself—I will get a servant to do it for me.” And out he goes, but he had better remain in Egypt than get out like *that!* Again, there are some that get out by main force; the keeper falls down dead, and so they get out of prison. There are men who not only bribe, but kill their conscience; they go so far that their conscience is almost dead, and

when he is in a fit one day they rush forth and escape, and so they have “peace, peace, where there is no peace.” They wrap themselves up in the folds of their own delusions, and invent for themselves refuges of lies where they place their trust. O you mixed multitude! You are the ruin of the churches! You set us a lusting! The pure Israelite’s blood is tainted by union with you! You sit as God’s people sit, and yet you are not His people! You hear as God’s people hear, and yet you are “in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity.” You take the sacrament as sweetly as others, while you are eating and drinking damnation to yourself. You come to the church meeting, and you sit in the private assembly of the saints, but even when you are there, you are nothing but a wolf in sheep’s clothing entering the flock when you ought not to be there!

My dear hearers, do try yourselves to see whether you are real Israelites; oh, could Christ say to you, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile”? Have you the blood on your doorpost? Have you eaten of Jesus? Do you live on Him? Do you have fellowship with Him? Has God the Holy Spirit brought you out of Egypt, or have you come out yourself? Have you found refuge in His dear cross and wounded side? If you have, rejoice, for Pharaoh cannot bring you back again! But if you have not, I pray my Master to dash your peace into atoms, fair and lovely as it may be! I beseech Him to send the winds of conviction, and the floods of His wrath that your house may fall now, rather than it should stand to your death, and then in that last solemn hour the edifice of your own hands should totter! Mixed multitude hear this! You assembled gatherings of professors—“Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves. Know you not yourselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except if you are reprobates?” But if He is not in you, then are you still reprobates whom God abhors!

May the Lord bring all His people out of Egypt, and deliver all His children from the house of bondage!

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# HEAVEN

## NO. 56

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 16, 1855,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“As it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”  
1 Corinthians 2:9, 10.***

HOW very frequently verses of Scripture are misquoted! Instead of turning to the Bible to see how it is written, and saying, “How do you read it?” we quote from one another. And thus a passage of Scripture is handed down misquoted, by a kind of tradition—from father to son, and passes as current among a great number of Christians! How very frequently at our prayer meetings do we hear our brethren describing heaven as a place of which we cannot conceive! They say, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” And there they stop, not seeing that the very marrow of the whole passage lies in this—“But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit,” so that the joys of heaven (if this passage alludes to heaven, which I take it is not quite as clear as some would suppose), are after all not things of which we cannot conceive, for “God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.”

I have hinted that this passage is most commonly applied to heaven, and I shall also apply it in some measure this morning. But anyone who reads the connection will discover that the apostle is not talking about heaven at all. He is only speaking of this—that the wisdom of this world is not able to discover the things of God, that the merely carnal mind is not able to know the deep spiritual things of our most holy religion. He says, “We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” And then he goes on lower down to say, “But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are fool-

ishness unto him. Neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.” I take it that this text is a great general fact, capable of specific application to certain cases, and that the great fact is this—that the things of God cannot be perceived by eye, ear, or heart; but must be revealed by the Spirit of God, as they are unto all true believers. We shall take that thought and endeavor to expand it this morning, explaining it concerning heaven, as well as regards other heavenly matters.

Every prophet who has stood upon the borders of a new dispensation might have uttered these words with peculiar force; he might have said as he looked forward to the future, God having touched his eyes with the anointing eye slave of the Holy Spirit, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” We will divide the economy of free grace into different dispensations. We commence with the *patriarchal*. A patriarch who like Abraham was gifted with foresight, might have looked forward to the Levitical dispensation, glorious with its tabernacle, its Shekinah, its gorgeous veil, its blazing altars; he might have caught a glimpse of Solomon’s magnificent temple, and even by anticipation heard the sacred song ascending from the assembled thousands of Jerusalem; he might have seen King Solomon upon his throne, surrounded with all his riches, and the people resting in peace and tranquility in the Promised Land. And he might have turned to his brethren who lived in the patriarchal age and said, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” in the next dispensation. You know not how clearly God will reveal Himself in the Paschal Lamb—how sweetly the people will be led, fed, guided, and directed all the way through the wilderness—what a sweet and fair country it is that they shall inhabit! Eye has not seen the brooks that gush with milk, nor the rivers that run with honey; ear has not heard the melodious voices of the daughters of Shiloh, nor have entered into the heart of man the joys of the men of Zion, “but God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.”

And so, moreover, at the close of the Levitical dispensation, the *prophets* might have thus foretold the coming glories. Old Isaiah, standing in the midst of the temple, beholding its sacrifices and the dim smoke that went up from them, when his eyes were opened by the Spirit of God might have said—“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” He saw by faith, Christ crucified upon the cross; he beheld Him soaking in His own blood in Gethsemane’s garden; he saw the disci-

ples going out of Jerusalem to preach everywhere the Word of God; he marked the progress of Messiah's kingdom, and he looked down to these latter days, when every man under his own vine and fig tree worships God, none daring to make him afraid. And he could well have cheered the captives in Babylon in words like these—"Now you sit down and weep, and you will not sing in a strange land, the songs of Zion; but lift up your heads, for your salvation draws near—your eye has not seen, nor your ear heard the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But he has revealed them unto me by His Spirit." And now, beloved, we stand on the borders of a new era! The mediatorial dispensation is almost finished; in a few more years, if prophecy is not thoroughly misinterpreted, we shall enter upon another condition. This poor earth of ours, which has been swathed in darkness, shall put on her garments of light! She has toiled a long while in travail and sorrow; soon shall her groaning end; her surface, which has been stained with blood, is soon to be purified by love, and a religion of peace is to be established! The hour is coming when storms shall be hushed, when tempests shall be unknown, when whirlwind and hurricane shall stay their mighty force, and when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." But do you ask me what sort of kingdom that is to be, and whether I can show you any likeness thereof? I answer no! "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him," in the next, the Millennial dispensation—"but God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit."

Sometimes, when we climb upwards, there are moments of contemplation when we can understand that verse, "From where we look for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be revealed from heaven." Then we can anticipate that thrice blessed hour when the King of kings shall put on His head the crown of the universe; when He shall gather up sheaves of scepters, and put them beneath his arm; when He shall take the crowns from the heads of all monarchs, and welding them into one, shall put them on His own head, amidst the shouts of ten thousands times ten thousands who shall chant His high praises! But it is little enough that we can guess of its wonders. But persons are curious to know what kind of dispensation the Millennial one is to be. Will the temple, they ask, be erected in Jerusalem? Will the Jews be positively restored to their own land? Will the different nations all speak one language? Will they all resort to one temple? And ten thousand other questions, beloved, we cannot answer you! "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has

prepared for those who love Him.” We do not profess to understand the minutiae of these things; it is enough for us to believe that a latter-day glory is approaching. Our eyes glisten with joy in the full belief that it *is* coming, and our hearts swell big at the thought that our Master is to reign over the wide, wide world, and to win it for Himself. But if you begin questioning us, we tell you that we cannot explain it! Just as under the legal dispensation there were types and shadows, but the mass of the people never saw Christ in them, so there are a great many different things in this dispensation which are types of the next which will never be explained till we have more wisdom, more light, and more instruction! Just as the enlightened Jew partially foresaw what the gospel was to be by the law, so may we guess the Millennium by the present, but we have not light enough—there are few who are taught enough in the deep things of God to explain them fully. Therefore we still say of the mass of mankind—“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them *unto us* by His Spirit” in some measure—and He will do so more and more, by-and-by!

And this brings us to make the application of the subject to *heaven, itself*. You see, while it does not expressly mean heaven here, you may very easily bring it to bear upon it, for concerning heaven, unto which believers are all fast going, we may say, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.”

Now, beloved, I am about to talk of heaven for this reason—you know I never preach any funeral sermons for anybody, and never intend to; I have passed by many persons who have died in our church without having made any parade of funeral sermons; but nevertheless, three or four of our friends having departed recently. I think I may speak a little to you about heaven in order to cheer you, and God may thus bless their departure. It is to be no funeral sermon, however—no eulogy for the dead and no oration pronounced over the departed! Frequent funeral sermons I utterly abhor, and I believe they are not under God’s sanction and approval. Of the dead we should say nothing but that which is good—and in the pulpit we should say very little of that, except perhaps in the case of some very eminent saint—and then we should say very little of the man, but let the “honor be unto Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever.”

Heaven—then, what is it? First what is it not? *It is not a heaven of the SENSES*—“Eye has not seen it.” What glorious things the eye has seen;

have we not seen the gaudy pageantry of pomp crowding the happy streets? We have seen the procession of kings and princes; our eyes have been feasted with the display of glittering uniforms, of lavished gold and jewels, of chariots and of horses, and we have perhaps thought that the procession of the saints of God may be dimly shadowed forth thereby. But oh, it was but the *thought* of our poor infant mind—and far enough from the great reality! We may hear of the magnificence of the old Persian princes, of palaces covered with gold and silver, and floors inlaid with jewels—but we cannot from there gather a thought of heaven, for “Eye has not seen” it. We have thought however, when we have come to the works of God, and our eyes have rested on them—surely we can get some glimpse of what heaven is here! By night we have turned our eyes up to the blue sky, and we have seen the stars—those golden-fleeced sheep of God feeding on the blue meadow of the sky, and we have said, “Look! Those are the nails in the floor of heaven up yonder.” And if this earth has such a glorious covering, what must that of the kingdom of heaven be? And when our eyes have wandered from star to star, we have thought “Now I can tell what heaven is by the beauty of its floor.” But it is all a mistake! All that we can see can never help us to understand heaven! At another time we have seen some glorious landscape; we have seen the white river winding among the verdant fields like a stream of silver, covered on either side with emerald; we have seen the mountain towering to the sky, the mist rising on it, or the golden sunrise covering the entire east with glory. Or we have seen the west, again reddened with the light of the sun as it departed, and we have said, “Surely, these grandeurs must be something like heaven!” We have clapped our hands and exclaimed—

***“Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,  
Stand dressed in living green.”***

We have imagined that there really were fields in heaven, and that things of earth were patterns of things in heaven, but it was all a mistake—“Eye has not seen” it!

Equally does our text assert that “the ear has not heard” it. Oh, have we not on the Sabbath sometimes heard the sweet voice of the messenger of God, when he has by the Spirit spoken to our souls? We knew something of heaven then, we thought. At other times we have been entranced with the voice of the preacher, and with the remarkable sayings which he has uttered; we have been charmed by his eloquence—some of us have known what it is to sit and alternately weep and smile under the power of some mighty man who played with us as skillfully as David could have played on his harp, and we have said, “How sweet to hear those sounds! How glorious his eloquence! How wonderful his power of oratory! Now I

think I know something of what heaven is, for my mind is so carried away, my passions are so excited, my imagination is so elevated; all the powers of my mind are stirred up so that I can think of nothing but of what the preacher is speaking about!" But the ear is not the medium by which you can guess anything of heaven! The "ear has not heard" it. At other times, perhaps, you have heard sweet music, and has not music charmed even savage breasts like some of ours? We have heard music, whether poured from the lungs of man—that noblest instrument in the world—or from some manufacture of harmony, and we have thought, "Oh, how glorious this is!" And we have fancied, "This is what John meant in the Revelation—I heard a voice like many waters and like exceeding great thunders, and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps"—and this must be something like heaven, something like the hallelujahs of the glorified." But ah, beloved, we made a mistake! "Ear has not heard" it.

Here has been the very ground of that error into which many persons have fallen concerning heaven. They have said that they would like to go to heaven. Why? For this reason—*they looked upon it as a place where they would be free from bodily pain*. They will never have a headache or a toothache there, nor any of those diseases which flesh is heir to, and whenever God laid His hand upon them, they began to wish themselves in heaven because they regarded it as a heaven of the *senses*—a heaven which the eyes have seen or the ears heard! A great mistake, for although we shall have a body free from pain, yet it is not a heaven where our senses shall indulge themselves. The laborer will have it that heaven is a place—

***"Where on a green and flowery mount  
His weary soul shall sit."***

Another will have it that heaven is a place where he shall *eat to the full, and his body shall be satisfied*. We may use these as figures, but we are so degenerate that we are apt to build a fine Muslim heaven, and to think that there we shall have all the delights of the flesh! There shall we drink from bowls of nectared red wine! There shall we lavishly indulge ourselves, and our body shall enjoy every delight of which it is capable! What a mistake for us to conceive such a thing! Heaven is not a place for the delight of mere *sense*—we shall be raised not a *sensual* body—but a *spiritual* body! We can get no conceptions of heaven through the senses! They must always come through the spirit! That is our first thought: it is not a heaven to be grasped by the senses.

But secondly, *it is not a heaven of the IMAGINATION*. Poets let their imaginations fly with loosened wings when they commence speaking of heaven, and how glorious are their descriptions of it! When we have read

them, we say, "Is *that* heaven? I wish I were there." And we think we have some idea of heaven by reading books of poetry. Perhaps the preacher weaves the filigree work of fancy, and builds up in a moment by his words charming palaces, the tops of which are covered with gold, and the walls are ivory. He pictures to you lights brighter than the sun; a place where spirits flap their bright wings; where comets flash through the sky! He tells you of fields where you may feed on ambrosia, where no henbane grows, but where sweet flowers cover the meadows, and then you think you have some idea of heaven—and you sit down and say "It is sweet to hear that man speak; he carried me so away; he made me think I was there! He gave me such conceptions as I never heard before; he worked on my imagination." And do you know, there is not a greater power than imagination? I would not give a farthing for a man who has no imagination; he is of no use if he wishes to move the multitude! If you were to take away my imagination, I would die! It is a little heaven below to imagine sweet things, but never think that imagination can picture *heaven*. When it is most sublime, when it is most free from the dust of earth, when it is carried up by the greatest knowledge, and kept steady by the most extreme caution, imagination cannot picture heaven! "It has not entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." Imagination is good, but *not to picture heaven!* Your imaginary heaven you will find, by-and-by, to be all a mistake; though you may have piled up fine castles, you will find them to be castles in the air, and they will vanish like thin clouds before the gale, for imagination cannot make a heaven. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive" it.

Our next point is that *it is not a heaven of the INTELLECT*. Men who take to themselves the title of intelligent, and who very humbly and modestly call themselves philosophers, generally describe heaven as a place where we shall *know all things*, and their grandest idea of heaven is that they shall discover all secrets there. There the brook which would not tell its origin shall bubble forth its history; there the star which would not tell its age, and could not be made to whisper of its inhabitants shall at once unravel all its secrets! There the animal, the fashion of which could scarcely be guessed, so long had it been buried among other fossils in the earth, shall start up again, and it shall be seen of what form and shape it really was; there the rocky secrets of this our earth, that they never could discover, will be opened to them, and they conceive that they shall travel from one star to another star, from planet to planet, and fill their ennobled intellect as they now delight to call it, with all kinds of human knowledge! They reckon that heaven will be to understand the

works of the Creator, and concerning such men as Bacon and other great philosophers, of whose piety we generally have very little evidence, we read at the end of their biographies—"He has now departed, that noble spirit which taught us such glorious things here, to sip at the fountain of knowledge, and have all his mistakes rectified and his doubts cleared up." But we do not believe anything of the kind! Intellect? You know it not! "It has not entered into the heart of man." It is high; what can you know? It is deep; what can you understand? It is only the Spirit that can give you a guess of heaven!

Now we come to the point—"He has revealed it unto us by His Spirit." I think this means that it was revealed unto the apostles by the Spirit so that they wrote something of it in the Holy Word. But as you all believe that, we will only hint at it and pass on. We also think that it refers to every believer, and that every believer does have glimpses of heaven below, and that God does reveal heaven to him, even while on earth, so that he understands what heaven is in some measure. I love to talk of the Spirit's influence on man; I am a firm believer in the doctrine of impulse, in the doctrine of influence, in the doctrine of direction, and in the doctrine of instruction by the Holy Spirit. I believe the Holy Spirit to be an interpreter who reveals unto man his own sinfulness, and afterwards teaches him his righteousness in Christ Jesus. I know there are some who abuse that doctrine, and ascribe every text that comes into their heart as given by the Spirit; we have heard of a man passing by his neighbor's firewood, and having none in his own house, fancied he should like to take some. The text crossed his mind—"In all those things Job sinned not." He said, "*There* is an influence from the Spirit; I must take that man's wood." Presently, however, conscience whispered, "You shall not steal," and he remembered then, that no text could have been put into his heart by the Spirit if it excused sin or led him into it! However, we do not discard the doctrine of impulse because some people make a mistake, and we shall have a little of it this morning—a little of the teaching of God's gracious Spirit whereby He reveals to us what heaven is.

First of all, we think a Christian gets a gaze of what heaven is *when in the midst of trials and troubles he is able to cast all his care upon the Lord*, because He cares for him. When waves of distress and billows of affliction pass over the Christian, there are times when his faith is so strong that he lies down and sleeps though the hurricane is thundering in his ears, and though billows are rocking him like a child in its cradle! Though the earth is removed, and the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea, he says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present

help in trouble.” Famine and desolation come, but he says, “Though the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall there be fruit on the vine; though the labor of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no increase, yet will I trust in the Lord and stay myself on the God of Jacob.” Affliction smites him to the ground; he looks up and says, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” The blows that are given to him are like the lashing of a whip upon the water, covered up immediately—but he seems to feel nothing. It is not stoicism; it is the peculiar sleep of the beloved. “So He gives His beloved sleep.” Persecution surrounds him, but he is unmoved. Heaven is something like that—a place of holy calm and trust—

***“That holy calm, that sweet repose  
Which none but he who feels it knows;  
This heavenly calm within the breast  
Is the dear pledge of glorious rest,  
Which for the church of God remains,  
The end of cares, the end of pains.”***

But there is another season in which the Christian has heaven revealed to him, and that is *the season of quiet contemplation*. There are precious hours, blessed be God, when we forget the world—times and seasons when we get quite away from it, when our weary spirit wings its way far, far, from scenes of toil and strife! There are precious moments when the angel of contemplation gives us a vision; he comes and puts his finger on the lips of the noisy world; he bids the wheels that are continually rattling in our ears be still, and we sit down and there is a solemn silence of the mind; we find our heaven and our God! We engage ourselves in contemplating the glories of Jesus, or mounting upwards towards the bliss of heaven—in going backward to the great secrets of electing love; in considering the immutability of the blessed covenant; in thinking of that wind which “blows where it wishes”—in remembering our own participation of that life which comes from God; in thinking of our blood-bought union with the Lamb; of the consummation of our marriage with Him in realms of light and bliss—or any such kindred topics! Then it is that we know a little about heaven! Have you never found, O you sons and daughters of gaiety, a holy calm come over you at times in reading the thoughts of your fellow men? But oh, how blessed to come and read the thoughts of God, and work and weave them out in contemplation! Then we have a web of contemplation that we wrap around us like an enchanted garment, and we open our eyes and see heaven! Christian, when you are enabled by the Spirit to hold a season of sweet contemplation, then you can say, “He has revealed them unto us by His Spirit,” for the joys of heaven are akin to the joys of contemplation, and the joys of a holy calm in God! There are times with me—I dare say there may be with

some of you—when we do something more than contemplate, when we arise by *meditation* above thought itself, and when our soul, after having touched the Pisgah of contemplation by the way, flies positively into the heavenly places in Christ Jesus! There are seasons when our spirit not only stands and flaps his wings over the gulf, but positively crosses the Jordan and dwells with Christ, holds fellowship with angels, and talks with spirits—gets up there with Jesus, clasps Him, and cries “My beloved is mine, and I am His! I will hold Him, and will not let Him go!” I know what it is at times to lay my beating head on the bosom of Christ with something more than faith—actually and positively to get hold of Him; not only to take Him by faith, but actually and positively to feed on Him—to feel a vital union with Him—to grasp His arm, and feel His very pulse beating! You say “Tell it not to unbelievers. They will laugh!” Laugh they may, but when we are there, we care not for your laughter if you should laugh as loud as devils—for one moment’s fellowship with Jesus would recompense us for it all! Picture not fairy lands; this is heaven, this is bliss: “He has revealed it unto us by His Spirit.”

And let not the Christian who says he has very little of this enjoyment be discouraged. Do not think you cannot have heaven revealed to you by the Spirit. I tell you, you can if you are one of the Lord’s people! And let me tell some of you that one of the places where you may most of all expect to see heaven is at the Lord’s table. There are some of you, my dearly beloved, who absent yourselves from the Supper of the Lord on earth. Let me tell you, in God’s name, that you are not only sinning against God, but robbing yourselves of a most inestimable privilege! If there is one season in which the soul gets into closer communion with Christ than another, it is at the Lord’s table. How often have we sang there—

***“Can I Gethsemane forget?  
Or there Your conflicts see,  
Your agony and bloody sweat,  
And not remember Thee?  
Remember You and all your pains,  
And all your love to me,  
Yes, while a pulse, or breath remains,  
I will remember Thee.”***

And then you see what an easy transition it is to heaven—

***“And when these failing lips grow dumb,  
And thought and memory flee.  
When You shall in Your kingdom come,  
Jesus, remember me!”***

O my erring brethren, you who live on unbaptized, and who receive not this sacred supper, I tell you not that they will *save* you—most assuredly they *will not*—and if you are not saved before you receive, them, they will

be an injury to you. But if you are the Lord's people, why need you stay away? I tell you, the Lord's Table is so high a place that you can see heaven from it very often! You get so near the cross there; you breathe so near the cross that your sight becomes clearer, and the air brighter, and you see more of heaven there than anywhere else! Christian, do not neglect the supper of your Lord, for if you do, He will in a measure, hide heaven from you.

Again, how sweetly do we realize heaven *when we assemble in our meetings for prayer*. I do not know how my brethren feel at prayer meetings, but they are so much akin to what heaven is, as a place of devotion, that I really think we get more ideas of heaven by the Spirit there, than in hearing a sermon preached, because the sermon necessarily appeals somewhat to the intellect and the imagination. But if we enter into the vitality of prayer at our prayer meetings, then it is the Spirit who reveals heaven to us! I remember two texts that I preached from lately at our Monday evening meeting, which were very sweet to some of our souls. "Abide with us, for the day is far spent"; and another, "By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loves—I sought Him and found Him." Then indeed we had some foretaste of heaven! Master Thomas would not believe that His Lord was risen; why? Because he was not at the last prayer meeting—for we are told that Thomas was not there, and those who are often away from devotional meetings are very apt to have doubting frames; they do not get sights of heaven, for they get their eyesight spoiled by staying away!

Another time when we get sights of heaven is in *extraordinary closet seasons*. Ordinary closet prayer will only make ordinary Christians of us; it is in *extraordinary* seasons when we are led by God to devote, say an hour, to earnest prayer—when we feel an impulse we scarcely know why, to cut off a portion of our time during the day to go alone. Then, beloved, we kneel down and begin to pray in earnest! It may be that we are attacked by the devil, for when the enemy knows we are going to have a great blessing, he always makes a great noise to drive us away! But if we keep at it, we shall soon get into a quiet frame of mind, and hear him roaring at a distance. Presently you get hold of the Angel and say, "Lord, I will not let You go, except You bless me." He asks your name; you begin to tell Him what your name was—

***"Once a sinner, near despair,  
Sought Your mercy seat by prayer—  
Mercy heard and set him free.  
Lord, that mercy came to me!"***

You say, "What is *Your* name, Lord?" He will not tell you; you hold Him fast. At last He deigns to bless you, and that is certainly some foretaste of

heaven, when you feel alone with Jesus! Let no man know your prayers—they are between God and yourselves; but if you want to know much of heaven, spend some extra time in prayer, for God then reveals it to us by His Spirit!

“Behold, you despisers, wonder and perish.” You have been saying in your hearts, “The prophet is a fool, and this spiritual man is mad.” Go away and say these things, but be it known unto you that what you style madness, is to us wisdom, and what you count folly, “is the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom.” And if there is a poor penitent here this morning saying, “Ah, sir, I get visions enough of hell, but I do not get visions of heaven.” Poor penitent sinner, you cannot have any visions of heaven unless you look through the hands of Christ! The only glass through which a poor sinner can see bliss is that formed by the holes in Jesus’ hands! Do you not know that all grace and mercy was put into the hands of Christ, and that it never could have run out to you unless His hands had been bored through in crucifixion? He cannot hold it from you, for it will run through, and He cannot hold it in His heart, for He has got a tear in it made by the spear! Go and confess your sin to Him, and He will wash you and make you whiter than snow! If you feel you cannot repent, go to Him and tell Him so, for He is exalted to give repentance as well as remission of sins! Oh, that the spirit of God might give you true repentance and true faith! And then saint and sinner shall meet together, and both shall not only know what “eye has not seen, nor ear heard” but—

***“Then shall we see and hear and know  
All we desired or wished below!  
And every power find sweet employ  
In that eternal world of joy!”***

Till that time we can only have these things revealed to us by the Spirit; and we will seek more of that by His grace, each day we live.

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# THE INCARNATION AND BIRTH OF CHRIST

## NO. 57

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 23, 1855,  
 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
 AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

***“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.”***  
***Micah 5:2. (NKJV)***

THIS is the season of the year when whether we wish it or not, we are compelled to think of the birth of Christ; I hold it to be one of the greatest absurdities under heaven to think that there is any religion in keeping Christmas day! There are no probabilities whatever that our Savior, Jesus Christ, was born on that day, and the observance of it is purely of Popish origin. Doubtless those who are Catholics have a right to hallow it, but I do not see how consistent Protestants can account it in the least sacred! However, I wish there were ten or a dozen Christmas days in the year, for there is work enough in the world, and a little more rest would not hurt laboring people. Christmas is really a gift to us, particularly as it enables us to assemble round the family hearth, and meet our friends once more. Still, although we do not fall exactly in the track of other people, I see no harm in thinking of the incarnation and birth of the Lord Jesus. We do not wish to be classed with those—

***“Who with more care keep holiday  
 The wrong, than others the right way.”***

The old Puritans made a parade of *work* on Christmas day, just to show that they protested against the observance of it, but we believe they entered that protest so completely that we are willing, as their descendants, to take the good accidentally conferred by the day, and leave its superstitions to the superstitious!

To proceed at once to what we have to say to you, we notice first *who it was that sent Christ forth*. God the Father here speaks, and says, “Out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be ruler in Israel.” Secondly, *where did He come to at the time of His incarnation*. Thirdly, *what did He come for*—“To be ruler in Israel.” Fourthly, *had He ever come before?* Yes He had—“Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.”

**I.** First, then, WHO SENT JESUS CHRIST? The answer is returned to us by the words of the text. “Out of you,” says Jehovah, speaking by the mouth of Micah, “out of you shall He come forth unto Me.” It is a sweet thought that Jesus Christ did not come forth without His Father’s permission, authority, consent, and assistance. He was sent of the Father that He might be the Savior of men. We are, alas, too apt to forget that while there are distinctions as to the persons in the Trinity, there are no

distinctions of *honor*—and we do very frequently ascribe the honor of our salvation, or at least the depths of its mercy, and the extremity of its benevolence more to Jesus Christ than we do to the Father. This is a very great mistake! What if Jesus came? Did not His Father send Him? If He were made a child, did not the Holy Spirit beget Him? If He spoke wondrously, did not His Father pour grace into His lips that He might be an able minister of the new covenant? If His Father did forsake Him when He drank the bitter cup of gall, did He not still love Him? And did He not, by-and-by, after three days raise Him from the dead, and at last receive Him up on high, leading captivity captive? Ah, beloved, he who knows the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as he should know them never sets one before another! He is not more thankful to one than the other; he sees them at Bethlehem, at Gethsemane, and on Calvary all equally engaged in the work of salvation! “He shall come forth unto *Me*.” O Christian, have you put your confidence in the man, Christ Jesus? Have you placed your reliance solely on Him? And are you united with Him? Then believe that you are united unto the God of heaven, since to the man, Christ Jesus, you are brother, and hold closest fellowship! You are linked thereby with God the Eternal, and “the Ancient of days” is your Father and your Friend! “He shall come forth unto *Me*.”

Did you never see the depth of love there was in the heart of Jehovah, when God the Father equipped His Son for the great enterprise of mercy? There had been a sad day in heaven once before, when Satan fell and dragged with him a third of the stars of heaven, and when the Son of God launching from His great right hand the omnipotent thunders, dashed the rebellious crew to the pit of perdition. But if we could conceive a grief in heaven—that must have been a sadder day when the Son of the Most High left His Father’s bosom where He had lain from before all worlds. “Go,” said the Father, “and Your Father’s blessing on Your head!” Then comes the unrobing; how angels crowd around to see the Son of God take off His robes! He laid aside His crown; He said, “My Father, I am Lord over all, blessed forever; but I will lay My crown aside and be as mortal men are.” He strips Himself of His bright vest of glory. “Father,” He said, “I will wear a robe of clay; just such as men wear.” Then He takes off all those jewels wherewith He was glorified; He lays aside His starry mantles and robes of light to dress Himself in the simple garments of the peasant of Galilee! What a solemn disrobing that must have been! And next, can you picture the dismissal? The angels attend the Savior through the streets until they approach the doors; an angel cries, “Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lifted up, you everlasting doors, and let the king of glory through!” Oh, I think the angels must have wept when they lost the company of Jesus—when the sun of heaven bereaved them of all its light! But they went after Him; they descended with Him, and when His spirit entered into flesh and He became a baby, He was attended by that mighty host of angels who after they had been with Him to Bethlehem’s manger, and seen Him safely laid on His mother’s

breast—in their journey upwards appeared to the shepherds, and told them that He was born king of the Jews! *The Father* sent Him! Contemplate that subject! Let your soul get hold of it, and in every period of His life think that He suffered what the *Father* willed—that every step of His life was marked with the approval of the great I AM. Let every thought that you have of Jesus be also connected with the eternal, ever-blessed God, for, “He,” says Jehovah, “shall come forth to Me.” Who sent Him then? The answer is, His Father!

**II.** Now, secondly, WHERE DID HE COME TO? A word or two concerning Bethlehem: it seemed meet and right that our Savior should be born in Bethlehem, because of Bethlehem’s history, Bethlehem’s name, and Bethlehem’s position—*little in Judah*.

**1.** First, it seemed necessary that Christ should be born in Bethlehem *because of Bethlehem’s history*. Dear to every Israelite was the little village of Bethlehem. Jerusalem might outshine it in splendor, for there stood the temple, the glory of the whole earth, and “beautiful for situation—the joy of the whole earth was Mount Zion.” Yet around Bethlehem there clustered a number of incidents which always made it a pleasant resting place to every Jewish mind. Even the Christian cannot help loving Bethlehem! The first mention I think that we have of Bethlehem is a sorrowful one. There Rachel died. If you turn to the 35<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis, you will find it said in the 16<sup>th</sup> verse—“And they journeyed from Bethel and there was but a little way to come to Ephrathah, and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labor. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said unto her, fear not, you shall have this son also. And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing (for she died), that she called his name Benoni, but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died and was buried in the way to Ephrathah, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave, which is the pillar of Rachel’s grave unto this day.” A singular incident, this—almost prophetic! Might not Mary have called her own son Jesus, her Benoni, for He was to be the child of sorrow? Simeon said to her—“Yes a sword shall pierce through your own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” But while she might have called Him Benoni, what did God, His Father, call Him? Benjamin, the son of My right hand; Benoni was He as a man; Benjamin as to His Godhead. This little incident seems to be almost a prophecy that Benoni—Benjamin, the Lord Jesus, should be born in Bethlehem!

But another woman makes this place celebrated. That woman’s name was Naomi. There lived at Bethlehem in later days, when perhaps the stone that Jacob’s fondness had raised, had been covered with moss, and its inscription obliterated, another woman named Naomi. She too was a daughter of joy, and yet a daughter of bitterness. Naomi was a woman whom the Lord had loved and blessed, but she had to go to a strange land, and she said, “Call me not Naomi, (pleasant), but let my name be called Mara, (bitter), for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with

me.” Yet was she not alone amid all her losses, for there cleaved unto her, Ruth the Moabitess, whose Gentile blood would unite with the pure untainted stream of the Jew, and should thus bring forth the Lord our Savior, the great king, both of Jews and Gentiles! That very beautiful Book of Ruth had all its scenery laid in Bethlehem; it was at Bethlehem that Ruth went forth to glean in the fields of Boaz; it was there that Boaz looked upon her, and she bowed herself before her lord; it was there her marriage was celebrated, and in the streets of Bethlehem did Boaz and Ruth receive a blessing which made them fruitful, so that Boaz became the father of Obed, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David! That last fact gilds Bethlehem with glory—the fact that David was born there—the mighty hero who smote the Philistine giant, who led the discontented of his land away from the tyranny of their monarch, and who afterwards by a full consent of a willing people, was crowned king of Israel and Judah! Bethlehem was a royal city because the kings were there brought forth! Little as Bethlehem was, it was much to be esteemed, because it was like certain principalities which we have in Europe, which are celebrated for nothing but for bringing forth the consorts of the royal families of England! It was right then from history, that Bethlehem should be the birthplace of Christ!

**2.** But again—*there is something in the name of the place.* “Bethlehem Ephrathah.” The word *Bethlehem* has a double meaning; it signifies, “the house of bread,” and “the house of war.” Ought not Jesus Christ to be born in “the house of bread”? He is the Bread of His people on which they feed! As our fathers ate manna in the wilderness, so do we live on Jesus here below! Famished by the world, we cannot feed on its shadows; its husks may gratify the swinish taste of worldlings, for they are swine, but we need something more substantial. In that blessed bread of heaven, made of the bruised body of our Lord Jesus, and baked in the furnace of His agonies, we find a blessed food! No food like Jesus to the desponding soul or to the strongest saint! The very meanest of the family of God goes to Bethlehem for his bread—and the strongest man, who eats strong meat, goes to Bethlehem for it, too. House of Bread, where could our nourishment come from but you? We have tried Sinai, but on her rugged steeps there grow no fruits, and her thorny heights yield no corn whereon we may feed; we have even gone to Tabor, itself, where Christ was transfigured, and yet there we have not been able to eat His flesh and drink His blood. But Bethlehem, house of bread, rightly were you called, for there the bread of life was first handed down for man to eat!

But it is also called, “the house of war,” because Christ is to a man, “the house of bread,” or else “the house of war.” While He is food to the righteous, He causes war to the wicked, according to His own words—”Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth; I am not come to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, 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." Sinner, if you do not know Bethlehem as "the house of bread," it shall be to you a "house of war." If from the lips of Jesus you never drink sweet honey—if you are not like the bee which sips sweet luscious liquor from the Rose of Sharon, then out of the same mouth there shall go forth against you a two-edged sword! And that mouth from which the *righteous* draw their bread, shall be to you the mouth of *destruction*. and the cause of your ruin! Jesus of Bethlehem, house of bread and house of war, we trust we know You as our bread. Oh, that some who are now at war with You might hear in their hearts, as well as in their ears the song—

***"Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled."***

And now for that word *Ephrathah*. That was the old name of the place which the Jews retained and loved. The meaning of it is, "fruitfulness," or "abundance." Ah, well was Jesus born in the house of fruitfulness, for where comes my fruitfulness and your fruitfulness, my brethren, but from Bethlehem? Our poor barren hearts never produced one fruit or flower till they were watered with the Savior's blood! It is His incarnation which fattens the soil of our hearts; there had been pricking thorns on all the ground—and mortal poisons before He came—but our fruitfulness comes from Him. "I am like a green fir tree; from You is my fruit found." "All my springs are in You." If we are like trees planted by the rivers of water bringing forth our fruit in our season, it is not because we were naturally fruitful, but because of the rivers of water by which we were planted; it is Jesus that makes us fruitful! "If a man abides in Me," He says, "and My words abide in him, he shall bring forth much fruit." Glorious Bethlehem Ephrathah! Rightly named! Fruitful house of bread—the house of abundant provision for the people of God!

**3.** We notice, next, *the position of Bethlehem*. It is said to be "little among the thousands of Judah." Why is this? It is because Jesus Christ always goes among little ones! He was born in the little one "among the thousands of Judah." Not Bashan's high hill; not on Hebron's royal mount; not in Jerusalem's palaces, but in the humble, yet illustrious village of Bethlehem! There is a passage in Zechariah which teaches us a lesson—it is said that the man on the red horse stood among the myrtle trees. Now the myrtle trees grow at the bottom of the hill, and the man on the red horse always rides there; he does not ride on the mountain-top, he rides among the humble in heart! "With this man will I dwell, says the Lord; with him who is of a humble and contrite spirit, and who trembles at My Word." There are some little ones here this morning—"little among the thousands of Judah." No one ever heard your name, did they? If you were buried, and had your name on your tombstone, it would never be noticed. Those who pass by would say, "He is nothing to me; I never knew him." You do not know much of yourself or think much of yourself; perhaps you can scarcely read; if you have some talents and

ability, you are despised among men; or if you are not despised by them, you despise yourself! You are one of the little ones. Well, Christ is always born in Bethlehem among the little ones; big hearts never get Christ inside of them; Christ lies not in great hearts, but in little ones; mighty and proud spirits never have Jesus Christ, for He comes in at low doors; He will not come in at high ones; he who has a broken heart and a low spirit shall have the Savior, but no one else! He heals not the prince and the king, but “the broken in heart, and He binds up their wounds.” Sweet thought! He is the Christ of the little ones! “You, Bethlehem Ephratah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel.”

We cannot pass away from this without another thought, which is, how “*wonderfully mysterious was that providence which brought Jesus Christ’s mother to Bethlehem at the very time when she was to deliver!*” His parents were residing at Nazareth, and why should they need to travel at that time? Naturally they would have remained at home; it was not at all likely that His mother would have taken a journey to Bethlehem while in so peculiar a condition! But Caesar Augustus issues a decree that they are to be taxed; very well then, let them be taxed at Nazareth. No! It pleases him that they should all go to their city, but why should Caesar Augustus think of it just at that particular time? Simply because while man devises his way, the king’s heart is in the hand of our Lord! Why, what a thousand chances—as the world has it—met together to bring about this event! First of all, Caesar quarreled with Herod; one of the Herods was deposed; Caesar says, “I shall tax Judea, and make it a province instead of having it for a separate kingdom.” Well, it must be done, but when is it to be done? This taxing, it is said, was first commenced when Cyreneus was governor, but why is the census to be taken at *that* particular period—suppose—December? Why not have had it last October? And why could not the people be taxed where they were living? Was not their money just as good there as anywhere else? It was Caesar’s whim, but it was God’s decree! Oh, we love the sublime doctrine of eternal absolute predestination! Some have doubted its being consistent with the free agency of man; we know well it is so, and we never saw any difficulty in the subject. We believe metaphysicians have made difficulties; we see none ourselves. It is for us to believe that man does as he pleases, yet notwithstanding, *he always does as God decrees!* If Judas betrays Christ, “thereunto he was appointed”; and if Pharaoh hardens his heart, yet “for this purpose have I raised you up, to show forth My power in you.”

Man does as he wills, but God makes him do as he wills! No, not only is the will of man under the absolute predestination of Jehovah, but all things, great or little are of Him! Well has the good poet said, “Doubtless the sailing of a cloud has providence as its pilot; doubtless the root of an oak is gnarled for a special purpose; God compasses all things, mantling the globe like air.” There is nothing great or little that is not from Him;

the summer dust moves in its orbit guided by the same hand which rolls the stars along; the dewdrops have their father, and trickle on the rose leaf as God bids them. Yes, the dry leaves of the forest, when hurled along by the tempest, have their allotted position where they shall fall, nor can they go beyond it! In the great, and in the little, there is God—God in everything, working all things according to the counsel of His own will. And though man seeks to go against his Maker, yet he cannot; God has bound the sea with a barrier of sand, and if the sea mounts up wave after wave, yet it shall not exceed its allotted channel. Everything is of God, and unto Him who guides the stars and wings sparrows, who rules planets and yet moves atoms, who speaks thunders and yet whispers zephyrs, unto Him be glory, for there is God in everything!

**III.** This brings us to the third point—WHY DID JESUS COME? He came to be “ruler in Israel.” A very singular thing is this, that Jesus Christ was said to have been “born the king of the Jews.” Very few have ever been, “*born king.*” Men are born *princes*, but they are seldom born kings. I do not think you can find an instance in history where any infant was born king. He was the prince of Wales perhaps, but he had to wait a number of years—till his father died, and then they manufactured him into a king by putting a crown on his head, and a sacred chrism, and other silly things; but he was not *born* a king! I remember no one who was born a king except Jesus, and there is emphatic meaning in that verse that we sing—

**“Born Your people to deliver  
Born a child, and yet a king.”**

The moment that He came on earth He was a king! He did not wait till His majority that He might take His empire—but as soon as His eyes greeted the sunshine, He was a king! from the moment that His little hands grasped anything, they grasped a scepter! As soon as His pulse beat, and His blood began to flow, His heart beat royally, and His pulse beat an imperial measure, and His blood flowed in a kingly current! He was *born a king*. He came “to be ruler in Israel.” “Ah,” says one, “then He came in vain, for little did He exercise His rule—‘He came unto His own, and His own received Him not’—He came to Israel, and He was not their ruler, but He was ‘despised and rejected of men,’ cast off by them all, and forsaken by Israel unto whom He came.” Yes, but “They are not all Israel who are of Israel.” Neither because they are the seed of Abraham shall they all be called such. Ah, no! He is not ruler of Israel after the *flesh*, but He is the ruler of Israel after the *spirit*! Many such have obeyed Him; did not the Apostles bow before Him, and acknowledge Him as their king? And now, does not Israel salute Him as their ruler? Do not all the seed of Abraham after the spirit, even all the faithful, for He is “the father of the faithful,” acknowledge that unto Christ belongs the shields of the mighty, for He is the king of the whole earth? Does He not rule over Israel? Yes, verily He does, and those who are not ruled over by Christ are not of Israel. He came to be a ruler over Israel!

My brother, have you submitted to the sway of Jesus? Is He ruler in your heart, or is He not? We may know Israel by this—Christ is come into their hearts to be ruler over them. “Oh,” says one, “I do as I please; I was never in bondage to any man.” Ah, then you hate the rule of Christ! “Oh,” says another, “I submit myself to my minister, to my clergyman, or to my priest—and I think that what he tells me is enough, for he is my ruler.” Do you? Ah, poor slave, you know not your dignity—for nobody is your lawful ruler but the Lord Jesus Christ! “Yes,” says another, “I have professed His religion, and I am His follower.” But does He rule in your hearts? Does He command your will? Does He guide your judgment? Do you ever seek counsel at His handling your difficulties? Are you desirous to honor Him, and to put crowns upon His head? Is He your ruler? If so, then you are one of Israel, for it is written, “He shall come to be ruler in Israel.” Blessed Lord Jesus, You are ruler in Your people’s hearts, and You always shall be! We want no other ruler save You, and we will submit to none other! We are free because we are the servants of Christ; we are at liberty because He is our ruler, and we know no bondage and no slavery because Jesus Christ alone is Monarch of our hearts! He came “to be ruler in Israel,” and mark you—that mission of His is not quite fulfilled yet—and shall not be till the latter-day glories! In a little while you shall see Christ come again, to be ruler over His people Israel, and ruler over them not only as *spiritual* Israel, but even as natural Israel, for the Jews shall be restored to their land, and the tribes of Jacob shall yet sing in the halls of their temple; unto God there shall yet again be offered Hebrew songs of praise, and the heart of the unbelieving Jew shall be melted at the feet of the true Messiah! In a short time, He who at His birth was hailed king of the Jews by Easterners, and at His death was written king of the Jews by a Westerner, shall be called king of the Jews everywhere—yes, king of the Jews and Gentiles also—in that universal monarchy whose dominion shall be co-extensive with the habitable globe, and whose duration shall be coeval with time itself! He came to be a ruler in Israel, and a ruler most decidedly He shall be, when He shall gloriously reign among His people with His ancients!

**IV.** And now, the last thing is, DID JESUS CHRIST EVER COME BEFORE? We answer, yes, for our text says, “Whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.”

First, Christ has had His goings forth in His Godhead, “from everlasting.” He has not been a secret and a silent person up to this moment; that new-born child there has worked wonders long before now! That infant slumbering in His mother’s arms is the infant of today, but it is the ancient of eternity! That child who is there has not made His appearance on the stage of this world—His name is not yet written in the calendar of the circumcised—but still though you wish it not, “His goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.”

**1.** Of old He went forth as our covenant head in election, “according as He has chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world”—

***“Christ is My first elect, He said,  
Then chose our souls in Christ our Head.”***

2. He had goings forth for His people, *as their representative before the throne of God even before they were begotten in the world!* It was from everlasting that His mighty fingers grasped the pen, the stylus of ages, and wrote His own name, the name of the eternal Son of God; it was from everlasting that He signed the compact with His Father, that He would pay blood for blood, wound for wound, suffering for suffering, agony for agony, and death for death on the behalf of His people; it was from everlasting that He gave Himself up without a murmuring word, that from the crown of His head to the sole of His feet He might sweat blood, that He might be spit upon, pierced, mocked, torn asunder, suffer the pain of death, and the agonies of the cross! His goings forth as our Surety were from everlasting. Pause, my soul, and wonder! You had goings forth in the person of Jesus from everlasting! Not only when you were born into the world did Christ love you, but His delights were with the sons of men *before* there were any sons of men! Often did He think of them; from everlasting to everlasting He had set His affection upon them. What? Believer, has He been so long about your salvation, and will He not accomplish it? Has He from everlasting been going forth to save me, and will He lose me now? What? Has He had me in His hand as His precious jewel, and will He now let me slip between His precious fingers? Did He choose me before the mountains were brought forth, or the channels of the deep scooped out, and will He lose me now? Impossible!—

***“My name from the palms of His hands  
Eternity cannot erase!  
Impressed on His heart it remains,  
In marks of indelible grace!”***

I am sure He would not love me so long, and then leave off loving me! If He intended to be tired of me, He would have been tired of me long before now; if He had not loved me with a love as deep as hell and as unutterable as the grave; if He had not given His whole heart to me, I am sure He would have turned from me long ago! He knew what I would be, and He has had time enough to consider it—but I am His choice, and that is the end of it; and unworthy as I am, it is not mine to grumble if He is contented with me, and He is contented with me—He must be contented with me, for He has known me long enough to know my faults! He knew me before I knew myself—yes, He knew me before I *was* myself! Long before my members were fashioned, they were written in His book, “when as yet there were none of them.” His eyes of affection were set on them; He knew how badly I would act towards Him, and yet He has continued to love me—

***“His love in times past forbids me to think,  
He’ll leave me at last in trouble to sink.”***

No! Since, “His goings forth were of old, from everlasting,” they will be, “to everlasting.”

Secondly, we believe that Christ *has come forth of old, even to men, so that men have beheld Him*. I will not stop to tell you that it was Jesus who walked in the garden of Eden in the cool of the day, for His delights were with the sons of men; nor will I detain you by pointing out all the various ways in which Christ came forth to His people in the form of the angel of the covenant, the Paschal Lamb, the brazen serpent, the burning bush, and ten thousand types with which the sacred history is so replete! But I will rather point you to four occasions when Jesus Christ our Lord, has appeared on earth as a man, before His great incarnation for our salvation. And, first, I beg to refer you to the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis, where Jesus Christ appeared to *Abraham*, of whom we read, “The Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day. And he lifted up his eyes and looked and lo, three men stood by him. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground.” But whom did he bow to? He said, “My Lord,” only to one of them. There was one man between the other two, the most conspicuous for His glory, for He was the God-Man, Christ Jesus! The other two were created angels who, for a time, had assumed the appearance of men, but this was the man Christ Jesus. “And he said, my Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, pass not away, I pray You, from Your servant; let a little water, I pray You, be fetched and wash Your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.” You will notice that this majestic man, this glorious person, stayed behind to talk with Abraham. In the 22<sup>nd</sup> verse it is said—“And the men turned their faces from there and went towards Sodom”—that is two of them, as you will see in the next chapter, “But Abraham stood yet before the Lord.” You will notice that this man, the Lord, held sweet fellowship with Abraham, and allowed Abraham to plead for the city He was about to destroy. He was in the positive form of Man; so that when He walked the streets of Judea it was not the first time that He was a man—He was so before, in “the plain of Mamre, in the heat of the day.”

There is another instance—His appearing to *Jacob*, which you have recorded in the 32<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Genesis, and the 24<sup>th</sup> verse. All his family were gone, “And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when He saw that He prevailed not against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with Him. And He said, Let Me go, for the day breaks. And he said, I will not let You go unless You bless me. And He said unto him, What is your name? And he said, Jacob. And He said, Your name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel, for as a prince have you power with God.” This was a man, and yet God! “For as a prince have you power with God and with men, and have prevailed.” And Jacob knew that this man was God, for he says in the 30<sup>th</sup> verse—“for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” Another instance you will find in the Book of *Joshua*. When Joshua had crossed the narrow stream of Jordan, and had entered the Promised Land, and was

about to drive out the Canaanites, lo, this mighty man-God appeared to Joshua. In the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter, at the 13<sup>th</sup> verse, we read—“And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with His sword drawn in His hand, and Joshua went unto Him, and (like a brave warrior, as he was,) said unto Him, Are You for us, or for our adversaries? And He said, No, but as Captain of the host of the LORD am I now come.” And Joshua saw at once that there was divinity in Him, for Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship and said to Him, “What says *my LORD* unto His servant?” Now, if this had been a created angel he would have reproved Joshua, and said, “I am one of your fellow servants.” But no; “the captain of the LORD’S host said unto Joshua, Loose your shoes from your feet; for the place whereon you stand is holy. And Joshua did so.”

Another remarkable instance is that recorded in the third chapter of the Book of Daniel, where we read the account of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego being cast into the fiery furnace, which was so fierce that it destroyed the men who threw them in. Suddenly the king said to his counselors—“Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” How should Nebuchadnezzar know that? Only that there was something so noble and majestic in the way in which that wondrous Man bore Himself—and some awful influence about Him who so marvelously broke the consuming teeth of that biting and devouring flame—so that it could not so much as singe the children of God! Nebuchadnezzar recognized His humanity. He did not say, “I see three men and an angel,” but he said, “I see four positive men and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” You see then, what is meant by His goings forth being “from everlasting.”

Observe for a moment here, that each of these four great occurrences happened to the saints when *they were engaged in very eminent duty, or when they were about to be engaged in it*. Jesus Christ does not appear to His saints every day; He did not come to see Jacob till he was in affliction; He did not visit Joshua before he was about to be engaged in a righteous war. It is only in extraordinary seasons that Christ thus manifests Himself to His people. When Abraham interceded for Sodom, Jesus was with him, for one of the highest and noblest employments of a Christian is that of intercession; and it is when he is so engaged that he will be likely to obtain a sight of Christ. Jacob was engaged in wrestling, and that is a part of a Christian’s duty to which some of you never did attain; consequently you do not have many visits from Jesus. It was when Joshua was exercising bravery that the Lord met him. So with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—they were in the high places of persecution on account of their adherence to duty, when He came to them, and said, “I will be with you, passing through the fire.” There are certain peculiar places we must enter to meet with the Lord. We must be in great trouble,

like Jacob; we must be in great labor, like Joshua; we must have great intercessory faith, like Abraham; we must be firm in the performance of duty, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; or else we shall not know Him, “whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.” Or, if we know Him, we shall not be able to “comprehend with all the saints what is the height, depth, length, and breadth of the love of Christ, which passes knowledge.”

Sweet Lord Jesus! You whose goings forth were of old, even from everlasting, You have not yet left Your goings forth! Oh, that You would go forth this day to cheer the faint, to help the weary, to bind up our wounds, to comfort our distresses! Go forth, we beseech You, to conquer sinners, to subdue hard hearts—to break the iron gates of sinners’ lusts, and cut the iron bars of their sins in pieces! O Jesus! Go forth; and when You go forth, come to me! Am I a hardened sinner? Come to me. I need You—

***“Oh, let Your grace, my heart subdue—  
I would be led in triumph too!  
A willing captive to my Lord,  
To sing the honors of Your word.”***

Poor sinner! Christ has not yet left going forth. And when He goes forth, remember He goes to Bethlehem! Have you a Bethlehem in your heart? Are you little? He will yet go forth to you! Go home and seek Him by earnest prayer. If you have been made to weep on account of sin, and think yourself too little to be noticed, go home, little one! Jesus comes to little ones; His goings forth were of old, and He is going forth now! He will come to your poor old house; He will come to your poor wretched heart; He will come, though you are in poverty, and clothed in rags; though you are destitute, tormented, and afflicted—He will come, for His goings forth have been of old from everlasting! Trust Him! Trust Him! Trust Him! And He will go forth to abide in your heart forever!

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# CANAAN ON EARTH

## NO. 58

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 30, 1855,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“For the land which you go to possess is not as the land of Egypt, from where you came out, where you sowed your seed and watered it with your foot, as a garden of herbs. But the land where you go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys and drinks water of the rain of heaven. A land which the Lord your God cares for. The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year.”  
Deuteronomy 11:10, 11, 12.***

IT has generally been considered that the passage of the Jordan by the Israelites is typical of death, and that Canaan is a fitting representation of heaven. We believe that in some sense it is true, and we do fondly cherish the household words of those hymns which describe our passing through Jordan's billows, and landing safely on Canaan's side. But we think that the allegory does not hold—that Jordan is not a fair exhibition of death, nor the land of Canaan a fair picture of the sweet land beyond the swelling flood which the Christian gains after death. For mark you, after the children of Israel had entered into Canaan, they had to fight with their enemies; it was a land filled with foes; every city they entered, they had to take by storm unless a miracle dismantled it. They were warriors even in the land of Canaan, fighting for their own inheritance, and though each tribe had its lot marked out, they had to conquer the giant Anakim, and encounter terrible hosts of Canaanites! But when we cross the river of death, we shall have no foes to fight, no enemies to encounter. Heaven is a place already prepared for us; out of it the evil ones have long ago been driven; there brethren shall await us with pleasing faces; kind hands shall clasp ours, and only loving words shall be heard. The shout of war shall never be raised by us in heaven; we shall throw our swords away, and the scabbards with them; no battles with warriors there; no plains soaked with blood, no hills where robbers dwell, no inhabitants with chariots of iron. It is “a land flowing with milk and honey,” and it dreams not of the foeman of Canaan of old. We think the church has lost the beauty of Scripture in taking Jordan to mean death—and that a far fuller meaning is the true allegory to be connected with it. Egypt, as we have lately observed to you, was typical of the condi-

tion of the children of God while they are in bondage to the law of sin; there they are made to work unceasingly without wages or profit, but continually subject to pains. We said, again, that the coming up out of Egypt was the type of the deliverance which every one of God's people enjoys, when by faith he strikes the blood of Jesus on his lintel and his doorpost, and spiritually eats the Paschal Lamb; and we can also tell you now, that the passage through the wilderness is typical of that state of hoping, fearing, doubting, wavering, inconstancy, and distrust which we usually experience between the period when we come out of Egypt, and attain unto the full assurance of faith.

Many of you, my dear hearers, have really come out of Egypt, but you are still wandering about in the wilderness. "We that have believed do enter into rest." But you, though you have eaten of Jesus, have not so believed on Him as to have entered into the Canaan of rest. You are the Lord's people, but you have not come into the Canaan of assured faith, confidence, and hope where we wrestle no longer with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers *in the heavenly places* in Christ Jesus. You have not come to that place where it is no longer a matter of doubt with us whether we shall be saved, but we feel that we *are* saved! I have known believers who have existed for years with almost no doubt as to their acceptance; they have enjoyed a sweet and blessed reliance on Christ; they have come into Canaan; they have fed on the good old corn of the land; they now "lie passive in His hands, and know no will but His." They have such a sweet oneness with their blessed Lord Jesus, that they lay their head on His breast all day long; they have scarcely any nights—they almost always live in days, for though they have not attained unto His perfect image, they feel themselves so manifestly in union with Him that they cannot and dare not doubt! They have entered into rest; they have come into Canaan. Such is the condition of the child of God when he has come to an advanced stage in his experience, when God has so given him grace upon grace that he can 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."

We will read this passage again, and bear in mind what I understand it to mean. It sets before us the Christian's state *after* he has attained to this faith and confidence in God; when he is no longer careful about the things of this life, when he does not water the ground with his foot, but has come to a land that drinks in the rain of heaven. "The land where you go in to possess it"—the land of high and holy Christian privilege—"is not as the land of Egypt, from where you came out, where you sowed your seed, and watered it with your foot, as a garden of herbs: but the

land where you go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinks water of the rain of heaven: a land which the Lord your God cares for: the eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” We shall have this morning to note, first of all, *the difference between the Christian’s temporal condition, and that of the Egyptian worldling*. And secondly, *the special privilege granted to those who have entered into Canaan*—that the eyes of the Lord their God are always upon their land, “from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year.”

**I.** True religion makes a difference not only in a man, but in a man’s condition; it affects not only his heart, but his state—not only his nature, but his very standing in society! The Lord your God cares not only for Israel, but for Canaan where Israel dwells. God has not only a regard to the elect, but to their habitation, and not only so, but to all their affairs and circumstances. The moment I become a child of God, not only is my heart changed, and my nature renewed, but my very position becomes different; the very beasts of the field are in league with me, and the stones there are at peace! My habitation is now guarded by Jehovah! My position in this world is no longer that of a needy mendicant—I have become a gentleman-pensioner on the providence of God! My position which was that of a bond slave in Egypt, is now become that of an inheritor in Canaan! In this difference of the condition of the Christian and the worldling, we shall mark three things.

**1.** First, *the Christian’s temporal condition is different to that of the worldling*. The worldling looks to secondary causes—the Christian looks to heaven; he gets his mercies there. Read the text—“The land which you go to possess is not as the land of Egypt, from where you came out, where you sowed your seed, and watered it with your foot, as a garden of herbs.” The land of Egypt has never had any rain from heaven—it has been always watered from earthly sources. At a certain season the river Nile overflowed its banks, and covered the land. A stock of water was then accumulated in artificial reservoirs, and afterwards let out in canals, and allowed to run in little trenches through the fields. They had to water it as a garden of herbs; all their dependence was on the nether springs; they looked to the river Nile as the source of all their plenty, and even worshipped it! But the land to which you are coming is not watered from a river—“it drinks water of the rain of heaven.” Your fertility shall not come from such artificial sources as canals and trenches; you shall be fed from the water that descends from heaven! You see how beautifully this pictures a worldling and a Christian? Look at the worldling; what is his dependence? It is all upon the water below—he looks only to the

water that flows from the river of this world. “Who will show us any good?” Some rely upon what they call *chance*—(a river the source of which, like the source of the Nile, is never known,) and though continually disappointed, they still persevere in trusting to this unknown stream. Others, who are more sensible, trust to their hard work and honesty; they look to the source of that river, and they trace it to a fountain of human erection, graced by a statue of labor. Ah, that river may yet fail you! It may not overflow its banks, and you may be starved. But, O Christian, what do *you* rely upon? Your land “drinks water of the rain of heaven”; your mercies come not from the hand of chance; your daily bread comes not so much from your industry as from your heavenly Father’s care; you see stamped upon every mercy heaven’s own inscription, and every blessing comes down to you perfumed with the ointment, and the spikenard, and the myrrh of the ivory palaces from where God dispenses His bounties! Here is the difference between the assured Christian and the mere worldling—the one trusts to natural causes—the other “looks through nature up to nature’s God.” He sees his mercies as coming down fresh from heaven!

Beloved, let us improve on this thought by showing you the great value of it. Do you know a man who sees his mercies coming from heaven, and not from earth? How much sweeter all his mercies are! There is nothing in the world that tastes as sweet to the schoolboy as that which comes from home; those who live at the school may make him ever such good things, but he cares nothing for anything like that which comes from home! And it is so with the Christian; all his mercies are sweeter because they are home mercies. I love God’s favors on earth, for everything I eat and drink tastes of home, and oh how sweet to think, “That bread, my Father’s hand molded; that water, my Father drops out from His hand in the gentle rain.” I can see everything coming from His hand! The land in which I live is not like the land of Egypt, fed by a river, but it “drinks water of the rain of heaven.” All my mercies come from above! Don’t you like, beloved, to see the print of your Father’s fingers on every mercy? You have heard of the haddock having the mark of the thumb of Peter on it; it is a fiction, of course, but I am sure all the fish that we get out of the sea of providence are marked by Jesus’ fingers. Happy the lot of that man who receives everything as coming from God, and thanks his Father for it all! It makes everything sweet, when he knows it comes from heaven!

This thought, again, has a great tendency to keep us from an overwhelming love of the world. If we think that all our mercies come from heaven, we shall not be so likely to love the world, as we shall be if we

think that they are the natural products of the soil. The spies went to Eschol, and fetched an immense cluster of the grapes which grew there, but you do not find that the people said, “These are fine fruits, therefore will we stay here.” No—they saw that the grapes came from Canaan, and therefore they said, “Let us go on and possess them.” And so, when we get rich mercies, if we think they come from the natural soil of this earth, we feel—

**“Here I will forever stay.”**

But if we know that they come from a foreign clime, we are anxious to go—

**“Where our dear Lord,  
His vineyard keeps,  
And all the clusters grow.”**

Then, Christian, rejoice, rejoice! Your mercies come from heaven! However small they are, still they are your Father’s gifts. Not one comes to you without His knowledge and His permission. Bless the Lord, therefore, that you have come to Canaan—where your “land drinks water of the rain of heaven”!

My dearly beloved, just stop here, and console yourselves, if you are in trouble. “Oh,” says one, “I know not what I shall do; where to turn myself I cannot tell.” You are not like your brother, who is sitting near you; he has a competency; he has a river of Egypt to depend on, you have not any. Nevertheless there is still the sky. If you were to tell a farmer, “You have no rivers to water your lands.” “Well,” he would say, “I don’t need them, for I have clouds up there, and the clouds are enough.” So, Christian, if you have nothing to depend on down below, turn your eyes up there, and say, “The land which I go to possess, is not as the land of Egypt, from where I came out, where I sowed my seed, and watered it with my foot, as a garden of herbs. But the land, where I go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinks water of the rain of heaven.”

**2.** But now comes the second distinction, and that is, *a difference in the toilsomeness of their lives*. The worldly man, just like the Israelites in Egypt, has to water his land with his foot. Read the passage—“For the land which you go to possess, is not as the land of Egypt, from where you came out, where you sowed your seed, and watered it with your foot as a garden of herbs.” This alludes, possibly, to the practice among all eastern nations where the land is irrigated, of letting out a certain quantity of water into a trench, and then having small gutters dug in the gardens to compel the water to run along different parts of the ground. Sometimes one of these gutters might be broken, and then the gardener would press the mold against it with his foot to keep the water in its proper channel. But I am inclined to think that the passage alludes to the method which

those Eastern countries have of pumping up the water by a tread wheel, and so watering the land with their foot. However that may be, it means that the land of Egypt was watered with extraordinary labor in order to preserve it from sterility! “But,” said Moses, “the land to which you are going is not a land which you will have to water with your foot. The water will come spontaneously; the land will be watered by the rain of heaven. You can sit in your own houses, or under your own vine, or under your own fig tree, and God Himself shall be your irrigator! You shall sit still, and ‘in quietness shall you possess your souls.’” Now, here is a difference between the godly and ungodly—the *ungodly man toils!* Suppose his objective is ambition—he will labor, and labor, and labor, and spend his very life until he obtains the desired pinnacle. Suppose it is wealth—how will he emaciate his frame, rob his body of its needed sleep, and take away the nourishment his frame requires, in order that he may accumulate riches! And if it is learning, how will he burn his eyes out with the flame of his hot desire, that he may understand all knowledge! How will he allow his frame to become weak, and weary and thin by midnight watching, till the oil with which he lights himself by night comes from his own flesh, and the marrow of his bones furnishes the light for his spirit! Men will in this way labor, and toil, and strive! But not so the Christian! No—God “gives His beloved sleep.” His “strength is to sit still.” He knows what it is to fulfill the command of Paul—“I would have you without carefulness.” We can take things as God gives them without all this toil and labor.

I have often admired the advice of old Cineasto Pyrrhus. An old story says that when Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, was making preparation for his intended expedition into Italy, Cineas, the philosopher, took a favorable opportunity of addressing him thus—“The Romans, sir, are reported to be a warlike and victorious people, but if God permits us to overcome them, what use shall we make of the victory?” “You ask,” said Pyrrhus, “a thing that is self-evident. The Romans once conquered, no city will resist us! We shall then be masters of all Italy.” Cineas added—“And having subdued Italy, what shall we do next?” Pyrrhus, not yet aware of his intentions, replied, “Sicily next stretches out her arms to receive us.” “That is very probable,” said Cineas, “but will the possession of Sicily put an end to the war?” “God grant us success in that,” answered Pyrrhus, “and we shall make these only the forerunners of greater things, for then Libya and Carthage will soon be ours; and these things being completed, none of our enemies can offer any further resistance.” “Very true,” added Cineas, “for then we may easily regain Macedon, and make absolute conquest of Greece. And when all these are in our possession, what shall we do,

then?" Pyrrhus, smiling, answered, "Why then, my dear friend, we will live at our ease, take pleasure all day, and amuse ourselves with cheerful conversation." "Well sir," said Cineas, "and why may we not do this now, and without the labor and hazard of an enterprise so laborious and uncertain?" So, beloved, says the Christian! The worldly man says, "Let me go and do this; let me go and do that; let me accumulate so many thousand pounds; let me get so rich, and then I will enjoy myself, and take my ease." "No," says the Christian, "I see no reason for doing it; why should I not make God my refuge *now*? Why should I not enjoy comfort and peace, and make myself happy *now*?" He does not want to water his land with his feet! He sits down quietly, and his land "drinks in water of the rain of heaven." Do not say I am preaching laziness! No such thing! I am only saying it is vain for you to rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, for "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it." But if, "He gives His beloved sleep," they rest in Him; they know not these toils. That is, if they have attained to full assurance, and crossed into the Canaan of full confidence in God, they do not care to go ranging the world to find their happiness; but they say, "God is my ever-present help; in Him my soul is satisfied." They rest content in Him. Their land is watered with the rain of heaven.

I remember a story of a young man who was a lawyer. In order to attain fame in his position, he was extremely anxious to understand all the mysteries and tortuous windings of the law, and to acquire some power of oratory, so that he might be able to deliver himself eloquently before the bench. For ten years he lived apart from other people, lest domestic habits should wean him from his studies. He wrapped himself every night in a blanket, and took one of his own volumes, and put it under his head; he denied himself food, eating only so many morsels a day, lest indigestion should impair his powers. Although he was an infidel, he believed in God, and he bowed his head so many times a day, and prayed that he might lose anything rather than his intellectual powers. "Make a giant of me!" That was his expression, and although his poor mother begged him to make himself more comfortable, he would not, but persisted in his course of moderation and self-denial. One day, in reading one of his books, he saw this passage—"When all is gained, how little then is won! And yet to gain that little, how much is lost!" He stamped his foot and raved like a maniac at the thought that he had spent all these ten years toiling and wearying himself for nothing! He saw the vanity of his course; he was driven to desperation, seized his axe, cut down the sign-board of his profession, and said, "Here ends this business." Turning to the same book, he found that it recommended Christianity as the rest of

the weary soul. He found it in Christ, and attained to such an understanding of Christ that he became a preacher of the gospel, and might well have preached on this text—"The land which you go to possess is not as the land of Egypt, from where you came out, where you sowed your seed, and watered it with your foot, as a garden of herbs. But the land which you go to possess is a land of hills and valleys, and drinks water of the rain of heaven. A land which the Lord your God cares for. The eyes of the Lord your God are upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year"

**3.** This brings us to the third and last difference that we will note this morning; and that is that the unbeliever—he who has not crossed the Jordan and come to full confidence—*does not understand the universality of God's providence*, while the assured Christian does. You will see that in my text in a minute. In Egypt the ground is almost entirely flat, and where it is not flat, it is impossible, of course, to grow anything unless the ground is watered at considerable difficulty by some method of artificial irrigation, which shall force the water onto the high places. "But," says Moses, "the land which you go to possess is a land of hills and valleys." The Egyptians could not get the water up on the hills, but you can, for the mountains drink in the rain, as well as the valleys! Now look at a worldling. Give him comforts, give him prosperity, and he can be so happy. Give him everything just as he likes it—make his course all a plain, all a dead valley, and a flat; he can fertilize and water it. But let him have a mountainous trouble—let him lose a friend, or let his property be taken from him; put a hill in his way, and he cannot water that with all the pumping of his feet, and all the force he strives to use! But the Christian lives in "a land of hills and valleys"; a land of sorrow as well as joys, and the hills drink the water, as well as the valleys. We need not climb the mountains to water their heads, for our God is as high as the hills, high as our troubles, and mountainous as are our difficulties sometimes; we need not climb up with weary feet to make them fertile, for they are all made to work together for our good! Go on, Egyptian; live in your flat country, and enjoy its luxuries—you have your papyrus, and you write mercies upon it—but it shall be the food of worms! We have no lotus, but we have a flower that blooms in paradise and we write our mercies on rocks, and not on rushes. Oh, sweet Canaan, heavenly land where I dwell and where you dwell, my brother and sister Christians—a land which "drinks water of the rain of heaven!"

**II.** We must consider a little time, THE SPECIAL MERCY. "The eyes of the Lord are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the

end of the year.” We must now altogether turn away from the allegory, and come to this special mercy, which is only the lot of God’s people.

“The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year”; that is, upon the lot of all Christians *individually*. We have come now, beloved, to the end of another year; to the threshold of another period of time; and have marched another year’s journey through the wilderness. Come, now! In reading this verse over, can you say Amen to it? “The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon you, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” Some of you say, “I have had deep troubles this year.” “I have lost a friend,” says one. “Ah,” says another, “I have been impoverished this year.” “I have been slandered,” cries another. “I have been exceedingly vexed and grieved,” says another. “I have been persecuted,” says another. But, beloved, take the year altogether; the blacks and the whites; the troubles and the joys; the hills and the valleys all together, and what have you to say about it? You may say, “Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Do not pick out one day in the year, and say it was a bad day, but take *all* the year round! Let it revolve in all its grandeur; let all the signs of the Zodiac come before you. Do not say, “I have been in Cancer a long time,” but run through them all, and then get into Libra and judge between things that differ. And then what will you say? “Ah, bless the Lord! He has done all things well; my soul and all that is within me bless His holy name!” And you know why all things have been well? It is because the eyes of the Lord have been upon you all the year! Oh, if those eyes had been shut for a single moment, by night or day, where would we have been? Why, we had not been at all, but swept away like airy dreams, into annihilation! God watches over every one of His people, just as if there were only that one in the world, and He has been watching over you, so that when a trouble came, God said, “Trouble, Avaunt!” “There shall no temptation happen to you but such as is common to man.” And when your joys would have satiated upon you, and around you, God has said, “Stand back, joy! I will not have you fondle him too much; he will be deceived by you.” “The eyes of the Lord have been upon you continually, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” “Well,” says one, “I cannot say very much of my year.” Then I cannot say very much of you. I was speaking to the Christian, and if you cannot say of your year, “surely goodness and mercy have followed it all,” I am afraid you are not a child of God, for I think a child of God will say, when he reviews it all, “Not one good thing has failed of all the Lord God has promised, but all has come to pass.”

Then, my brethren might I not say a word to you concerning *the eyes of the Lord having been upon us as a church?* Ought we to let this year pass without rehearsing the works of the Lord? Has He not been with us exceedingly abundant, and prospered us? It is during this year that we met together in the great assembly—during this year that these eyes have seen the mighty gatherings of men who listened to our words on the Sabbath. We shall not soon forget our sojourn in Exeter Hall, shall we? During those months, the Lord brought in many of His own elect, and multitudes that were unsaved up to that time, were called by divine mercy, and brought into the fold. How God protected us there! What peace and prosperity has He given to us! How has He enlarged our borders, and multiplied our numbers, so that we are not few, and increased us, so that we are not weak! I think we are not thankful enough for the goodness of the Lord which carried us here, and gave us so many who have become useful to us in our church! Remember in how many places you have worshipped God this year. This place has been enlarged so that more can be held within its walls. Now we can receive more to listen to the voice of the gospel than we could before, and God seems to say, “Go forward, go forward still.” The goodness of the Lord has increased as we have gone along. I have often feared, lest the people should desert the house, that when we made it larger we would not have enough to fill it, but the Lord still sends an overwhelming congregation, and still gives us grace to preach His gospel! How thankful should we be! Surely, “The eyes of the Lord” have been upon this church, “from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” We have had peace; not a rotten peace, I trust; but the peace of God! Nothing has arisen that should disturb our equanimity. The church has been kept by the grace of God faithful to the doctrines of grace. Ah, what a blessing it is, that our members have been kept from falling into sin! What a glorious thing that we are carried through another year safely! Some old writer has said, “Every hour that a Christian remains a Christian, is an hour of miracle.” It is true, and every year that the church is kept an entire church, is a year of miracle!

It is a year of miracles. Tell it to the wide, wide world. Tell it everywhere! “The eyes of the Lord” have been upon us, “from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” Two hundred and ten persons have this year united with us in church fellowship; about enough to have formed a church! One half the churches in London cannot number so many in their entire body, and yet the Lord has brought so many into our midst. And still they come; still they come. Whenever I have an opportunity of seeing those who are converted to God, they come in such numbers that many have to be sent away. Still they come; still they

come! And I am well assured that I have as many still in this congregation, who will during the present year, come forward to put on the Lord Jesus Christ! How often has the sacred pool of baptism been opened this year! How sweetly have we assembled round the Lord's Table! What precious moments we have had at the Monday evening prayer meetings! And how glorious it has been when we have publicly recognized brother after brother, sister after sister, by giving them the right hand of fellowship! In all our ways we hope we have acknowledged Him, and He has directed our paths. Sing unto the Lord, for He has done wonders! Bless His name, for He has worked miracles! Praise His grace, for He has highly exalted His people! Unto Him be honor forever and ever! And mark you, brethren; this church has known what it is to come out of Egypt; we have not toiled with our feathers. I hope there has been no desire to draw unfit persons into the church; I have had no toiling with my feet, I am sure, in preaching the gospel—no legal preaching—none of your exciting preaching—none of all that toiling with your feet! But we have had nothing but the rain from heaven. We have not labored to excite carnal passions, or to preach sermons with a view of driving you into religious fevers. Sturdy old Calvinism will not let us do that! We cannot preach such sermons as Arminians can; the land has been watered by the rain of heaven! We have not had any of those fatal pestilential mists that sometimes gather round the church; it is proverbial, that wherever the revivalists go, they always carry desolation; before them is an Eden; behind them is a desert! Wherever they go, they search the land like firebrands—though hundreds seem to be converted to God, they are converted to ten times blacker sins than before, and the last end of them is worse than the first! *[The revivalists since this period have been usually true preachers of the gospel with whom I have the fullest sympathy. Our remarks are intended for certain American Arminian ravers who have done much mischief.]* We want not the getting up of a little feverish passion by appealing to the natural man; it is the drinking water of the rain of heaven that does the good! I trust it has been so here, and that “the eyes of the Lord” have been upon you “from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year.”

So, beloved, I can say that, *as a minister, the eyes of the Lord have been upon me this year.* It has been my privilege, many times this year to preach His word. I think more than 400 times have I stood in the pulpit to testify His truth, and the eyes of the Lord have been upon me. Blessed be His name! Whether it has been in the north, in the south, in the east, or in the west, I have never lacked a congregation, nor have I ever gone again, to any of the places I have preached, without hearing of souls converted! I cannot remember a single village or town that I have visited a

second time without meeting with some who blessed God that they heard the word of truth there. When I went to Bradford last time, I stated in the pulpit that I had never heard of a soul being converted through my preaching there; and the good pew-opener came to Brother Dowson, and said, “Why didn’t you tell Mr. Spurgeon that such-a-one joined the church through hearing him?” And instantly that dear man of God told me the cheering news!

We have met with much opposition this year. Thanks to our brothers in the ministry, we have not had very much assistance from them. We have been enabled to say to them all, “I will not take from you, from a thread to a shoe-latch, lest you should say, I have made him rich.” But how much of that bigotry which formerly existed has subsided! How much of that sneer which was at one time so common, has now gone away, by God’s grace! I am now rather more afraid of their smiles than their frowns—though I do not think I feel much of either. *Cedo nulli*, was my motto at the beginning, and I take it once more. I yield to none! But by the grace of God I preach His truth, and still, if He helps me, will I hold on my way! And to the Three-in-One God, be eternal honor. Amen.

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# WATCH-NIGHT SERVICE

## NO. 59

**HELD AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
ON TUESDAY NIGHT, DECEMBER 31, 1855.**

***“Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up your hands toward Him for the life of your young children that faint for hunger at the head of every street.”  
Lamentations 2:19.***

IF it is inquired why I held a Watch-night, let the answer be because I hoped that the Lord would acknowledge the service, and thus souls might be saved. I have preached the gospel of Jesus Christ at all hours, and see no reason why I may not preach at midnight if I can obtain hearers; I have not done it from imitation but for the best of reasons—the hope of doing good, and the wish to be the means of gathering in the outcasts of Israel. God is my witness, I would preach every hour of the day if my body and mind were equal to the task. When I consider how souls are being damned, and how few there are who cry and mourn over them, I am compelled to cry with Paul, “Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.” Oh, that the new year may be far better than the last!

I am almost sorry to see this service in print, and fear it will rob many of their week’s food from the regular sermon—but as it is done, I will pray the Lord to acknowledge it for Jesus’ sake.—C. H. S.

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The chapel being densely crowded in every part, the preacher entered the pulpit, and after prayer, solemnly read the verse—which the congregation then sang—

***“You virgin souls, arise!  
With all the dead awake  
Unto salvation wise,  
Oil in your vessels take—  
Upstarting at the MIDNIGHT CRY,  
Behold your heavenly bridegroom nigh!”***

Two brothers then offered prayer for the church and the World, that the new year might be clothed with glory by the spread of the knowledge of Jesus.—Then followed the

**EXPOSITION.**  
**PSALM 90:1-12.**

1. *“Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.”* Yes Jehovah, WE, Your children, can say that You have been *our* home, our safe dwelling place, and oh what joy, what peace have we found in His sacred bosom! No home like the breast of the Lord to which in all generations true believers fly. Let me ask the unbelievers where their joy is. Where has your habitation been, you sons of sin and daughters of folly?

2. *“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.”* And the same God, too, loving His people, passing by their sins, and remembering not their iniquities. Oh, beloved, let this thought cheer you—He was, He is, He will be God! Here change cannot climb, here mutation must not approach; forever and ever He is God!

3. *“You turn man to destruction, and say, Return, you children of men.”* How many this year have departed? Oh, where had we been had this been our case? Many of us can say we would have been in bliss, and we would have returned unto God, but alas, many here would have entered the fires of hell and commenced their never-ending torture!

4. *“For a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.”*

5. *“You carry them away as a flood.”* Who are they who are carried away as a flood? Yourselves, my hearers! And myself. Though we know it not, we are always in motion; the impetuous torrent of time is carrying us along like a mighty rolling river; we cannot stand against the force which drives us onwards! We are as powerless as the straw! We can by no means resist it! Where are we going? Where is the river carrying us? We cannot stem its torrents; we cannot escape its floods. Oh, where? Oh, where are we going?

6. *“You carry them away as with a flood. They are as asleep—in the morning they are like grass which grows up.”*

7. *“In the morning it flourishes and grows up. In the evening it is cut down and withers.”*

8. *“For we are consumed by Your anger, and by Your wrath are we troubled.”* No man better understands this than the convicted sinner when smarting under the rod of God. Truly our strength is then utterly consumed, and the troubles of our heart are enlarged!

9. *“You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your countenance.”* Hear that! *“Our secret sins!”* Some of you bear hell’s mark on your forehead; some of you, like Cain, have the mark of justice

on your very brow. Your sins are beforehand with you in judgment; ah, you are here tonight blabbing out the tale of your sad, sad history, but there are persons here who have “secret sins.” You have not been found out yet; the night was too dark for human eyes to see you; the deed was too secret for mortal to behold. But it is set somewhere; just as we set a stone in a golden ring, so has God set your “secret sins in the light of *His* countenance.” Your sins are this night before the eyes of the infinite Jehovah!

**10.** *“For as our days are passed away in Your wrath, we spend our years as a tale that is told.”* The Vulgate translation has—“Our years pass away like those of a spider.” It implies that our life is as frail as the thread of a spider’s web. Constituted most curiously, the spider’s web is, but what more fragile? In what is there more wisdom than in the complicated frame of a human body? And what more easily destroyed? Glass is granite compared with flesh, and vapors are rocks compared with life!

**11.** *“The days of our years are threescore years and ten.”* Mark the Psalmist says, “The *days* of our years.” How seldom we think of that! Our *years* we think of—but not “the *days* of our years.”

**12.** *“And if [it is a great “if,” indeed, for how many die before they attain to it!] by reason of strength they are fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we fly away.”* Where do we fly to? Is it upwards that we wing our way, on more than eagles’ wings, to realms of joy unknown? Or is it downward that we sink with all our sins round our necks like millstones? Oh, shall we go down, down, till in hell we lift up our eye, being in torment?

**13.** *“Who knows the power of Your anger? Even according to Your fear, so is Your wrath.”*

**14.** *“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”* Here is heavenly arithmetic! An application of numeration seldom thought of, even by the wise! May we during the next year so measure out our time that we may apply our hearts to Jesus, who is true wisdom. Amen! Lord, may that be granted!

Now we will sing a verse of that solemn hymn—

***“When You, my righteous judge, shall come.”***

And then the Pastor will make an evening’s prayer for you before he comes to speak with your souls on God’s behalf.

### **HYMN**

***“Let me among Your saints be found  
Whenever the archangel’s trump shall sound,  
To see Your smiling face—  
Then loudest of the crowd I’ll sing,  
While heaven’s resounding mansions ring***

***With shouts of sovereign grace.”***

### **PRAYER**

O GOD, save my people! Save my people! You have given a solemn charge to Your servant; ah, Lord, it is all too solemn for such a child. Help him! Help him, by Your own grace to discharge it as he ought. O Lord, let Your servant confess that he feels that his prayers are not as earnest as they should be for his people's souls; that he does not preach as frequently as he ought with that fire, that energy, that true love to men's souls. But O Lord, damn not the hearers for the preacher's sin! Oh destroy not the flock for the shepherd's iniquity! Have mercy on them, good Lord, have mercy on them! O Lord, have mercy on them! There are some of them, Father, that will not have mercy on themselves; how have we preached to them, and labored for them! O God You know that I lie not; how have I strived for them that they might be saved, but the heart is too hard for man to melt, and the soul made of iron too hard for flesh and blood to render soft! O God, the God of Israel, only You can save! *There* is the pastor's hope; there is the minister's trust—he cannot—but You can! Lord, they will not come, but You can make them willing in the day of Your power! They will not come unto You that they may have life, but You can draw them, and then they shall run after You. They cannot come; but You can give them power, for though, “no man comes except the Father draw him,” yet if He draw him, then he can come! O Lord, for another year has Your servant preached—You know how; it is not for him to plead his cause with You—that is in another's hands and has been there, thank God, years ago! But now, O Lord, we beseech You, bless our people; let this our church—Your church—be still knit together in unity, and this night may they commence a fresh era of prayer. They *are* a praying people—blessed be Your name, and they pray for their minister with all their hearts. O Lord, help them to pray more earnestly! May we wrestle in prayer more than ever, and besiege Your throne until You make Jerusalem a praise, not only here, but everywhere! But Father, it is not the church we weep for; it is not the church we groan for; it is the world! O Faithful Promiser, have You not promised to Your Son that He should not die in vain? Give Him souls, we beseech You, that He may be abundantly satisfied! Have You not promised Your church that she shall be increased? Oh, increase her, increase her! And have You not promised that Your ministers shall not labor in vain, for You have said, that “as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not there, but waters the earth, even so shall Your word be—it shall not return unto You void.” Let not the word return void, tonight, but now may Your servant, in the most earnest manner, with the most fervent heart—

burning with love to His Savior, and with love to souls—preach once more the glorious gospel of the blessed God! Come, Holy Spirit! We can do nothing without You! We solemnly invoke You, great Spirit of God; You who did rest on Abraham, on Isaac, and on Jacob; You who in the night visions, speaks unto men. Spirit of the Prophets, Spirit of the Apostles, Spirit of the Church, be You our Spirit this night, that the earth may tremble, that souls may be made to hear Your Word, and that all flesh may rejoice together to praise Your name! Unto Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the dread Supreme, be everlasting praise! Amen.

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## SERMON.

***“Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up your hands toward Him for the life of your young children that faint for hunger at the head of every street.”***  
***Lamentations 2:19.***

THIS was originally spoken to Zion when in her sad and desolate condition. Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, had wept his eyes dry for the slain of the daughters of his people, and when he had done all he could to pour out tears for poor Jerusalem, he then begged Jerusalem to weep for herself! I think I might become a Jeremy, tonight, and weep as he, for surely the church at large is in almost as evil a condition! O Zion, how have you been veiled in a cloud, and how is your honor trod in the dust! Arise, you sons of Zion, and weep for your mother—weep bitterly—for she has given herself to other lovers, and forsaken the Lord that bought her! I bear witness this night, in the midst of this solemn assembly, that the church at large is wickedly departing from the living God; she is leaving the truth of God which was once her glory, and she is mixing herself among the nations. Ah, beloved, it were well if Zion could now sometimes weep; it were well if there were more who would lay to heart the wounds of the daughter of His people. How has the city become a harlot! How has the much fine gold become dim! And how has the glory departed! Zion is under a cloud; her ministers preach not with the energy and fire that anciently dwelt in the lips of God’s servants; neither is pure and undefiled doctrine proclaimed in her streets. Where are her evangelists who, with earnest hearts, traversed the land with the gospel on their lips? Where are her apostolic preachers who everywhere declared the good tidings of salvation? Alas for the idle shepherds! Alas for the slumbering ministers! Weep sorely, O Zion! Weep sorely, until another reformation comes to sweep your floor! Weep, Zion—weep until He shall come whose fan is in

His hand, who shall thoroughly purge His floor, for the time is coming when judgment must begin at the house of God! Oh, that now the princes of Israel had wisdom, that they might seek the Lord! But alas, our leaders have given themselves to false doctrine! Neither do they love the thing which is right. Therefore I charge you, "Arise," O Zion, "cry out in the night in the beginning of the watches. Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord."

We leave Zion, however, to speak to those who need exhortation more than Zion does—to speak to those who are Zion's enemies, or followers of Zion, and yet not belonging to her ranks; to them we shall have a word or two to say tonight.

1. First, from our text we gather *that it is never too soon to pray*. "Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord." You are lying on your bed; the gracious Spirit whispers—"Arise and pray to God." Well, there is no reason why you should delay till the morning light! "In the beginning of the watches, pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord." We are told here, that it is *never too soon to pray*. How many young persons imagine that religion is a thing for age, or at least for maturity? They conceive that while they are in the bloom of their youth, they need not attend to its admonitions. How many more have we found who count religion to be a crutch for old age? They reckon it an ornament to their gray hairs, forgetting that to the young man religion is like a chain of gold around his neck, and like an ornament set with precious jewels that shall array him with honor! How many are there who think it is yet too soon for them to bear for a single moment the cross of Jesus? They do not want to have their young shoulders galled with an early burden; they do not think it is true that "it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth," and they forget that that "yoke is easy," and that "burden is light." Therefore hour after hour, and day after day the malicious fiend whispers in their ear—"It is too soon; it is too soon! Postpone, postpone, postpone! Procrastinate!" Need we tell you once more that oft-repeated axiom, "Procrastination is the thief of time"? Need we remind you that "delays are dangerous"? Need we tell you that those are the works of Satan, for the Holy Spirit, when He strives with man, says, "*Today*, if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart." It is never, beloved, too soon to pray!

Are you a child tonight? Your God hears children! He called Samuel when he was but a child; "Samuel, Samuel," and Samuel said, "Here am I." We have had our Josiahs; we have heard of our Timothys; we have seen those in early youth who have been brought to the Savior. Oh remember it is not too soon to seek the Savior, before you arrive at man-

hood! If God in His mercy calls you to Him, I beseech you think not for a moment that He will not hear you! I trust I know His name—more than that, I *know* I do! “I know whom I have believed.” But He did not call me too early; though but a child, I descended into the pool of baptism there to be buried with my Savior. Oh I wish I could say that all those 14 or 15 years of my life had not been thrown away! Blessed be His name, He never calls us too soon! If He rises early in the morning, and sends some into His vineyard to labor, He does not send them before they should go—before there is work for them to do. Young man, it is not too soon! “Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord.”

**2.** Again—*it is not too late to cry to the Lord*; for if the sun is set, and the watches of the night have commenced their rounds, the mercy seat is open. No shop is open as late as the house of mercy. The devil has two tricks with men; sometimes he puts their clock a little backward, and he says, “Stop, there is time enough.” And when that does not work, he turns the hands forward, and he cries out, “Too late! Too late!” Old man, has the devil said, “It is too late”? Convicted sinner, has Satan said, “It is too late”? Troubled, distressed one, has the thought risen in your soul—a bitter and a dark one—“It is too late”? It is not! Within another 15 minutes, another year shall have come, but if the Spirit of God calls you this year, He will not call you too late in the year! If to the last second you should live, if God the Holy Spirit calls you, then He will not have called you too late! Ah, you desponding ones, who think it is all too late, it is not—

**“While the lamp holds out to burn,  
The vilest sinner that returns  
Shall find mercy and peace!”**

There have been some older than you can be; some as sinful and vile, and heinously wicked, who have provoked God as much, who have sinned against Him as frequently—and yet, by His grace, they have found pardon! If He calls you, sinner, if He calls you tonight, 12 o’clock is not too late, as 1 o’clock is not too early! If He calls you, whether it is at midnight, or cockcrowing, or noonday, we would say to you as they did to the blind man, “Arise! He calls you!” And as sure as ever He calls you, He will not send you away without a blessing! It is not too late to call on God! The darkness of night is gathering; it is coming on, and you are near to death. Arise, sleeper, arise! You who are now taking the last nap of death, “Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord.”

**3.** Next—*we cannot pray too vehemently*, for the text says, “Arise, cry out in the night.” God loves earnest prayers; He loves impetuous prayers;

vehement prayers. Let a man preach, if he dare, coldly and slowly, but never let him *pray* so! God loves crying-out prayers! There is a poor fellow who says, "I don't know how to pray." "Why, sir," he says, "I could not put six or seven words together in English grammar." Tush upon English grammar! God does not care for that, as long as you pour out your heart, that is enough. *Cry out* before Him! "Ah," says one, "I have been supplicating to God; I think I have asked for mercy." But perhaps you have not cried out. *Cry out* before God! I have often heard men say they have prayed, and have not been heard, and I have known the reason—they have asked amiss if they have even asked, and those who cry with weak voices, who do not cry aloud, must not expect to get a blessing. When you go to mercy's gate, let me give you a little advice: do not go and give a gentle tap, like a lady; do not give a single knock, like a beggar; but take the knocker and rap hard till the very door seems to shake! Rap with all your might! And remember that God loves those who knock hard at mercy's gate. "Knock and it shall be opened unto you." I picture that scene at midnight which our Savior mentioned in the parable—it will suit the present occasion. A certain man needed some bread—a friend of his on a journey had come to his house, and was very faint and needed bread to eat. So off he went to his next door neighbor, and rapped at his door, but no one came. He stood beneath a window and called out his friend's name; his friend answered from the top of the house, where he had been lying asleep, "My wife and children are with me in bed, and I cannot rise and give to you." But the man did not care about that; his poor friend needed bread, so he called out aloud—"It is bread I need, and bread I must have!" I fancy I see the man lying and sleeping there; he says, "I shall not get up; it is very cold tonight; how can you expect me to rise, and go down stairs to get bread for you? I won't! I can't! I shall not." So he wraps himself very comfortably again, and lays down to sleep once more. What does the man down below do? Oh, I still hear him—"Awake, sir! I must have it! I will have it! My friend is starving." "Go home, you fellow! Don't disturb me this time of night." "I must have bread! Why don't you come and let me have it?" says the other. But the friend, vexed and angry, lies down on his bed. Still at the door there comes a heavier and a heavier rap, and the man still shouts—"Bread, sir, bread! You will not sleep all night till you come down and give it to me!" And verily I say unto you, though he will not rise and give it to him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as much as he needs! "Arise, cry out in the night," and God will hear you if you cry out with all your soul, and pour out your heart before Him!

**4.** And now our last remark—*we cannot pray too simply*. Just hear how the Psalmist has it—"Pour out *your hearts* before Him." Not, "Pour

out your fine words." Not, "Pour out your beautiful periods," but, "Pour out *your hearts*." "I dare not," says one—"there is black filth in my heart." Out with it, then—it is better out than in! "I cannot," says another, "it would not run freely." Pour it out, sir; pour it all out like water! Do you not notice something in this? Some men say—"I cannot pray as I could wish; my crying out is a feeble one." Well, when you pour out water, it does not make much noise, so you can pour out your heart like water, and it will run away, and you will scarcely know it! There are many prayers uttered in an attic that nobody has heard—but stop! Gabriel heard it! God Himself heard it! There is many a cry down in a cellar, or up in an attic, or some lonely place where the cobbler sits mending his shoes beneath a window, which the world does not hear, but the Lord hears it! Pour out your heart like water! How does water run out? The quickest way it can—that's all; it never thinks much about how it runs. That is the way the Lord loves to have it! Some of your gentry offer prayers which are poured out, drop after drop, and must be brought to a grand, ecclesiastical, prayer-book shape. Now, take your heart and pour it out like water. "What?" asks one, "with all the oaths in it, and with even all my old sins in it?" Yes, pour out your heart like water; pour it out by confessing all your sins; pour it out by begging the Lord to have mercy upon you for Christ's sake! Pour it out like water, and when it is all poured out, He will come and fill it again with "wines on the lees, well refined." "Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord."

Thus do I speak to all who will acknowledge they are sinners in the sight of God—but even these must have the assistance of the Holy Spirit to enable them to cry out! O my Lord, grant it!

And now, dear friends, may grace be given unto you that you may be able to pour out your hearts this night! Remember, my hearers, it may seem a light thing for us to assemble tonight at such an hour, but listen for one moment to the ticking of that clock! [Here, the preacher paused, and amid solemn silence everyone heard the clock with its tick, tick, tick.] It is the beating of the pulse of eternity! You hear the ticking of that clock? It is the footstep of death pursuing you! Each time the clock ticks, death's footsteps are falling on the ground close behind you! You will soon enter another year; this year will have gone in a few seconds. 1855 is almost gone—where will the next year be spent, my friends? This one has been spent on earth—where will you spend the next? "In heaven!" says one, "I trust." Another murmurs, "Perhaps I shall spend mine in hell!" Ah, solemn is the thought, but before that clock strikes 12, *some here may be in hell!* And blessed be the name of God, *some of us may be in heaven!* But O, do you know how to estimate your time, my hearers?

Do you know how to measure your days? Oh, I have not words to speak tonight! Do you know that every hour you are nearing the tomb? That every hour you are nearing judgment? Do you not know that the archangel is flapping his wings every second of your life, and trumpet at his mouth is approaching you? Do you not know that you do not live stationary lives, but always going on, on, on towards the grave? Do you know where the stream of life is hastening some of you? To the rapids—to the rapids of woe and destruction! What shall the end of those be who obey not the gospel of God? You will not have so many hours to live as you had last year! See the man who has but a few shillings in his pocket—how he takes them out, and spends them one by one? Now he has but a few coppers, and there is so much for that tiny candle, so much for that piece of bread; he counts the articles out one by one, and so the money goes gradually from his pocket. Oh, if you knew how poor you are, some of you! You think there is no bottom to your pockets; you think you have a boundless store of time—but you have not!

As the Lord lives, there is a young man here that has not more than one year to live! And yet he is spending all that he is worth in time, in sin—in folly and vice! Some of you have not that to live, and yet how are you spending your time? O take care! Take care! Time is precious, and whenever we have little of it, it is more precious! It is most precious! May God help you to escape from hell, and fly to heaven! Tonight I feel like the angel who put his hand upon Lot and cried—“Escape! Look not behind you! Stay not in all the plain; flee to the mountain, lest you be consumed!”

And now, I appreciate the power of silence. You will please observe strict and solemn silence until the striking of that clock. And let each one spend the time as he pleases. [It was now two minutes to twelve, and profound silence reigned, save where sobs and groans could be distinctly heard from penitent lips seeking the Savior. The clock having struck, Mr. Spurgeon continued:] You are now where you never were before, and you never will be again where you have been tonight. Now we have had a solemn meeting, and let us have a cheerful ending of it. As we go away, let us sing a sweet hymn to encourage our hearts.

**[A hymn was then sung.]**

Now may the Lord bless you, and lift up the light of His countenance upon you, and give you peace! May you, during this year of grace, receive much grace, and may you proceed onwards towards heaven! And may we as a church, as members of churches, as ministers, as deacons, mutually strive together for the faith of Jesus, and be edified therein! And may

the Lord save the ungodly! If the last year is clean gone and they are not yet pardoned and forgiven, let not another year roll away without their finding mercy!

The Lord dismiss you all with His sweet blessing, for His blessed Son's sake, Amen. And may the love of Jesus Christ, the grace of His Father, and the fellowship of His blessed Spirit be yours, my beloved, if you know Christ, world without end! Amen.

Now, my friends, in the highest and best sense, I wish you all a happy new year.

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# SOVEREIGNTY AND SALVATION

## NO. 60

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 6, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Look unto Me, and be you saved all the ends of the earth;  
for I am God, and there is none else.”  
Isaiah 45:22.***

SIX years ago, today, as near as possible at this very hour of the day, I was, “in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity,” but had yet, by divine grace, been led to feel the bitterness of that bondage, and to cry out by reason of the soreness of its slavery. Seeking rest and finding none, I stepped within the house of God, and sat there, afraid to look upward, lest I should be utterly cut off, and lest His fierce wrath should consume me. The minister rose in his pulpit, and as I have done this morning, read this text—“Look unto Me, and be you saved all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.” I looked that moment! The grace of faith was vouchsafed to me in the same instant, and now I think I can say with truth—

***“Ever since by faith I saw the stream  
His flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die.”***

I shall never forget that day while memory holds its place; nor can I help repeating this text whenever I remember that hour when first I knew the Lord! How strangely gracious! How wonderfully and marvelously kind, that he who heard these words so little time ago for his own soul’s profit, should now address you this morning, as his hearers, from the same text! It is my full and confident hope that some poor sinner within these walls may hear the glad tidings of salvation for himself also, and may to-day, on this 6<sup>th</sup> of January, be “turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.”

If it were within the range of human capacity to conceive a time when God dwelt alone, without His creatures, we should then have one of the grandest and most stupendous ideas of God! There was a season when as yet the sun had never run his race, nor commenced flinging his golden rays across space to gladden the earth; there was an era when no stars sparkled in the firmament, for there was no sea of azure in which they might float; there was a time when all that we now behold of God’s great universe was yet unborn, slumbering within the mind of God, as yet uncreated and non-existent, but there was God, and He was over all blessed forever! Though no seraphs hymned His praises, though no strong-winged cherubs flashed like lightning to do His high behests,

though He was without a retinue, yet He sat as a king on His throne—the mighty God, forever to be worshipped—the Dread Supreme, in solemn silence dwelling by Himself in vast immensity, making of the placid clouds His canopy, and the light from His own countenance forming the brightness of His glory. God was, and God is! From the beginning God was God; before worlds had beginning, He was, “from everlasting to everlasting.” Now, when it pleased Him to create His creatures, does it not strike you how infinitely those creatures must have been below Him? If you are potters, and you fashion upon the wheel a vessel, shall that piece of clay arrogate to itself equality with you? No, at what distance will it be from you, because you have been in part its creator! So when the Almighty formed His creatures, was it not consummate impudence that they should venture for a moment to compare themselves with Him? Yet that arch-traitor, that leader of rebels, Satan, sought to climb to the high throne of God, soon to find his aim too high, and hell, itself, not low enough wherein to escape divine vengeance! He knows that God is “God alone.”

Since the world was created man has imitated Satan—the creature of a day, the ephemera of an hour has sought to match itself with the Eternal. Hence it has always been one of the objectives of the great Jehovah to teach mankind that He is God, and beside Him there is none else; it the lesson He has been teaching the world since it went astray from Him. He has been busying Himself in breaking down the high places, in exalting the valleys, in casting down imaginations and lofty looks, that the entire world might—

**“Know that the Lord is God alone,  
He can create, and He can destroy.”**

This morning we shall attempt to show you, in the first place, *how God has been teaching this great lesson to the world*—that He is God, and beside Him there is none else; and then, secondly, *the special way in which He designs to teach it in the matter of salvation*—“Look unto Me, and be you saved; for I am God, and there is none else.”

**I. First, then, HOW HAS GOD BEEN TEACHING THIS LESSON TO MANKIND?**

We reply He has taught it, first of all, to *false gods, and to the idolaters who have bowed before them*. Man, in his wickedness and sin, has set up a block of wood and stone to be his maker, and has bowed before it. He has fashioned for himself out of a goodly tree, an image made unto the likeness of mortal man, or of the fishes of the sea, or of creeping things of the earth, and he has prostrated his body, and his soul too, before that creature of his own hands, calling it God, while it had neither eyes to see, nor hands to handle, nor ears to hear! But how has God poured contempt on the ancient gods of the heathen! Where are they now? Are they as much as known? Where are those false deities before whom the multitudes of Nineveh prostrated themselves? Ask the moles and the bats whose companions they are, or ask the mounds beneath which they are

buried, or go where the idle gazer walks through the museum—see them there as curiosities, and smile to think that men should ever bow before such gods as these! And where are the gods of Persia? Where are they? The fires are quenched, and the fire-worshipper has almost ceased out of the earth! Where are the gods of Greece—those gods adorned with poetry, and hymned in the most sublime odes? Where are they? They are gone! Who talks of them now, but as things that were of yore? Jupiter—does anyone bow before him? And who is he that adores Saturn? They are passed away, and they are forgotten! And where are the gods of Rome? Does Janus now command the temple? Or do the vestal virgins now feed their perpetual fires? Are there any now that bow before these gods? No, they have lost their thrones.

And where are the gods of the South Sea Islands—those bloody demons before whom wretched creatures prostrated their bodies? They have well-near become extinct! Ask the inhabitants of China and Polynesia where are the gods before which they bowed? Ask, and echo says ask and ask again! They are cast down from their thrones; they are hurled from their pedestals; their chariots are broken, their scepters are burned in the fire, their glories are departed! God has gotten unto Himself the victory over false gods, and taught their worshippers that He is God, and that beside Him there is none else! Are there gods still worshipped, or idols before which the nations bow themselves? Wait but a little while, and you shall see them fall! Cruel Juggernaut, whose ear still crushes in its motion the foolish ones who throw themselves before it, shall yet be the object of derision, and the most noted idols, such as Buddha, and Brahma, and Vishnu, shall yet stoop themselves to the earth, and men shall tread them down as mire in the streets, for God will teach all men that He is God, and that there is none else!

Mark you, yet again, how God has taught this truth to *empires*. Empires have risen up and have been the gods of the era; their kings and princes have taken to themselves high titles, and have been worshipped by the multitude. But ask the empires whether there is any besides God. Do you not think you hear the boasting soliloquy of Babylon—“I sit as a queen, and am no widow. I shall see no sorrow; I am god and there is none beside me”? And think you not now, if you walk over ruined Babylon, that you will meet nothing but the solemn spirit of the Bible, standing like a prophet, gray with age, and telling you that there is one God, and that beside Him there is none else? Go to Babylon covered with its sand, the sand of its own ruins! Stand on the mounds of Nineveh, and let the voice come up—“There is one God, and empires sink before Him; there is only one God, and the princes and kings of the earth with their dynasties and thrones are shaken by the trampling of His foot.” Go seat yourselves in the temple of Greece; mark you there, what proud words Alexander once spoke, but now where is he, and where is his empire? Sit on the ruined arches of the bridge of Carthage, or walk through the desolated theatres of Rome, and you will hear a voice in the wild wind amid

those ruins—"I am God, and there is none else." "O city, you did call yourself eternal! I have made you melt away like dew; you said, 'I sit on seven hills, and I shall last forever.' I have made you crumble, and you are now a miserable and contemptible place, compared with what you were. You were once stone; you made yourself marble; I have made you stone again, and brought you low." Oh, how has God taught monarchs and empires that have set themselves up like new kingdoms of heaven, that He is God, and that there is none else!

Again—how has He taught this great truth to *monarchs!* There are some who have been most proud that have had to learn it in a way more difficult than others. Take for instance, Nebuchadnezzar; his crown is on his head, his purple robe is over his shoulders, he walks through proud Babylon, and says, "Is not this great Babylon which I have built?" Do you see that creature in the field there? It is a man. "A man?" you say, "Its hair has grown like eagles' feathers, and its nails like bird's claws. It walks on all fours, and eats grass like an ox; it is driven out from men! Is that the monarch who said, 'Is not this great Babylon that I have built?'" And now he is restored to Babylon's palace, that he may "bless the Most High who is able to abase those who walk in pride. I remember another monarch; look at Herod! He sits in the midst of his people, and he speaks. Do you hear the impious shout? "It is the voice of God," they cry, "and not the voice of man." The proud monarch gives not God the glory—he accepts the title of god, and seems to shake the spheres, imagining himself divine! There is a worm that creeps into his body, and yet another, and another, and before that sun has set, he is eaten up of worms! Ah, monarch! You thought of being a god, and worms have eaten you! You have thought of being more than man, and what are you?—less than man, for worms consume you, and you are the prey of corruption! Thus God humbles the proud; thus He abases the mighty! We might give you instances from modern history, but the death of a king is all-sufficient to teach this one lesson, if men would but learn it. When kings die, and in funeral pomp are carried to the grave, we are taught the lesson—"I am God, and beside Me there is none else." When we hear of revolutions, and the shaking of empires—when we see old dynasties tremble, and gray-haired monarchs driven from their thrones, then it is that Jehovah seems to put His foot upon land and sea, and with His hands uplifted cries, "Hear, you inhabitants of the earth! You are but as grasshoppers! I am God, and beside Me there is none else!"

Again—our God has had much to do to teach this lesson to *the wise men of this world.* For as rank, pomp, and power have set themselves up in the place of God, so has wisdom. And one of the greatest enemies of Deity has always been the wisdom of man. The wisdom of man will not see God; professing themselves to be wise, wise men have become fools! But have you not noticed in reading history, how God has abased the pride of wisdom? In ages long gone He sent mighty minds into the world who devised systems of philosophy. "These systems," they said, "will last

forever.” Their pupils thought them infallible, and therefore wrote their sayings on enduring parchment, saying, “This book will last forever. Succeeding generations of men will read it, and to the last man, that book shall be handed down as the epitome of wisdom.” “Ah, but,” said God, “that book of yours shall be seen to be folly before another 100 years have rolled away.” And so the mighty thoughts of Socrates and the wisdom of Solon are now utterly forgotten! And could we hear them speak, the very child in our school would laugh to think that he understands more of philosophy than they! But when man has found the vanity of one system, his eyes have sparkled at another; if Aristotle will not suffice, here is Bacon. “Now I shall know everything”—and he sets to work, and says that this new philosophy is to last forever. He lays his stones with fair colors, and he thinks that every truth he piles up is a precious imperishable truth. But alas, another century comes, and it is found to be “wood, hay, and stubble”—a new sect of philosophers rise up who refute their predecessors! So, too, we have wise men in this day—wise secularists and so on, who fancy they have obtained the truth. But within another 50 years—mark that word—this hair shall not be silvered over with gray before the last of that race shall have perished, and that man shall be thought a fool that was ever connected with such a race! Systems of infidelity pass away like a dewdrop before the sun, for God says, “I am God, and beside Me there is none else.”

This Bible is the stone that shall break philosophy in powder! This is the mighty battering ram that shall dash all systems of philosophy in pieces! This is the stone that a woman may yet hurl upon the head of every Abimelech, and he shall be utterly destroyed! O Church of God, fear not! You shall do wonders; wise men shall be confounded, and you shall know, and they too, that He is God, and that beside Him there is none else! “Surely,” says one, “*the church of God* does not need to be taught this.” Yes, we answer, she does, for of all beings, those whom God has made the objects of His grace are perhaps the most apt to forget this cardinal truth of God—that He is God, and that beside Him there is none else! How the church in Canaan forgot it, for when they bowed before other gods, He brought against them mighty kings and princes, and sorely afflicted them. Israel forgot it—and He carried them away captive into Babylon! And what Israel did in Canaan, and in Babylon, that *we* do now! We too, too often forget that He is God, and beside Him there is none else. Does not the Christian know what I mean when I tell him this great fact, for has he not done it himself? In certain times prosperity has come upon him, soft gales have blown his boat along just where his wild will wished to steer, and he has said within himself, “Now I have peace; now I have happiness; now the objective I wished for is within my grasp! Now I will say, ‘Sit down, my soul, and take your rest; eat, drink, and be merry; these things will well content you; make these your god, be blessed and happy.’” But have we not seen our God dash the goblet to the earth, spill the sweet wine, and instead fill it with gall? And as He

has given it to us, He has said—"Drink it, drink it—you have thought to find a god on earth, but drain the cup, and know its bitterness." When we have drunk it, the draught was nauseous, and we have cried, "Ah, God, I will drink no more from these things; You are God, and beside you there is none else."

And ah, how often, too, have we devised schemes for the future without asking God's permission. Men have said, like those foolish ones whom James mentioned, "We will do such-and-such things on the morrow; we will buy and sell, and get gain." Whereas they knew not what was to be on the morrow, for long before the morrow came, they were unable to buy and sell—death had claimed them—and a small span of earth held all their frame! God teaches His people every day by sickness, by affliction, by depression of spirits, by the forsaking of God, by the loss of the Spirit for a season, by the lacking of the joys of His countenance that He is God, and that beside Him there is none else! And we must not forget that there are some special servants of God raised up to do great works, who in a peculiar manner have to learn this lesson. Let a man, for instance, be called to the great work of preaching the gospel. He is successful; God helps him—thousands wait at his feet, and multitudes hang upon his lips. As truly as that man is a man, he will have a tendency to be exalted above measure! And he will begin too much to look to himself, and too little to his God! Let men who know, speak, and speak what they know—let them speak, and they will say—"It is true, it is most true." If God gives us a special mission, we generally begin to take some honor and glory to ourselves, but in the review of the eminent saints of God, have you ever observed how God has made them feel that He was God, and beside Him there was none else? Poor Paul might have thought himself a god; he easily could have been puffed up above measure by reason of the greatness of his revelation, but Paul could feel that he was not a God, for he had a thorn in the flesh, and gods *could not* have thorns in their flesh! Sometimes God teaches the minister by denying him help on special occasions. We come up into our pulpits, and say, "Oh, I wish I could have a good day today!" We begin to labor; we have been just as earnest in prayer, and just as indefatigable; but it is like a blind horse turning round a mill, or like Samson with Delilah—we shake our vain limbs with vast surprise, "make feeble flight," and win no victories! We are made to see that the Lord is God, and that beside Him there is none else!

Very frequently God teaches this to the minister by leading him to see his own sinful nature. He will have such an insight into his own wicked and abominable heart that he will feel, as he comes up the pulpit stairs, that he does not deserve so much as to sit in his pew, much less to preach to his fellows! Although we always feel joy in the declaration of God's Word, yet we have known what it is to totter on the pulpit steps under a sense that the chief of sinners should scarcely be allowed to preach to others! Ah, beloved, I do not think he will be very successful as

a minister, who is not taken into the depths and blackness of his own soul, and made to exclaim, “Unto me, who am *less than the least of all saints*, is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ?” There is another antidote which God applies in the case of ministers. If He does not deal with them personally, He raises up a host of enemies that it may be seen that He is God, and God alone! What? Will a man subject himself to the calumnies of the multitude? Will he toil and work, day after day, unnecessarily? Will he stand up Sabbath after Sabbath and preach the gospel, and have his name maligned and slandered if he has not the grace of God in him? For myself I can say that were it not that the love of Christ constrained me, this hour might be the last that I should preach, so far as the case of the thing is concerned. “Necessity is laid upon us; woe is unto us if we preach not the gospel.” But that opposition through which God carries His servants leads them to see at once that He is God, and that there is none else! If everyone applauded, if all were gratified, we would think ourselves God, but, when they hiss and hoot, we turn to our God and cry—

***“If on my face, for Your dear name  
Shame and reproach should be,  
I’ll hail reproach, and welcome shame  
If You’ll remember me!”***

**II.** This brings us to the second portion of our discourse. Salvation is God’s greatest work, and therefore, in His greatest work, He specially teaches us this lesson—That He is God, and that beside Him there is none else. Our text tells us HOW HE TEACHES IT—He says, “Look unto Me, and *be you saved all the ends of the earth.*” He shows us that He is God, and that beside Him there is none else in three ways. First, by the person to whom He directs us—“Look unto Me, and be you saved.” Secondly, by the means He tells us to use to obtain mercy—“Look.” Simply, “Look.” And thirdly, by the persons whom he calls to “look”—“Look unto Me, and be you saved *all the ends of the earth.*”

**1.** First, to *whom does God tell us to look for salvation?* Oh, does it not lower the pride of man when we hear the Lord say, “Look unto Me, and be you saved all the ends of the earth”? It is not, “Look to your priest, and be you saved”—if you did, there would be another God—and beside him there would be someone else! It is not, “Look to yourself”—if so, then there would be a being who might arrogate some of the praise of salvation. But it is, “Look unto Me.” How frequently you who are coming to Christ, look to yourselves. “Oh!” you say, “I do not *repent* enough.” That is looking to yourself. “I do not *believe* enough.” That is looking to yourself. “I am too *unworthy.*” That is looking to yourself. “I cannot discover,” says another, “that I have any *righteousness.*” It is quite right to say that you have not any righteousness, but it is quite wrong to *look* for any! It is, “Look unto *Me.*” God will have you turn your eyes off yourself, and look unto Him! The hardest thing in the world is to turn a man’s eyes off

himself. As long as he lives, he always has a predilection to turn his eyes inside, and look at himself—whereas God says, “Look unto *ME*”—from the Cross of Calvary, where the bleeding hands of Jesus drop mercy! From the Garden of Gethsemane where the bleeding pores of the Savior sweat pardons—the cry comes—“Look unto Me, and be you saved all the ends of the earth.” From Calvary’s summit, where Jesus cries, “It is finished,” I hear a shout, “Look and be saved”; but there comes a vile cry from our soul, “No, look to yourself! Look to yourself!” Ah, my hearer, look to yourself, and you will be damned! That certainly will come of it; as long as you look to yourself, there is no hope for you; it is not a consideration of what *you are*, but a consideration of what *God is*, and what *Christ is* that can save you! It is looking *from* yourself *to* Jesus.

Oh, there are men that quite misunderstand the gospel. They think that righteousness qualifies them to come to Christ—whereas *sin* is the only qualification for a man to come to Jesus! Good old Crisp says, “Righteousness keeps me from Christ—the whole have no need of a physician, only they who are sick. Sin makes me come to Jesus when sin is felt, and in coming to Christ, the more sin I have, the more cause I have to hope for mercy.” David said, and it was a strange thing, too, “Have mercy upon me, for my iniquity is great.” But, David, why did you not say that it was little? Because David knew that the bigger his sins were, the better reason for asking for mercy. The viler a man is, the more eagerly I invite him to believe in Jesus! A sense of sin is all we have to look for as ministers; we preach to sinners, and let us know that a man will take the title of sinner to himself, and we then say to him, “Look unto Christ, and you shall be saved.” “Look.” That is all He demands of you, and even this He *gives* you! If you look to yourself, you are damned; you are a vile miscreant, filled with loathsomeness, corrupt and corrupting others. But look here! Do you see that man hanging on the cross? Do you behold His agonized head drooping meekly down upon His breast? Do you see that crown of thorns causing drops of blood to trickle down His cheeks? Do you see His hands pierced and torn, and His blessed feet, supporting the weight of His own frame, torn well near in two with the cruel nails? Sinner! Do you hear Him shriek, “Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani?” Do you hear Him cry, “It is finished!”? Do you see His head hang down in death? Do you see that side pierced with the spear, and the body taken from the cross? Oh, look here! Those hands were nailed for *you!* Those feet gushed gore for *you!* That side was opened wide for *you!* And if you want to know how you can find mercy—there it is! “LOOK!” “Look unto *ME!*” Look no longer to Moses! Look no longer to Sinai! Come here and look to Calvary, to Calvary’s victim, and to Joseph’s grave. And look yonder—to the man who near the throne sits with His Father, crowned with light and immortality! “Look, sinner,” He says, this morning, to you, “Look unto *ME*, and be you saved.” It is in this way God teaches that there is none beside Him—because He makes us look entirely to Him, and utterly away from ourselves.

2. But the second thought is *the means of salvation*. It is, “Look unto Me, and be you saved.” You have often observed, I am sure, that many people are fond of an intricate worship—an involved religion—one they can hardly understand. They cannot endure worship as simple as ours; they must have a man dressed in white, and a man dressed in black; they must have what they call an altar and a chancel, and after a little while that will not suffice, and so they must have flower pots and candles. The clergyman then becomes a priest, and he must have a variegated dress with a cross on it! So it goes—what is simply a plate becomes a paten, and what was once a cup, becomes a chalice, and the more complicated the ceremonies are, the better they like them! They like their minister to stand like a superior being; the world likes a religion they cannot comprehend! But have you ever noticed how gloriously simple the Bible is? It will not have any of your nonsense! It speaks of plain, and nothing but plain things. “*Look!*” There is not an unconverted man who likes this, “Look unto Christ and be you saved.” No, he comes to Christ like Naaman to Elijah, and when it is said, “Go, wash in the Jordan!” he replies, “I verily thought he would come and put his hand on the place and call on the name of his God, but the idea of telling me to wash in the Jordan—what a ridiculous thing! Anybody could do that!” If the prophet had bid him do some great thing, would he not have done it? Ah, certainly he would!

And if, this morning, I could preach that anyone who walked from here to Bath without his shoes and stockings, or did some impossible thing, would be saved—you would start off tomorrow morning before breakfast! If it would take me seven years to describe the way of salvation, I am sure you would all long to hear it! If only one learned doctor could tell the way to heaven, how would he be run after! And if it were in hard words with a few scraps of Latin and Greek, it would be all the better! But it is a simple gospel that we have to preach—it is only, “*Look!*” “Ah,” you say, “is that the gospel? I shall not pay any attention to *that*.” Why has God ordered you to do such a simple thing? Simply to take down your pride, and to show you that He is God, and that beside Him there is none else. Oh, mark how simple the way of salvation is. It is, “*Look, look, look!*” Four letters and two of them alike! “*Look unto Me, and be you saved all the ends of the earth.*” Some divines need a week to tell you what you are to do to be saved—but God the Holy Spirit only needs four letters to do it! “*Look unto Me, and be you saved all the ends of the earth.*” How simple is that way of salvation! And oh, how instantaneous! It takes us some time to move our hands—but a *look* does not require a moment! So a sinner believes in a moment—and in the moment the sinner believes and trusts in his crucified God for pardon—he at once receives salvation in full through His blood!

There may be one that came in here this morning unjustified in his conscience—who will go out justified rather than others. There may be some here, filthy sinners one moment, pardoned the next! It is done in

an instant. “Look! Look! Look!” And how universal it is, because wherever I am, however far off—it just says, “Look!” It does not say I am to see. It only says, “Look!” If we look on a thing in the dark, we cannot see it, but we have done what we were told. So if a sinner only looks to Jesus, Jesus will save him, for Jesus in the dark is as good as Jesus in the light—and Jesus, even when you cannot see Him—is as good as Jesus when you can! It is only “look!” “Ah,” says one, “I have been trying to see Jesus this year, but I have not seen Him.” It does not say *see* Him, but, “*Look* unto Him”! And it says that they who looked were lightened. If there is an obstacle before you, and you only look in the right direction, it is sufficient. “Look unto Me!” It is not seeing Christ so much as looking after Him; the will after Christ, the wish after Christ, the desire after Christ, the trusting in Christ, the hanging on Christ—that is what is needed! “Look! Look! Look!” Ah, if the man bitten by the serpent had turned his sightless eyeballs towards the brazen serpent, though he had not seen it, he would still have had his life restored. It is *looking*, not seeing, that saves the sinner!

We say again, how this *humbles* the man! There is a gentleman who says, “Well, if it had been a thousand pounds that would have saved me, I would have thought nothing of it.” But your gold and silver is cankered; it is good for nothing! “Then am I to be saved just the same as my servant Betty?” Yes, just the same, there is no other way of salvation for you. That is to show man that Jehovah is God, and that beside Him there is none else. The wise man says, “If it had been to work the most wonderful problem, or to solve the greatest mystery, I would have done it. May I not have some mysterious gospel? May I not believe in some mysterious religion?” No, it is, “Look!” “What? Am I to be saved just like that Ragged School boy who can’t read his letters?” Yes, you must, or you will not be saved at all! Another says, “I have been very moral and upright; I have observed all the laws of the land, and if there is anything else to do, I will do it. I will eat only fish on Fridays, and keep all the fasts of the church if that will save me.” No, sir that will *not* save you! Your good works are good for nothing! “What? Must I be saved in the same way as a harlot or a drunkard?” Yes, sir, there is only one way of salvation for all. “He has concluded all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.” He has passed a sentence of condemnation on all that the free grace of God might come upon many to salvation. “Look! Look! Look!” This is the simple method of salvation: “Look unto Me, and be you saved all the ends of the earth.”

But, lastly, mark how God has cut down the pride of man, and has exalted Himself *by the persons whom He has called to look*. “Look unto Me, and be you saved all the ends of the earth.” When the Jew heard Isaiah say that, “Ah,” he exclaimed, “you ought to have said, ‘Look unto Me, O Jerusalem, and be saved.’ That would have been right; but those Gentiles—the dogs—are *they* to look and be saved?” “Yes,” says God, “I

will show you, Jews, that though I have given you many privileges, I will exalt others above you. I can do as I will with My own."

Now, who are the ends of the earth? Why, there are now poor heathen nations that are very few degrees removed from brutes, uncivilized and untaught; but if I might go and tread the desert, and find the Bushman in his kraal, or go to the South Seas, and find a Cannibal, I would say to the Cannibal or the Bushman, "Look unto Jesus and be you saved all the ends of the earth." They are some of "the ends of the earth," and the gospel is sent as much to them as to the polite Grecians, the refined Romans, or the educated Britons! But I think "the ends of the earth" imply those who have gone the farthest away from Christ. I say to the drunk, "That means you! You have been staggering back till you have got right to the ends of the earth. You have almost had *delirium tremens*; you cannot be much worse. There is not a man breathing worse than you." *Is there?* Ah, but God, in order to humble your pride, says to you, "Look unto Me, and be you saved." There is another who lived a life of infamy and sin until she has ruined herself, and even Satan seems to sweep her out at the back door. But God says, "Look unto Me, and be you saved all the ends of the earth." I think I see one trembling and saying, "Ah, I have not been one of these, sir, but I have been something *worse*, for I have attended the house of God, and I have stifled convictions, and put off all thoughts of Jesus, and now I think He will never have mercy on me." You are one of them! "Ends of the earth!" So long as I find any who feel like that, I can tell them that they are "the ends of the earth." "But," says another, "I am so peculiar; if I did not feel as I do, it would be all very well, but I feel that my case is a peculiar one." That is all right; there are a peculiar people—you will do just fine. But another one says, "There is nobody in the world like me; I do not think you will find a being under the sun that has had so many calls, and put them all away, and so many sins on his head. Besides, I have guilt that I should not like to confess to any living creature." You are one of "the ends of the earth"—therefore all I have to do is to cry out, in the Master's name, "Look unto Me, and be you saved all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." But you say sin will not let you look. I tell you, sin will be removed the moment you do look. "*But I dare not; He will condemn me. I fear to look.*" He will condemn you more if you do not look! Fear then, and look—but do not let your fearing keep you from looking. "*But He will cast me out.*" Try Him! "*But I cannot see Him.*" I tell you, it is not *seeing*, but *looking*! "*But my eyes are so fixed on the earth, so earthly, so worldly.*" Ah but, poor soul, He gives power to look and live. He says—"Look unto Me, and be you saved all the ends of the earth."

Take this, dear friends, for a New Year's text—both you who love the Lord, and you who are only looking for the first time. Christian, in all your troubles through this year, look unto God and be saved! In all your trials and afflictions, look unto Christ and find deliverance! In all your agony, poor soul; in all your repentance for your guilt, look unto Christ,

and find pardon! This year remember to put your eyes heavenward, and your heart heavenward, too. Look unto Christ—fear not; there is no stumbling when a man walks with his eyes looking up to Jesus. He that looked at the stars fell into the ditch, but he that looks at Christ walks safely! Keep your eyes up all the year long. “Look unto *HIM* and be you saved,” and remember that “*HE* is God, and beside *HIM* there is none else.” And you poor trembler, what do you say? Will you begin the year by looking to Him? You know how sinful you are this morning; you know how filthy you are, and yet it is possible that before you open your pew door, and get into the aisle you will be as justified as the apostles before the throne of God! It is possible that before your foot treads the threshold of your door, you will have lost the burden that has been on your back, and you will go on your way, singing, “I am forgiven, I am forgiven! I am a miracle of grace! This day is my spiritual birthday!” Oh, that it might be such to many of you, that at last I might say, “Here am I, and the children You have given me.” Hear this, convicted sinner! “This poor man cried, and the Lord delivered him out of his distresses.” Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Now believe on Him; now cast your guilty soul upon His righteousness; now plunge your black soul into the bath of His blood; now put your naked soul at the door of the wardrobe of His righteousness; now seat your famished soul at the feast of plenty! Now “LOOK!” How simple does it seem! And yet it is the hardest thing in the world to bring men to. They never will do it, till compelling grace makes them! Yet there it is, “LOOK!” Go away with that thought. “Look unto Me, and be you saved all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.” Amen

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# THE BEATIFIC VISION

## NOS. 61-62

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 20, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

*“We shall see Him as He is.”  
1 John 3:2.*

IT IS one of the most natural desires in the entire world that when we hear of a great and a good man, we should wish to see him in person. When we read the works of any eminent author, we are accustomed to turn to the frontispiece to look for his portrait. When we hear of any wondrous deed of daring, we will crowd our windows to see the warrior ride through the streets. When we know of any man who is holy and who is eminently devoted to his work, we will not mind tarrying anywhere if we may but have a glimpse of him whom God has so highly blessed. This feeling becomes doubly powerful when we have any connection with the man—when we feel not only that he is great, but that he is great for us—not simply that he is good, but that he is good to us; not only that he is benevolent, but that he has been a benefactor to us as individuals. Then the wish to see him rises to a craving desire, and the desire is insatiable until it can satisfy itself in seeing that unknown and hitherto unseen donor who has done such wondrously good deeds for us. I am sure, my brethren, you will all confess that this strong desire has arisen in your minds concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. We owe to none so much! We talk of none so much, and we hope and we think of none so much—at any rate, no one so constantly thinks of us! We have, I believe, all of us who love His name, a most insatiable wish to behold His person. The thing for which I would pray above all others would be forever to behold His face; forever to lay my head upon His breast; forever to know that I am His, and forever to dwell with Him! Yes, one short glimpse, one transitory vision of His glory, one brief glance at His marred but now exalted and beaming countenance would repay almost a world of trouble! We have a strong desire to see Him, and I do not think that that desire is wrong. Moses himself asked that he might see God. Had it been a wrong wish arising out of vain curiosity, it would not have been granted, but God granted Moses his desire—He put him in the cleft of the rock, shaded him with His hands, and bade him look at the skirts of His garments, because His face could not be seen. Yes, more: the earnest desire of the very best of men has been in the same direction. Job said, “I know that my Redeemer lives, and though worms devour this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God”—that was his desire. The holy Psalmist said, “I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.” “I shall behold Your face in righteousness.” And most saints on their deathbeds have expressed their

fondest, dearest, and most blessed wish for heaven—in the expression of longing “to be with Christ, which is far better.” And not ill did our sweet singer of Israel put the words together, when he humbly said, and sweetly, too—

**“Millions of years my wondering eyes  
Shall over Your beauties rove,  
And endless ages I’ll adore  
The glories of Your love.”**

We are rejoiced to find such a verse as this, for it tells us that our curiosity shall be satisfied, our desire consummated, our bliss perfected. “WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS.” Heaven shall be ours, and all we ever dreamed of Him shall be more than in our possession!

By the help of God’s mighty Spirit, who alone can put words in our mouths, let us speak, first of all, concerning the glorious position—“AS HE IS”; secondly, His personal identity—“We shall see HIM as He is”; thirdly, the positive vision—“We SHALL SEE Him as He is”; and fourthly, the actual persons—“WE shall see Him as He is.”

**I.** First then, THE GLORIOUS POSITION. Our minds often revert to Christ as He was, and as such we have desired to see Him. Ah, how often have we wished to see the Baby that slept in Bethlehem! How earnestly have we desired to see the Man who talked with the woman at the well! How frequently have we wished that we might see the blessed Physician walking among the sick, and dying, giving life with His touch, and healing with His breath! How frequently too have our thoughts retired to Gethsemane; how we have wished our eyes were strong enough to pierce through 1,850 years which part us from that wondrous spectacle, that we might see Him as He was! We shall never see Him thus—Bethlehem’s glories are gone forever; Calvary’s glooms are swept away; Gethsemane’s scene is dissolved, and even Tabor’s splendors are quenched in the past. They are as things that were; nor shall they ever have a resurrection. The crown of thorns, the spear, the sponge, the nails—these are not. The manger and the rocky tomb are gone. The places are there, unsanctified by Christian feet, unblessed, unhallowed by the presence of their Lord! We shall never see Him as He was; in vain our fancy tries to paint it, or our imagination to fashion it. We cannot, must not see Him as He was! Nor do we wish to, for we have a larger promise—“We shall see Him as He is.” Come, just look at that a few moments by way of contrast, and then I am sure you will prefer to see Christ as He is, rather than behold Him as He was!

Consider, first of all, that we shall not see Him abased in His incarnation, but exalted in His glory. We are not to see the infant of a span long; we are not to admire the youthful boy; we are not to address the incipient man; we are not to pity the man wiping the hot sweat from His burning brow; we are not to behold Him shivering in the midnight air; we are not to behold Him subject to pains, weaknesses, sorrows, and infirmities like ours. We are not to see His eyes wearied by sleeplessness; we are not to behold His hands tired in labor; we are not to behold His feet bleeding

with arduous journeys too long for their strength. We are not to see Him with His soul distressed; we are not to behold Him abased and sorrowful. Oh, the sight is better still! We are to see Him exalted! We shall see the head, but not with its crown of thorns—

***“The head that once was crowned with thorns,  
Is crowned with glory now.”***

We shall see the hand, and the nail prints too, but not the nails, for they have been drawn out, and forever. We shall see His side, and its pierced wound, but the blood shall not issue from it; we shall see Him not with a peasant’s garb around Him, but with the empire of the universe upon His shoulders! We shall see Him, not with a reed in His hand, but grasping a golden scepter! We shall see Him, not as mocked and spit upon, and insulted, not bone of our bone, in all our agonies, afflictions, and distresses—but we shall see Him exalted—no longer Christ, the Man of Sorrows, the acquaintance of grief—but Christ the Man-God, radiant with splendor, effulgent with light, clothed with rainbows, girded with clouds, wrapped in lightning, crowned with stars, the sun beneath His feet! Oh, glorious vision! How can we guess what He is? What words can tell us? Or how can we speak thereof? Yet whatever He is, with all His splendor unveiled, all His glories unclouded, and Himself unclothed—we shall see Him as He is!

Remember again; we are not to see Christ as He was, the despised, the tempted one. We shall never see Christ sitting in the wilderness, while the arch-traitor says to Him, “If You are the Son of God command that these stones be made bread.” We shall not see Him standing firmly on the temple’s pinnacle, bidding defiance to the evil one who bids Him cast Himself down from that towering height; we shall not see Him erect on the mountain of temptation, with the earth offered to Him if He will but crouch at the feet of the demon. No! Nor shall we see Him mocked by Pharisees, tempted by Sadducees, laughed at by Herodians; we shall not behold Him with the finger of scorn pointed at Him; we shall never see Him called a “drunk, and a winebibber.” We shall never see the calumniated, the insulted, the molested, the despised Jesus! He will not be seen as one from whom we shall hide our faces, who “was despised, and we esteemed Him not.” Never shall these eyes see those blessed cheeks dripping with spit! Never shall these hands touch that blessed hand of His while stained with infamy. We shall not see Him despised of men, and oppressed; but “we shall see Him as He is”—

***“No more the bloody spear,  
The cross and nails no more!  
For hell itself shakes at His name,  
And all the heavens adore!”***

No tempting devil near Him, for the dragon is beneath His feet! No insulting men, for lo, the redeemed cast their crowns before His feet! No molesting demons, for angels sound His lofty praise through every golden street! Princes bow before Him; the kings of the isles bring tribute; all nations pay Him homage, while the great God of heaven and earth, shining on Him, gives Him mighty honor! We shall see Him, beloved, not ab-

horred, not despised and rejected, but worshipped, honored, crowned, exalted, served by flaming spirits, and worshipped by cherubim and seraphim! “We shall see Him as He is.”

Mark again. We shall not see the Christ wrestling with pain, but Christ as a conqueror. We shall never see Him tread the winepress alone, but we shall see Him when we shall cry, “Who is this who comes from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength?” We shall never see Him as when He stood foot to foot with His enemy—we shall see Him when His enemy is beneath His feet! We shall never see Him as the bloody sweat streams from His whole body, but we shall see Him as He has put all things under Him, and has conquered hell itself! We shall never see Him as the wrestler; but we shall see Him grasp the prize. We shall never see Him sealing the rampart; but we shall see Him wave the sword of victory on the top thereof! We shall not see Him fight; but we shall see Him return from the fight victorious, and shall cry, “Crown Him, Crown Him! Crowns become the Victor’s brow.” “We shall see Him as He is.”

Yet again. We shall never see our Savior under His Father’s displeasure; but we shall see Him honored by His Father’s smile. The darkest hour of Christ’s life was when His Father forsook Him—that gloomy hour when His Father’s remorseless hand held the cup to His Son’s own lips, and bitter though it was, said to Him, “Drink My Son—yes, drink”; and when the quivering Savior said, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me.” Oh, it was a dark moment when the Father’s ears were deaf to His Son’s petitions, when the Father’s eyes were closed upon His Son’s agonies. “My Father,” said the Son, “Can You not remove the cup? Is there no way else for Your severe justice? Is there no other medium for man’s salvation?” There is none! Ah, it was a terrible moment when He tasted the wormwood and the gall; and surely darker still was that sad midday midnight, when the sun hid his face in darkness, while Jesus cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” believer, you will never see that sick face; you will never see that wan, thin forehead; you will never see that poor scarred brow; you will never see those tearful eyes; you will never see that pale emaciated body; you will never see that weary, weary heart! You will never see that exceedingly sorrowful spirit, for the Father never turns His face away now! But what will you see? You will see your Lord lit up with His Father’s light as well as with His own; you will see Him caressed by His beloved Parent; you will see Him sitting at His Father’s right hand, glorified and exalted forever! “We shall see Him as He is.”

Perhaps I have not shown clearly enough the difference between the two visions—the sight of what He was, and what He is. Allow me then, a moment more, and I will try and make it still clearer. When we see Christ as He was, how astonished we are! One of the first feelings we should have, if we could have gone to the Mount of Olives and seen our Savior sweating there, would have been astonishment! When we were told that it was the Son of God in agonies, we would have lifted up our hands, and

there would have been no speech in us at the thought! But then, beloved, here is the difference. The believer will be as much astonished when he sees Jesus' Glories, as He sits on His Believer, as he would have been to have seen Him in His earthly sufferings! The one would have been astonishment and horror would have succeeded it. But when we see Jesus as He is, it will be astonishment without horror. We shall not, for one moment, feel terrified at the sight, but rather—

***“Our joys shall run eternal rounds,  
Beyond the limits of the skies  
And earth's remotest bounds.”***

If we could see Jesus as He was, we would see Him with great awe. If we had seen Him walking on the water, what awe would we have felt! If we had seen Him raising the dead, we would have thought Him a most majestic Being. So we shall feel awe when we see Christ on His throne. But the first kind of awe is awe compounded with fear—for when they saw Jesus walking on the water, they cried out and were afraid; but when we shall see Christ as He is, we shall say—

***“Majestic sweetness sits enthroned  
Upon His amazing brow!”***

There will be no fear with the awe—it will be awe without fear! We shall not bow before Him with trembling, but it will be with joy! We shall not shake at His presence, but rejoice with unspeakable joy!

Furthermore, if we had seen Christ as He was, we would have had great love for Him; but that love would have been compounded with pity. We would stand over Him, and say—

***“Alas! And did my Savior bleed,  
And did my Sovereign die?  
Would He devote that sacred head  
For such a worm as I?”***

We shall love Him quite as much when we see Him in heaven, and more too, but it will be love without pity; we shall not say, “Alas!” but we shall shout—

***“All hail, the power of Jesus' name!  
Let angels prostrate fall—  
Bring forth the royal diadem  
And crown Him Lord of all!”***

Once again. If we had seen Jesus Christ as He was here below, there would have been joy to think that He came to save us; but we would have had sorrow mingled with it to think that we needed saving! Our sins would make us grieve that He should die, and, “alas!” would burst from us even with a song of joy. But when we see Him up there it will be joy without sorrow—sin and sorrow itself will have gone. Ours will be a pure, unmingled, unadulterated joy!

Yet more. If we had seen our Savior as He was, it would have been a triumph to see how He conquered, but still there would have been suspense about it; we would have feared lest He might not overcome. But when we see Him up there it will be triumph without suspense. Sheathe the sword! The battle's won! 'Tis over now—'Tis finished,” has been said! The grave has been past; the gates have been opened, and now, hence—

forth, and forever, He sits down at His Father's right hand, from where also He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

Here, then, is the difference. "We shall see Him as He is." We shall feel astonishment without horror, awe without fear, love without pity, joy without sorrow, and triumph without suspense. That is the glorious position! Poor words, why fail you? Poor lips, why speak you not much better? If you could, you would, for these are glorious things you speak of—"WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS."

II. Now secondly, we have PERSONAL IDENTITY. Perhaps while I have been speaking, some have said, "Ah, but I want to see the Savior, the Savior of Calvary, the Savior of Judea, the very one that died for me! I do not so much pant to see the glorious Savior you have spoken of; I want to see that very Savior who did the works of love, the suffering Savior—for Him I love." Beloved, you shall see Him! It is the same one! There is personal identity! "We shall see Him." "Our eyes shall see Him and not another." "We shall see HIM as He is." It is a charming thought that we shall see the very, very Christ; and the poet sung well, who said—

***"Oh, how the thought that I shall know  
The man who suffered here below,  
To manifest His favor,  
For me, and those whom most I love,  
Or here, or with Himself above,  
Does my delighted passion move,  
At that sweet word, 'forever.'  
Forever to behold Him shine,  
Forever more to call Him mine,  
And see Him still before me.  
Forever on His face to gaze,  
And meet His full assembled rays,  
While all the Father He displays,  
To all the saints forever."***

That is what we want—to see the same Savior. Yes, it will be the same Lord we shall see in heaven! Our eyes shall see HIM and not another. We shall be sure it is He, for when we enter heaven, we shall know Him by His manhood and Godhead. We shall find Him a man, even as much as He was on earth; we shall find Him man and God too, and we shall be quite sure there never was another Man-God; we never read or dreamed of another! Don't suppose that when you get to heaven you will have to ask, "Where is the man Christ Jesus?" You will see Him straight before you on His throne, a man like yourselves—

***"Bright like a man, the Savior sits—  
The God, how bright He shines."***

And you will know Christ by His wounds. Have you never heard of mothers having recognized their children years after they were lost by the marks and wounds upon their bodies? Ah, beloved, if we ever see our Savior, we shall know Him by His wounds. "But," you say, "They are all gone." Oh no, for He—

***"Looks like a Lamb that once was slain,  
And wears His priesthood still."***

The hands are still pierced, though the nails are not there; the feet have still the openings through them, and the side is still gaping wide. We shall know Him by His wounds. We have heard of some who on the battlefield have been seeking for the dead; they have turned their faces up, and looked at them, but knew them not. But the tender wife has come, and there was some deep wound, some saber cut that her husband had received upon his breast, and she said, "It is he; I know him by that wound." So in heaven we shall in a moment detect our Savior by His wounds, and shall say "It is He! It is He—He who once said, 'They have pierced My hands and My feet.'"

But then, beloved, Christ and we are not strangers, for we have often seen Him in this glass of the Word. When by the Holy Spirit our poor eyes have been anointed with eye salve, we have sometimes caught a sufficient glimpse of Christ to know Him by it. We have never seen Him except by reflection. When we have looked in the Bible, He has been above us and looked down upon it; and we have looked there as into a looking glass, and have seen Him, "as in a glass darkly"; but we have seen enough of Him to know Him! And oh, I think when I see Him, I shall say, "That is the Bridegroom I read of in Solomon's Song! I am sure it is the same Lord that David used to sing of; I know that is Jesus, for He looks even now like that Jesus who said to the poor woman, 'Neither do I condemn you'—like that blessed Jesus who said, 'Tabitha Cumi'—'Maid, I say unto you, arise.'" We shall know Him because He will be so much like the Jesus of the Bible, that we shall recognize Him at once!

Yet more. Sometimes we have known Him better than by Scripture—by close and intimate fellowship with Him. Why, we sometimes meet Jesus in the dark; and we have sweet conversation with Him, and He puts His lips against our ear, and our lips go so close to His ear when we talk with Him. Oh, we shall know Him well enough when we see Him! You may trust the believer for knowing His Master when he finds Him. We shall not need to have Jesus Christ introduced to us when we go to heaven! If He were off His throne, and sitting down with all the rest of the blessed spirits, we would immediately go up to Him and say—"Jesus, I know You." The devil knew Him, for he said, "Jesus I know." And I am sure God's people ought to know Him! "Jesus, I know You," we shall say at once, as we go up to Him. "How do you know Me?" asks Jesus. "Why, sweet Jesus, we are no strangers; You have manifested Yourself to me as You do not unto the world; sometimes You have given me such tokens of Your gracious affection; do you think I have forgotten You? Why, sometimes I have seen Your hands and Your feet by faith, and I have put my hand into Your side, like Thomas, of old; and do You think that I am a stranger to You? No, blessed Jesus! If You were to put Your hand before your eyes, and hide Your countenance, I would still know You! Were You blindfolded once more, my eyes could tell you, for I have known You too long to doubt Your personality." Believer, take this thought with you—"we shall see Him," despite all the changes in His position! It will be the same person; we shall see the same hands that were pierced, the same

feet that were weary, the same lips that preached, the same eyes that wept, the same heart that heaved with agony—positively the same, except as to His condition! “We shall see HIM.” Write the word, HIM, as large as you like. “We shall see HIM as He is.”

III. This brings us to the third point—THE POSITIVE NATURE OF THE VISION. “We shall see Him as He is.” This is not the land of sight; it is too dark a country to see Him, and our eyes are not good enough. We walk here by faith, not by sight. It is pleasant to believe His grace, but we had rather see it. Well, “We shall see Him.” But perhaps you think when it says, “We shall see Him,” that it means we shall know more about Him—we shall think more of Him—we shall get better views of Him by faith. Oh, no, it does not mean that at all! It means what it says—positive sight! Just as plainly as I can see my brother there, just as plainly as I can see any of you, shall I see Christ—with these very eyes too. With these very eyes that look on you, I shall look on the Savior! It is not a fancy that we shall see Him; do not begin cutting these words to pieces. Do you see that gas lamp? You will see the Savior in the same fashion—naturally, positively, really, actually. You will not see Him dreamily; you will not see Him in the poetical sense of the word; you will not see Him in the metaphorical meaning of the word; you will see Him positively—you shall “see Him as He is.” “See him”—mark that. Not think about Him, or dream about Him; but we shall positively “see Him as He is.” How different that sight of Him will be from that which we have here, for here we see Him by reflection. Now I have told you before, we see Christ “through a glass darkly”—then we shall see Him face to face! Good Doctor John Owen, in one of his books, explains this passage, “Here we see through a glass darkly”; and he says that means, “Here we look through a telescope, and we see Christ only darkly through it.” But the good man had forgotten that telescopes were not invented till hundreds of years after Paul wrote; so that Paul could not have meant telescopes! Others have tried to give other meanings to the word. The fact is, glass was never used to see through at that time; they used glass to see by, but not to see through. The only glass they had for seeing was a glass mirror; they had some glass which was no brighter than our black common bottle glass. “Here we see through a glass darkly.” That means, by means of a mirror. As I have told you, Jesus is represented in the Bible; there is His portrait; we look in the Bible, and we see it. We see Him “through a glass darkly.” Just as sometimes when you are looking in your mirror, you see somebody going along in the street; you do not see the person; you only see him reflected. Now we see Christ reflected, but then we shall not see Him in the mirror; we shall positively see His person—not the reflected Christ, not Christ in the sanctuary, not the mere Christ shining out of the Bible, not Christ reflected from the sacred pulpit; but “we shall see Him as He is.”

Again: how partially we see Christ here. The best believer only gets half a glimpse of Christ. While here, one Christian sees Christ’s glorious head, and he delights much in the hope of His coming; another beholds

His wounds, and he always preaches the atonement; another looks into His heart, and he glories most in immutability and the doctrine of election; another only looks at Christ's manhood, and he speaks much concerning the sympathy of Christ with believers; another thinks more of His Godhead, and you will always hear him asserting the divinity of Christ. I do not think there is a believer who has seen the whole of Christ. No, we preach as much as we can of the Master, but we cannot paint Him wholly; some of the best paintings, you know, only just give the head and shoulders; they do not give the full-length portrait. There is no believer, there is no choice divine who could paint a full-length portrait of Christ. There are some of you who could not paint much more than His little finger; and mark, if we can paint the little finger of Jesus, well, it will be worth a lifetime to be able to do that! Those who paint best cannot paint even His face fully. Ah, He is so glorious and wondrous, that we cannot fully portray Him; we have not seen Him more than partially. Come, beloved—how much do you know of Christ? You will say, "Ah, I know some little of Him; I think I could join with the spouse when she declares that He is altogether lovely, but I have not surveyed Him from head to foot; upon His wondrous glories I cannot fully dwell." Here we see Christ partially; there we shall see Christ entirely, when "we shall see Him as He is."

Here, too, how dimly we see Christ! It is through many shadows that we now behold our Master. Dim enough is the vision, here; but there "We shall see Him as He is." Have you ever stood upon the hilltops, when the mist has played on the valley? You have looked down to see the city and the streamlet below; you could just see yonder steeple, and mark that pinnacle; you could see that dome in the distance; but they were all so swathed in the mist that you could scarcely discern them. Suddenly the wind blows away the mist from under you, and you have seen the fair, fair valley! Ah, it is so when the believer enters heaven. Here he stands and looks upon Christ veiled in a mist—upon a Jesus who is shrouded; but when he gets up there, on Pisgah's brow, higher still, with his Jesus, then he shall not see Him dimly, but he shall see Him brightly! We shall see Jesus then "without a veil between"—not dimly, but face to face!

Here, too, how distantly we see Christ! Almost as far off as the farthest star! We see Him, but not near; we behold Him, but not near to us; we catch some glimpse of Him, but oh, what lengths and distances lie between! What hills of guilt—a heavy load! But then we shall see Him closely; we shall see Him face to face; as a man talks with his friend, even so shall we then talk with Jesus. Now we are distant from Him; then we shall be near to Him. Away in the highlands where Jesus dwells, there shall our hearts be too, when heart and body shall be "present with the Lord."

And oh, how transitory is our view of Jesus! It is only a little while we get a glimpse of Christ, and then He seems to depart from us. Our chariots have sometimes been like Amminadib's; but in a little while the wheels are all gone, and we have lost the blessed Lord. Have you not

some hours in your life felt so to be in the presence of Christ, that you scarcely knew where you were? Talk of Elijah's chariots and horses of fire; you were on fire yourself; you could have made yourself into a horse and chariot of fire, and gone to heaven easily enough. But then, all of a sudden, did you ever feel as if a lump of ice had fallen on your heart, and put the fire out, and you have cried, "Where has my beloved gone? Why has He hidden His face?" Oh how dark! How dim! But, Christians, there will be no hidings of faces in heaven! Blessed Lord Jesus, there will be no coverings of Your eyes in glory! Is not Your heart a sea of love where all passions roll? And there is no ebb tide of Your sea, sweet Jesus, there! Are You not everything? There will be no losing You there—no putting Your hand before Your eyes up there. But without a single alteration, without change or diminution, our unwearied, unclouded eyes shall throughout eternity perpetually behold You! "We shall see Him as He is!" Blessed sight! Oh, that it were come!

Then do you know, there will be another difference. When "we shall see Him as He is," how much better that sight will be than what we have here! When we see Christ here, we see Him to our profit. When we see Him there, we shall see Him to our perfection. I bear my Master witness, I never saw Him yet without being profited by Him. There are many men in this world whom we see very often, and get very little good from seeing them—the less we see of them, the better! But of our Jesus we can say we never come near Him without receiving good by Him; I never touched His garments without feeling that my fingers did smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia out of the ivory palaces! I never did come near His lips, but what His very breath shed perfume on me; I was never near my Master yet, but what He slew some sin for me; I never have approached Him, but His blessed eyes burned a lust out of my heart for me; I have never come near to hear Him speak, but I felt I was melting when the Beloved spoke—being conformed into His image. But, beloved, it will not be to improve us, it will be to perfect us when we see Him up there! "We shall be like He is; for we shall see Him as He is." Oh, that first sweet look on Christ, when we shall have left the body! I am clothed in rags—He looks upon me, and I am clothed in robes of light! I am black—He looks upon me, and I forget the tents of Kedar, and become white as the curtains of Solomon! I am defiled—sin has looked upon me, and there is filth upon my garments—lo, I am whiter than the driven snow, for He has looked upon me! I have evil wishes and evil thoughts, but they have fled like the demon before His face, when He said, "Get you hence, Satan. I command you to come out of the man." "We shall be like He is; for we shall see Him as He is." I know, beloved, the Savior seems to you like a great ship, and I like some small boat, trying to pull the ship out of the harbor. It is how I feel myself. I have the oars, I am trying to pull, but it is such a glorious big ship, that I cannot pull it out! There are some subjects the rudder of which I can take hold of and guide anywhere. They will come out of any harbor, let the passage be ever so narrow, but this is a noble ship—so big that we can hardly get it out to sea! It needs the Holy Spirit to blow the

sails for you, and your whole souls to dwell upon it, and desire to think of this wondrous sight—and then I hope you will go away dissatisfied with the preacher because you will feel that the subject had altogether mastered him and you also!

IV. Lastly, here are THE ACTUAL PERSONS—“We shall see Him as He is.” Come, now, beloved! I do not like dividing you; it seems hard work that you and I should be split asunder when I am sure we love each other with all our hearts. Ten thousand deeds of kindness received from you; ten thousand acts of heart-felt love and sympathy knit my heart to my people; but oh, beloved, is it not obvious that when we say, “we shall see Him,” that word, “we,” does not signify all of us—does not include everybody here? “We shall see Him as He is!” Come, let us divide that, “we” into “I’s.” How many “I’s” are there here who will “see Him as He is”?

Brother, with snow upon your heads, will you “see Him as He is”? You have had many years of fighting, trying, and trouble—if you ever do “see Him as He is,” that will pay for all! “Yes,” you say, “I know in whom I have believed.” Well, brother, your old dim eyes will soon need no spectacles to “see Him as He is.” He will give you back your youth’s bright beaming eyes, with their luster and their fire! But are your gray hairs full of sin? And does lust tarry in your old cold blood? Ah, you shall see Him, but not near—you shall be driven from His presence! Would God this arm were strong enough to drag you to the Savior! But it is not; I leave you in His hands; God save you! And you, dear brother, and you, dear sister who have come to middle age—struggling with the toils of life, mixed up with all its battles, enduring its ills; you are asking, it may be, shall you see Him? The text says, “We shall,” and can you and I put our hands on our hearts, and know our union with Jesus? If so, “We shall see Him as He is.” Brethren, fight on! Up at the devil; strike hard at him! Fear not; that sight of Christ will pay you. Soldier of the cross, whet your sword, again and let it cut deep! Laborer, toil again; delve deeper; lift the axe higher with a brawnier and stouter arm, for the sight of your Master at last will please you well! Up, warrior! Up the rampart, for victory sits smiling on the top, and you shall meet your Captain there! When your sword is reeking with the blood of your sins, it will be a glory indeed to meet your Master when you are clothed with triumph, and then to “see Him as He is.”

Young man, my brother in age, the text says, “We shall see Him as He is.” Does “we” mean that young man there in the aisle? Does it mean you, my brother, up there? Shall we “see Him as He is”? We are not ashamed to call each other brethren in this house of prayer. Young man, you have a mother, and her soul dotes upon you. Could your mother come to you, this morning, she might take hold of your arm and say to you, “John, we shall ‘see Him as He is.’ It is not I, John, that shall see Him for myself, alone, but you and I shall see Him together! ‘We shall see Him as He is.’” Oh, bitter, bitter thought that just now crossed my soul! O heavens! If we ever should be separated from those we love so dearly when the Last Day of account shall come; oh, if we should not see Him

as He is! I think to a son's soul there can be nothing more harrowing than the thought that it possibly may happen that some of his mother's children shall see God, and he shall not! I had a letter, just now, from a person who thanks God that he read the sermon, "Many Shall Come from the East and from the West." And he hopes it has brought him to God. He says, "I am one out of a large family, and all of them love God except myself. I don't know that I should have thought of it, but I took up this sermon of yours, and it has brought me to the Savior." Oh, beloved, think of bringing the last out of nine children to the Savior! Have not I made a mother's heart leap for joy? But oh, if that young man had been lost out of the nine, and had seen his eight brothers and sisters in heaven, while he himself was cast out, I think he would have had nine hells! He would be nine times more miserable in hell as he saw each of them and his mother, and his father too, accepted, and he cast out! It would not have been "we," there with the whole family.

What a pleasant thought it is, that we can assemble today, some of us, and can put our hands round those we love, and stand an unbroken family—father, mother, sister, brother, and all else who are dear—and can say by humble faith, "We shall see Him as He is"—all of us, not one left out! Oh, my friends, we feel like a family at Park Street! I feel when I am away from you, that there is nothing like this place, that there is nothing on earth which can recompense the pain of absence from this hallowed spot! Somehow or other we feel knit together by such ties of love! Last Sabbath I went into a place where the minister gave us the vilest stuff that ever was brewed. I am sure I wished I was back here, that I might preach a little godliness, or else hear it. Poor Wesleyan thing! He preached works from beginning to end, from that very beautiful text—"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy"—telling us that whatever we do, that we should reap. He never mentioned salvation for sinners, or pardon required even by saints! It was something like this—"Be good men and women, and you shall have heaven for it; whatever you sow, you are sure to reap, and if you are very good people, and do the best you can, you will all go to heaven. But if you are very bad and wicked, then you will have to go to hell. I am sorry to tell you so, but whatever you sow, that shall you reap." Not a morsel about Jesus Christ, from beginning to end! Not a scrap! "Well," I thought, "they say I'm rather hard upon these Arminian fellows, but if I do not drive my old sword into them worse than ever, now that I have heard them again, then I am not a living man!" I thought they might have altered a little, and not preach works so much, but I am sure there never was a sermon more full of salvation by works preached by the Pope, himself, than that was! They believe in salvation by works, whatever they may say, and however they may deny it when you come to close quarters with them! They are so everlastingly telling you to be good, upright, godly—never directing you first to look to the bleeding wounds of a dying Savior; never telling you about God's free grace, which has brought you out of enormous sins! No, they are always

talking about that goodness, goodness, goodness—which will never be found in the creature!

Well, beloved, somehow or other, wherever we go, we seem that we must come back here—

***“Here our best friends, our kindred dwell!  
Here God our Savior reigns!”***

And the thought of losing one of you grieves me almost as much as the thought of losing any of my relatives. How often have we looked at one another with pleasure! How often have we met together to sing the same old songs to the same old tunes! How often have we prayed together, and how dearly we all of us love the sound of the word, “grace, grace, grace!” And yet there are some of you who I know in my heart, and you know yourselves—will not see Him unless you have a change; unless you have a new heart, and a right spirit! Well, would you like to meet your pastor at the Day of Judgment and feel that you must be parted from him because his warnings were unheeded, and his invitations cast to the wind? Do you think, young man, that you would like to meet me at the Day of Judgment—there to remember what you have heard, and what you have disregarded? And do you think that you would like to stand before your God, and remember how the way of salvation was preached to you—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized, and you shall be saved”—and that you disregarded the message? That would be sad indeed! But we leave the thought with you. And lest you should think that if you are not worthy, you will not see Him; if you are not good you will not see Him; if you do not do such-and-such good things you will not see Him; let me just tell you—whoever, though he is the greatest sinner under heaven; whoever, though his life is the most filthy, and the most corrupt; WHOEVER he or she is, though he has up till now been the most abandoned and profligate—whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall have everlasting life, for God will blot out his sins, will give him righteousness through Jesus, accept him in the beloved, save him by His mercy, keep him by His grace, and at last present him spotless and faultless before His presence with exceedingly great joy!

My dear friends, it is a sweet thought to close with—that with a very large part of you I can say, “We shall see Him as He is,” for you know when we sit down at the Lord’s table, we occupy the whole ground floor of this chapel, and I believe that half of us are people of God here, for I know that many members cannot get to the Lord’s table in the evening. Brethren, we have one heart, one soul—“one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” We may be sundered here below a little while; some may die before us, as our dear brother Mitchell has died. Some may cross the stream before the time comes for us, but we shall meet again on the other side of the river. “We shall see Him as He is.”

## EXPOSITION

### 1 John 3:1-10

1. “Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not.”

2. “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 is, for we shall see Him as He is.” As dear Dr. Hawker said concerning this, here is a chapter in every word, and a sermon in every letter. How it opens with a, “Behold!” because it is such a striking portion of sacred Scripture that the Holy Spirit would have us pay particular attention to it. “Behold,” He says, “read other Scriptures if you like with a glance, but stop here! I have put up a way-mark to tell you there is something eminently worthy of attention buried beneath these words.” “Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us.” Consider who we were and who we are now; yes, and what we feel ourselves to be even when divine grace is powerful in us. And yet, beloved, we are called “the sons of God.” It is said that when one of the learned heathens was translating this, he stopped and said, “No. It cannot be! Let it be written, ‘subjects,’ not, ‘sons,’ for it is impossible we should be called ‘the sons of God.’” What a high relationship is that of a son to his father; what privileges a son has from his father; what liberties a son may take with his father! And oh, what obedience the son owes to his father, and what love the father feels towards the son! And all that, and more than that we now have through Christ! “Behold,” you angels! Stop, you seraphs! Here is a thing more wonderful than heaven with its walls of jasper! Behold, universe! Open your eyes, O world. “Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not.” Well, we are content to go with Him in His humiliation, for we are to be exalted with Him.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God.” That is easy to read, but it is not so easy to feel. “Now are we the sons of God.” How is it with your heart this morning? Are you in the lowest depths of sorrow and suffering? “Now are you a son of God.” Does corruption rise within your spirit, and grace seem like a poor spark trampled underfoot? “Beloved, now are you a child of God.” Does your faith almost fail you? Are your graces like a candle well near blown out by the wind? Fear not, beloved. It is not your graces, it is not your attitude, it is not your feelings on which you are to live—you must live simply by naked faith on Christ. “Beloved, now are we the children of God.” With all these things against us, with the foot of the devil on our necks, and the sword in his hand ready to slay us—beloved, now in the very depths of our sorrow, wherever we may be—as much in the valley, as on the mountain; as much in the dungeon, as in the palace; as much when broken on the wheel of suffering, as when exalted on the wings of triumph—“beloved, now are we the sons of God.” “Ah, but,” you say, “look how I am arrayed! My graces are not bright; my

righteousness does not shine with apparent glory.” But read the next—“It does not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He is.” We are not so much like He is now, for we have some more refining process to undergo, and death itself, that best of all friends, is yet to wash us clean. “We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He is. For we shall see Him as He is.”

**3.** “And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure.”

**4.** “Whoever commits sin, transgresses also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law.”

**5.** “And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins. And in Him is no sin.” Believer, read these words in two senses: He was manifested to take away your sins that you have committed, and that He accomplished when, “the Just for the unjust,” He sustained the penalties of them, and He was manifested to take away the power of your sins. That is to say, to conquer your reigning lusts, to take away your evil imaginations, to purify you, and make you like He is! Well, beloved, what a mercy it is that someone was manifested to take away our sins from us, for some of us have been striving a long, long while to conquer our sins, and we cannot do it! We thought we had driven them out, but they had “chariots of iron,” and we could not overcome them. They lived “in the hill country,” and we could not get near them. As often as we beat them in one battle, they came upon us thick and strong, like an army of locusts; when heaps and heaps had been destroyed, they seemed as thick as ever! Ah, but here is a thought—they shall all be taken away. “You know that He was manifested to take away our sins,” and so He will! The time will come when you and I shall stand without spot or blemish before the throne of God—for they are “without fault before the throne of God” at this moment, and so shall we be before long!

**6.** “Whoever abides in Him sins not—whoever sins has not seen Him, neither known Him.” This plain simple verse has been twisted by some who believe in the doctrine of sinless perfection, and they have made it declare that it is possible for some to abide in Christ and therefore not to sin; but you will remark that it does not say that some who abide in Christ do not sin, but it says that none who abide in Christ sin! “Whoever abides in Him sins not.” Therefore this passage is not to be applied to a few who attain to what is called by our Arminian friends, the fourth degree, or perfection; but it appertains to all believers. And of every soul in Christ it may be said that he sins not. In reading the Bible, we should read it simply as we would read any other book; we ought not to read it as a preacher reads his text, with the intention of making something out of every word, but we should read it as we find it written—“Whoever abides in Christ sins not.” Now, we are sure that cannot mean that he does not sin at all, but it means that he sins not habitually, he sins not designedly, and he sins not finally so as to perish. The Bible often calls a man righteous, but that does not mean that he is perfectly righteous. It calls a man a sinner, but it does not imply that he may not have done

some good deeds in his life; it means that that is the man's general character. So with the man who abides in Christ—his general character is not that he is a sinner, but that he is a saint—he sins not openly, willfully, before men; in his own heart he has much to confess, but his life before his fellow creatures is such a one that it can be said of him—“Whoever abides in Him sins not. But whoever sins [the sins of this world in which the multitude indulge] has not seen Him, neither known Him.”

**7.** “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that does righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.” That is the sign of it. Works are the fruits of grace. “He is righteous”—not in himself, for mark how graces come in here—“he is righteous, even as HE is righteous.” It will not allow our righteousness to be our own, but it brings us again to Christ! “He that does righteousness is righteous,” not according to his own works, but “even as HE is righteous.” Good works prove that perfect righteousness in Christ; they do not help the righteousness of Christ, nor yet in any way make me righteous! Good works are of no use whatever in the matter of justification—the only use they are, is for our comfort, for the benefit of others, and for the glory of God. “He that does righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that commits sin is of the devil.”

**8.** “He that commits sin is of the devil, for the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

**9.** “Whoever is born of God does not commit sin, for His seed remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

**10.** “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother.” It were well if we always remembered that practical godliness is the sort of godliness that is not talking religion, but walking religion which proves a man to be sincere. It is not having a religious tongue, but a religious heart; it is not a religious mouth, but a religious foot. The best evidence is the salvation of the soul. Be gone, talker; go your way, you mere professing formalist! Your ways lead down to hell, and your end shall be destruction, for, “he that does righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that commits sin is of the devil, for the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

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# MARVELOUS INCREASE OF THE CHURCH

## NO. 63

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 27, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

*“Who are these who fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?”  
Isaiah 60:8.*

THE ancient church, in the foresight of her mighty increase in these latter days, lifts up her hands in astonishment, and having been so used to see the Lord’s grace confined to a small nation, she exclaims in amazement, “Who are these who fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?” We, beloved, are in a somewhat similar position; it has pleased our Father to add to our numbers so greatly beyond all precedent in modern times; I doubt not that many of our aged members who remember days of yore, when God was pleased to bless them very greatly, and then think of days of sadness and weariness when they were diminished and brought low, are this morning lifting up their hands and saying—as they think of the present prosperity of our church—“Who are these who fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?” I tell you that whenever I appoint an evening for seeing the converts, I am amazed! I can only stand up afterwards, clap my hands, and go home and weep for very joy to think that the Word of our God is so running, and multiplying, and abundantly increasing! And as post after post I receive letters from different parts of this country, from one person here, and another there, not only in England, but in Scotland, and even across the sea in Ireland, and you know, in the Crimea also—I have been overwhelmed with amazement, and have been obliged to cry out, “Who has begotten me these?” “Who are these who fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?”

The church, when she uttered these words, appears to have been the subject of three kinds of feeling: first, *wonder*; secondly, *pleasure*; thirdly, *anxiety*. These three feelings *you* have felt; you are not strangers to them, and you will understand while I speak to you as the children of God, how it is that we can feel at the same time—wonder, pleasure, and yet anxiety.

**I.** First, the church of old, and our church now appear to have been the subject of WONDERS when she saw so many come to know the Lord. “Who are these who fly as a cloud and as the doves to their windows?” Take the first sentence of the text first—“Who are these who fly as a cloud?”

The church wondered first of all, *at the number of her converts*. They did, “fly as a cloud.” Not here and there, a convert; not now and then one; not converts like solitary bitterns of the desert; but they “did fly as a

cloud.” Not a convert now and then like a meteor; a thing we see but seldom which flashes across the sky, rejoices the darkness, and then is gone. Not now and then a convert as a *rara avis*—a spiritual prodigy, “But who are these?” she said, “Who fly as a cloud?” She wonders at their number. But, my brethren, why should we be astonished? Did not the apostle Peter become the instrument of converting three thousand under one sermon? And have we not heard of Whitefield, that while ten thousand listened to him, it has been known that two thousand at a time have felt the power of God manifested in their hearts? And why should we wonder if hundreds are brought to God now? “Is His arm shortened that He cannot save? Is His ear heavy that He cannot hear?” Have we not cried unto the God of Jacob, and is anything impossible to Him? Remember how He “cut Rahab and wounded the dragon”? Think of His prodigies by the Red Sea, and the miracles He worked in the field of Zoan. “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” Oh, you distrustful church, do you marvel because your Lord gives you many children? Is it not written, “More are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife,” says the Lord? I tell you, the Lord will show you greater things than these! The increase we have had shall yet be exceeded if God wills it! Nothing is impossible with Him; He who converts one, could as easily convert a hundred, and He who redeems a hundred could save a thousand by the same power! Is not the blood of Jesus sufficient? Is not the Holy Spirit powerful enough? And is not the mighty Three-in-One God “able to do for us exceeding abundantly above what we can ask or think?”

Yet so it is—so little are our expectations, and so unprepared are we for God’s mercies, that when He pours out a blessing upon us, so that we have not room enough to receive it, we begin shutting up the windows altogether, and think, “Surely it cannot come from God, because there is so much of it.” Why, that is the very reason why we *should* believe it to be! If there were few conversions, then we might tremble and fear lest they might be man’s, but when there are so many, none but God can accomplish it! When one or two are brought to join a church, we may shake for fear, and examine them with caution, but when they fly like a cloud, we can only say, “Great are You, O God; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows right well.” Doubtless, brethren, until larger views of God’s power and increased faith shall diminish the wonder, we shall always stand in amazement and say, “Who are these who fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?”

But, secondly, the Chaldee has the idea in it, not of numbers, but of *swiftness*. “Who are these who *fly as a cloud*,” for swiftness? You have seen clouds dashing along like chariots drawn by mighty horses, or flying like a fugitive army when the swift winds have pursued them, and you have said, “Look how swiftly the clouds move along the sky.” And it is notable that in great revivals of religion, persons are generally swifter in their religious growth and experience than they are in dull and degener-

ate times. “Why,” one says, “how soon persons join the church here; how very soon they attain to assurance of faith; how very speedily they come to understand gospel doctrines. It was not so in my days, for I know I was months and months, and tried a long while before I dared think of obeying my Master—before I could say, ‘I know whom I have believed.’” Just so, but these are brighter days than your days, and you are now wondering because the converts fly so swiftly, but that is just the idea of the text—“Who are these who fly *as swiftly* as a cloud?” I know, brethren, it used to be the custom with our churches, when a convert came, to keep him a summer and a winter—to summer him winter him! Now, that is very prudent and very wise—but it is not at all Scriptural—there is nothing in the Word of God to support it! The example of Jesus and His apostles is altogether against it! And I take it that Scripture is to go before prudence, and that His example is always to be above man’s wisdom! Why should the people of God tarry in these days? Let them hasten, and delay not to keep His commandments! And what if young people do grow in grace faster now than they did in your time? Perhaps God has now poured out a larger measure of His Spirit; He has placed us in brighter days, and plants in the warm sunshine must expect to grow faster than those that dwell in the frost. We know that in the short summers of Sweden, a harvest will ripen in two or three months, or less than that; why should we complain of the corn of Sweden because it ripens so swiftly, when it is just as good as ours that takes several months to ripen? The Lord does as He wills, and as He pleases, and if some fly swiftly, while others travel slowly, let those who go slowly bless God that they go at all—but let them not murmur that others go a little faster! Nevertheless, it will always be to God’s church a source of wonder—“Who are these who fly so swiftly like a cloud?”

The Targum has another idea—that of *publicity*. “Who are these who fly as a cloud?” The cloud, you know, flies so that everybody can see it. So do these converts fly openly before the world. It is a matter of admiration with this church, and with God’s church whenever it is increased, that the converts become so bold, and fly so publicly. In the first days of the church, Nicodemus, the ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night; he was somewhat ashamed lest he should be put out of the synagogue. Joseph of Arimathea, the rich man, was afraid to proclaim his Lord, and therefore loved Jesus “secretly, for fear of the Jews.” But you do not read that any of them were afraid when God poured out the Holy Spirit on the day that Peter preached! No, “They broke their bread from house to house, and did eat it in singleness of heart, praising God.” They went up to the beautiful gate of the temple—and in the very teeth of all the people, Peter and John healed the lame man! They worked their miracles openly before all men; they were not ashamed! So when there is a glorious ingathering of souls, you will always notice how bold the people become. Why, there never were such a brazen-faced set of people as those who assemble here! They are not ashamed of their religion! Why, I have

seen persons come to the pool of baptism, fearing, shaking, and trembling—but I have not found it so with the majority of those who have been baptized in *this place*. They seem proud to acknowledge their Master. They can sing—

***“Ashamed of Jesus? Sooner far  
Let evening blush to acknowledge a star!  
Ashamed of Jesus? Just as soon  
Let midnight be ashamed of noon!”***

You “are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,” for it has been here the power of God unto salvation to many who have believed! I have rejoiced to see the boldness of the young converts; I have heard of them fighting with the antagonists of the truth of God; I have seen them boldly standing up for their Master in the face of scorns, jeers, and slanders. And the church says, with regard to them, “Who are these who fly publicly as a cloud?”

But I think there is another idea here, which Dr. Gill gives us in his very valuable commentary. “Who are these who fly as a cloud,” for *unity*. You will mark not as *clouds*, but “as *a cloud*,” not as two or three bodies, but as one united and compact mass! Here is the secret of strength! Split us into fractions, and we are conquered—unite us into a steady army, and we become invincible! Knit us together as one man, and Satan himself can never rend us asunder. Divide us into threads, let our warp and woof be disunited, and we become like thin paper that burns before a single spark of the fire of the enemy. But thanks be to God, we are “as the heart of one man.” I could not but wonder at our Church Meeting on Wednesday, how all seemed to fly as a cloud. No sooner was a thing proposed than the whole church seemed without one dissenting opinion, to be carried along irresistibly by one thought that possessed its bosom! It is very seldom you see a church really united—but *God has united us!* We have “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” But yet the church wonders at it, she can scarcely understand it—“Who are these,” she says, “who fly as one compact and solid cloud?” God grant that we may always continue so! Whatever is said of one of us, let it be said of all of us; do not let us be stragglers. Those who fall into the rear of an army are always in danger—and those who hang about its flanks are equally subject to insult and injury. Let us march breast to breast, shoulder to shoulder, each of us drawing the sword at one word—everyone doing as the captain tells us! And as surely as truth prevails, unity shall conquer and our king shall honor us and bless us—treading our foes beneath our feet, and making us more than conquerors through Him who has loved us!

Again—there is the idea of *power*. Who is he that shall bridle a cloud, or stop it in its march? What man is he who by a word can stay the moving clouds, and make them still? Who is he that can bid them, when they are driving northward, turn their course to the south? Who is he that can rein the coursers of the wind, and forbid them to drag the chariots of darkness along to the west? The clouds yield to none! No majesty can

control them; they laugh to scorn the scepter of the prince, and they move on despite the rattling of the sabers of armies! None can stop the clouds; they are invincible, uncontrollable; and in their majesty they move themselves right royally, like the kings of heaven! And who is he that can stop the converts of Zion? Who is he that can keep back the children of Jerusalem? When the Lord shall “bring again the captivity of His people,” who is he that shall stop them? When His people of old were in Babylon, could “the two-leaved gates” bar them in? Could Cyrus, with all his armies, have kept them prisoners? No, the two-leaved gates open, the bars of brass give way, and Cyrus himself sends them back to their country with gold and silver to build their temple! And in latter days the Jews shall return to their own land again, to worship God! Who shall stop them? Shall the might of Russia? Shall the power of Egypt? Shall the tyranny of Turkey? Shall anything keep them back? No, the city shall be built again upon her own heap, and the tribes of the Lord shall yet go up again to worship God where their forefathers bowed before them!

O, people of God! It is so with you. “Who are these who fly as a cloud?” Try, try, O enemy, to stop one of the Lord’s doves when he is coming to the windows; you cannot do it! Did not the devil try to stop you, O brother, when you were coming to God? Ah, he did, but it was all in vain! And when you went to join the church, how many difficulties there were in the way; but when you are called to God you will not be afraid, you will fly like a cloud! Ah, the world says we shall stop by-and-by; that all our success is as nothing; that it will soon die away; that it is a mere excitement, and will soon end! Ah, let them talk so if they please—we are flying like a cloud! We have God within us; we have good within us; we have the might of the Deity within our church, and who is he that shall stop us? We bid the mighty men of this earth come! We bid carnal reason array itself against us! We bid the wisdom of the critic try to stop us! But they cannot do it; the weakness of God is mightier than man, and He who took us from the sheepfolds to lead His people Israel, will not desert His David! He who has put us before His people will not cast us away, nor will He leave His church, nor forsake His chosen ones! “Who are these who fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?”

Thus have I tried to picture to you the amazement of Christ’s Church. “Who are these who fly as a cloud?” And now, Church of God, one word with you before I leave you. Your success is amazing one way, but it is not amazing if you look at it in another direction. It is amazing that any man should be saved—if you look at man; but it is not amazing if you consider God! It is amazing that the wilderness should blossom as the rose—if you look at the wilderness; but it is not amazing if you consider Jehovah! It is wonderful that a desert should have the excellence of Carmel and Sharon, but wonder all dies away when you recollect that God who does as He wills in the armies of heaven, does as He pleases in this lower world! O, Church of God! Give the honor and the glory to your God, and only to your God! Write His name upon your banners; let your sacri-

face smoke before Him, and before no one else. Let no man receive your honor; give it unto God. Unto God belongs the shields of the mighty; “I Am, and there is none else besides Me.” Bow before Him, lest, if you give praise to the creature, and if you think we have done anything, and say, “Behold this great Babylon that I have built,” God would then say, “Because you have exalted yourself like the cedars of Lebanon, therefore will I bring you down to the earth, and your glory shall be taken from you.” May the Lord in His mercy keep us from pride, and also keep us living on Him, believing in His might, and trusting in His power!

**II.** This brings us to the second portion of our discourse, which is the PLEASURE OF THE CHURCH. “Who are these who fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?”

First, the church is exceedingly pleased at the *character* of those who come to her—“doves.” We should always thank God when those who join the church are of the right sort, For alas, there is such a thing as having a large addition to the church of men that are of no use whatever! Many an army has swelled its ranks with recruits who have in no way whatever contributed to its might. And it has been known in many great revivals, that large hosts have been gathered in who have forsaken the truth in six months! I know a church which excommunicated 80 members in 12 months for disorderly conduct and forsaking the truth; they had taken in a hundred or so the year before, from some great spasm which had been occasioned by one of those spurious revivalists! He came about making a great noise, and doing no good whatever, but scorching and burning up the ground where other men might have sown the good seed of the kingdom. I wonder that any man should be so self-conceited as to call himself a revivalist, or profess to be a revival-maker! Let this be known as my opinion: he is a nuisance and nothing better! But where a church is cautious, where the minister exercises scrutiny, and all possible means are taken to see into character, it gives us great pleasure that they are of the right sort. Ah, beloved, you should be at our Church Meetings sometimes, and hear the sweet words of experience which are uttered there! I am sure you would say that they “fly as the dove from their windows.” Now and then there comes before me an old croaking raven that wants to come in—but we are soon able to tell the raven from the dove! It may be that now and then a raven gets into our church, but I do hope that the majority are doves. We have seen them so humble, so meek, and trusting alone in Jesus like timid doves, half afraid to speak and tell you, and yet so loving that they seemed as if they had sat on the finger of Jesus, and picked their food from between His lips. We have marked their conduct afterwards, and seen it to be holy and consistent. We will glory before the world that notwithstanding the numbers that have been added to us, we have had to cut off as few as any church in the world—but one in a year, out of our vast body! And that one was received from another church, and therefore had never been examined thoroughly. O my brethren, always try to give the church pleasure by your dove-like conversation! “Be

wise as serpents, but harmless as doves”; such was your Master’s teaching. Let your character be—

***“Humble, teachable and mild.  
Changed into a little child—  
Pleased with all the Lord provides,  
Weaned from the entire world besides.”***

“Set your reflections on things above, and not on things on the earth.” Be not like the unclean bird that will devour all kinds of filth, but be like the dove that lives on the “good corn of the kingdom.” And be sure that you are like they—loving and kind to one another, and like they—always mourn when you lose your mate. Weep when your Jesus is gone from you, and you lose His delightful presence. Be you like the dove in all these things.

Again—the church feels pleasure, not only in their character, but in their condition. Like doves “who fly.” Lowth translates this portion of the verse, “like doves on the wing.” The church feels pleasure in thinking that her converts are “like doves on the wing.” Do you ever, beloved, get into such a condition that you are not like a dove on the wing, but like a dove in a secret place—in the cleft of the rock—hiding yourself in darkness because you are afraid to be seen? For my own part, I am often not like a dove on the wing, but like a dove hiding its head under its wing afraid to fly! But, “He renews our strength like the eagle’s.” There is a molting time for the Lord’s doves; their feathers grow again and then they have the wings of the dove, covered with silver, and their feathers with yellow gold—and then they can fly upwards towards Jesus! And will not our church rejoice when her converts appear to be all on the wing? Not doubting, fearful converts; not converts that stand timidly, afraid to come, but converts on the wing, flying upwards towards Jesus! Prayerful, laborious, active converts not sitting still, but doing nothing but laboring and flying upwards towards Jesus! These are the converts we want! And the church is pleased when she can ask, “Who are these who are like doves on the wing?”

Furthermore, the translation of the Septuagint gives us another idea. “Who are these who fly like doves with their young?” The church rejoices at the company that the converts bring with them! How charming is the sight when a father unites himself with the people of God—and then his children after him! We had an instance a little while ago of two sons followed by their mother, and we have had many instances of a mother following her daughters, and of daughters following their mothers, and sons following their fathers. Oh, how blessed it is to see the doves come with their young! If there is anything more beautiful than a dove, it is the little dove that flies by its side! Beloved, do you not rejoice, some of you, that you have your children in the church, that you can run your eyes along the pew where your offspring are sitting with you, and can say, “Ah, glory be to God! It is not only I that have received His mercy, but here are my sons too—and there sits my daughter drinking from the same well as I draw from—living on the same spiritual manna, looking to the same

Cross for salvation, and hoping for the same heaven”? But I notice some families here; I could point them out if I would; I notice them with sadness because there is a father and a mother, both of them heirs of heaven, but of whose sons we have no evidence and no hope that they are the children of God. And there are some of you, my friends, whose young ones have come before you; we have daughters here who have prayerless mothers! We have sons who have ungodly fathers! Oh, does it not seem hard that the children should be in the kingdom before the parents? For if it is hard that a parent should see his children perishing, surely there is tenfold horror in the thought of children saved, but parents going to hell! Your offspring entering into the joy of their Lord, and you yourselves cast “into outer darkness, where there is weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth.” Daughter of Zion! Plead for your children. Men of Jerusalem! Plead for your children.

The church, again, feels pleasure *at the direction in which these doves move*. “Who are these who fly as the doves to *their windows*?” Where should the dove fly to but to its dovecot? The word means the dovecot, where the doves live—the little pigeon holes into which the doves enter and dwell. The joy of the church is that the poor sinner does not fly to man, nor to the law, but flies to Christ, the dovecot! I can remember when, like a poor dove, sent out by Noah from his hand, I flew over the wide expanse of waters, and hoped to find some place where I might rest my wearied wings. Up towards the north I flew, and my eye looked keenly through the mist and darkness, if perhaps it might find some floating substance on which my soul might rest its feet, but it found nothing. Again it turned its wings and flapped them, but not so rapidly as before, across that deep water that knew no shore. But still there was no rest; the raven had found his resting place upon a floating body, and was feeding itself upon the carrion of some drowned man’s carcass. But my poor soul found none. I went on—I thought I saw a ship floating out at sea—it was the ship of the law; and I thought I would put my feet on its canvas, or rest myself on its cordage for a time, and find some refuge. But ah, it was an airy phantom on which I could not rest! My feet had no right to rest on the law—I had not kept it, and the soul that keeps it not must die! At last I saw the boat, Christ Jesus—that happy ark, and I thought I would fly there. But my poor wings were weary, and I could fly no further, and down I sank into the water—but as providence would have it, when my wings were flagging, and I dropped into the stream to be drowned, just below me was the roof of the ark, and I saw a hand put out from it, that took me, and said, “I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore I have not delivered the soul of My turtle dove into the company of the wicked. Come in, come in!” And then I found I had an olive branch in my mouth—of peace with God, and peace with man—plucked off with Jesus’ power!

Poor soul! Have you found a resting place in the ark? Have you fled to your window? Or are you, O Ephraim, like the silly dove that has no

heart, that goes down to Egypt, and rests itself in Assyria? Oh, why is it that you are looking for rest where none can be found? There are many that say, "Who will show us any good? Lord lift up the light of Your countenance upon me!" That is the dove's resting place! That is his house! Have you found your home in Christ? If you have not, when the storm comes, O dove, with ruffled plumage you shall be driven before the swift tempest! You shall be blown along like a small feather before the stream, onward, onward through the dark unknown—until you find yourself with burned and singed wings—falling into flames that have no bottom! The Lord give you deliverance, and help you to fly to Jesus!

**III.** Now we come to our third point—the CHURCH'S ANXIETY. "Ah," says the church, "it is all very well, their flying like a cloud; it is all right, their going as doves to their windows; but who are they?" The church is anxious, and she anxiously desires to be sure that it is all gold that is put into her treasury, for she suspects that some of those lumps of bullion cannot be gold. She thinks, "Surely that is not all genuine metal, or there would not be so much of it." And she says, "Who are they?" That is the question! Now I address myself to an anxious church to answer it.

First, they are *those who fly*. Our text says, "Who are these who fly?" They are those who fly because they cannot stop where they were, and they are flying somewhere else for refuge. We trust that those who have joined our church are those who are persuaded that the land wherein they dwelt is to be consumed with fire; those who feel a necessity to come out of the place where they once lived, and have a strong desire to seek "a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." We hope, beloved, that those who have joined with us here are those who are escaping from hell, and flying to heaven! We hope they are such who once had no sins that they feared, but now come out because they must come—for their house has got too hot for them, and they cannot abide any longer in their sins! Here we have the idea of *conviction*. They are those who fly. They are not content now to make their nest of their own good works with here and there a little bit of down picked off Morality Common—and here a piece of yarn that they have picked up in Legality Palace—and here a piece of good work that they have found in the barnyard of Ceremonialism! No, they are poor souls who have no rest *anywhere*, but are flying and flying with rapid wing, until they can get to their windows! Are you such, my beloved, who have joined the church? Or are you not? If you are not, you have deceived me, and you have deceived the church, for we thought you were! We want to have none united with us but those who are flying to Jesus! We want no self-righteous ones; no self-sufficient ones, no good moral people. We want those who feel that they are nothing at all, and need Jesus Christ to be their all-in-all. We want a church of poor ragged sinners, clothed by Jesus; poor dead sinners, made alive by Jesus! I ask God when I ask Him to give me any, to give me those who are flying with haste for a Savior! And if any of you who have come to us making a profession of flying are not such, I

beseech you by everything that is solemn, by that hell of hypocrites, which is the hell of hells, and by the heaven you would lose, to think about how sinfully you are acting, in continuing members of a Christian church when you are hypocrites and have never fled!

But again—they are those who fly *not on the ground, but like a cloud, up high*. We know many a church to which the people come because there is so much charity connected with it. I know some country churches in the Establishment which are attended by some people because there are regularly given away so many sixpences after the service. That is flying like a will-o'-the-wisp, dancing about in dark marshy places! If I could buy all London for my congregation by the turn of a three-penny piece, I would not give it! If people do not come from some better motives, we do not wish to have any! But we have none of that sort, we trust. They fly higher than these groundlings. Zion rejoiced that they did not fly on the ground, but flew like a cloud. They were persons that did not care about the world, but wanted heaven.

They were *souls filled with rain*, like the clouds. Or if they were not big and black with rain, as the clouds sometimes are when they are about to burst, yet they had a little grace in them, a little moisture, a little dew.

And they were *persons driven by the wind*, just as the clouds are—who do not move of themselves, but go because they must go; who have no power of themselves to move, but have something driving them behind. Brethren, we hope that the converts of this church have been driven to us by the power of the Holy Spirit, and could not help coming! We hope they have been men and women, and children filled with rain, which they will drop out upon us in copious showers, if God pleases. We pray, by God's grace, they have been like the clouds which tarry not for man, neither wait for the sons of men. They are with us now—and we hope to see the clouds go up higher and higher, into the air, until those clouds shall one by one, be swallowed up in Jesus; shall be lost in the one assembly of the First-Born Church of the Holy Spirit! These are the persons who “fly as a cloud.”

We give you yet another answer, O you timid church. Those who come to join themselves with you are *persons who have been regenerated*, for they are *doves*. They were not doves by nature; they were ravens. But they are now doves; they are changed from ravens into doves, from lions into lambs. Beloved, it is very easy for you to pretend to be the children of God, but it is not easy for you to be so! The old fable of the crow dressed up in peacock's feathers often takes place now; many a time have we seen coming to our church a fine strutting fellow with long feathers of prayer behind him; he could pray gloriously! And he has come strutting in, with all his majesty and pride, and said, “Surely I must come. I have everything about me—am I not rich and polite? Have I not learning and talent?” In a very little while we have found him to be nothing but an old prattling crow, having none of the true feathers belonging to him! By some accident one of his borrowed feathers has dropped out,

and we have found him to be a hypocrite! I beseech you, do not be hypocrites! The glory of the gospel is not that it paints ravens white, and whitewashes blackbirds, but that it turns them into doves! It is the glory of our religion not that it makes a man seem what he is not, but that it makes him something else! It takes the raven, and turns him into a dove—his ravenous heart becomes a dove's heart! It is not the feathers that are changed, but the man himself. Glorious gospel, which takes a lion, and does not cut the lion's mane off, and then cover him with a sheep's skin, but makes him into a lamb! O church of God! These who have come like doves to their windows are trophies of regenerating grace, which has transformed them, and made them as new creatures in Christ Jesus!

The last answer I shall give respecting those who have come to join themselves with us is that they are those, we hope, who have *fled to their windows*, and found a refuge in Christ, my Lord. There is nothing we want to know of a person coming before the church, except this—Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you had pardon from His hands? Have you had union with His person? Do you hold communion with Him day by day? Is He your hope, your stay, your refuge, your trust? If so, then you may come in! If you are one living in the dovecot, we will not drive you away; if you have fled like a dove to your window, we are glad to have you! But there is the anxious question—Have you fled to Christ? Beloved, there are some who *think* they have fled to Christ who have not, and there are some who *think* they have *not* fled to Christ who have! There are some of you who think yourselves safe for heaven, but who are nothing but whitewashed sepulchers, like the Pharisees of old! It is a horrible thought that there are some, we fear, who lay their head upon their death pillow, as they think, in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection, but will in hell lift up their eyes, being in torment! A dove, you know, can find good shelter for itself in other places beside a dovecot. There may be some little hole in the barn, and in there the dove gets and builds its nest, and is very happy and comfortable. Ah, dove, but there is no place that will protect you that is not a dovecot!

And there is only one dovecot! You have built a nice snug nest, perhaps, in some of your trees; you are building your hope in some one of your merits; you are putting your trust in some of your own works. It is all in vain! There is only one dovecot. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ and Him crucified." There is only one hope for a poor sinner from the justice of Jehovah. And that is in the "Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief," who "gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair." Do you know how *that* dovecot was made for you? Do you know how it is lined for you, and how large the door is? It was made by Jesus, the carpenter's son; it is lined with the blood of His own heart, and the door is so wide that the biggest sinner can get in—but he who has any righteousness will find that the door is not large enough to let him carry his righteousness with

him! Poor soul, have you a dovecot? And are you living in it? If so, we rejoice with you, and glad enough should we be to have you united with our church, for we love all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ! Yet, lest you should not understand our holy religion, one moment shall suffice, and then you may go.

Do you not know that the law which God made on Sinai has been broken by us all, and that God, the “jealous God,” will “by no means spare the guilty”? And do you not know, O sinner, that you must offer something to God to make up a recompense for what you have done? Do you not know, that God is so angry with the man who sins, that He will damn that man unless there is someone who will be damned for him, and suffer the punishment in his place? And do you not know that our religion is a religion of *substitution*—that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became man; that He might take the punishment we ought to have had? That He bore the wrath we ought to have borne? That He took the guilt we committed, just as the scapegoat of old did, and carried it right away into the wilderness of forgetfulness? So now a sinner who is putting his trust in that substitution can escape punishment! God’s justice cannot demand payment twice—

***“First at my bleeding Surety’s hands,  
And then again at mine.”***

Precious Jesus! What a substitute You were for guilt! Sweet Lord Jesus! I kiss Your wounds this day. You Man! You God! You who did wrestle with Jacob! You who did walk with Abraham, the man of God, of Mamre! You who stood in the fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! You Son of God, You Son of Man who did appear to Joshua with your sword drawn! I worship You, my substitute, my hope! Oh, that others might do so too, and that the whole of this vast multitude might, with one heart, accept Him, by God’s grace, as their Savior! Amen.

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# THE ENCHANTED GROUND

## NO. 64

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 3, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others. But let us watch and be sober.”  
1 Thessalonians 5:6.***

AS the spiritual guide of the flock of God along the intricate mazes of experience, it is the duty of the gospel minister to point out every turning of the road to heaven, to speak concerning its dangers or its privileges, and to warn any whom he may suspect to be in a peculiarly perilous position. Now, there is a portion of the road which leads from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, which has in it perhaps, more dangers than any other portion of the way. It does not abound with lions; there are no dragons in it; it has no dark woods, and no deep pitfalls; yet more pilgrims have been destroyed in that portion of the road than anywhere else! Not even Doubting Castle, with all its host of bones, can show as many who have been slain there. It is the part of the road called the Enchanted Ground; the great geographer, John Bunyan, well pictured it when he said—“I then saw in my dream, that they went on till they came into a certain country, whose air naturally tended to make one drowsy, if he came a stranger into it. And here Hopeful began to be very dull and heavy of sleep: therefore he said unto Christian, I do now begin to grow so drowsy that I can scarcely hold up my eyes. Let us lie down here and take a nap.

CHR. “By no means, said the other, lest sleeping, we never wake again.”

HOPE. “Why, my brother? Sleep is sweet to the laboring man; we may be refreshed if we take a nap.”

CHR. “Do you not remember that one of the Shepherds bid us beware of the Enchanted Ground? He meant by that, that we should beware of sleeping; therefore ‘let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.’”

There is no doubt, many of us, beloved, are passing over this plain, and I fear that this is the condition of the majority of churches in the present day. They are lying down on the settles of Lukewarmness in the Arbors of the Enchanted Ground! There is not that activity and zeal we would wish to see among them; they are not perhaps, notably heterodox;

they may not be invaded by the lion of persecution—they are somewhat worse than that—they are lying down to slumber, like Heedless and Too-Bold in the Arbor of Sloth! May God grant that His servants may be the means of awakening the church from its lethargy, and stirring it up from its slumbers, lest professors should sleep the sleep of death!

This morning I intend to show you *what is meant by the state of sleep into which Christians sometimes fall*; secondly, I shall use some considerations, if possible, to *wake up such as are slumbering*; thirdly, I shall mark *sundry times when the Christian is most liable to fall asleep*—and shall conclude by giving you some advice as to the mode in which you should conduct yourselves when you are passing over the Enchanted Ground, and feel drowsiness weighing down your eyelids.

**I.** First, WHAT IS THAT STATE OF SLEEP INTO WHICH THE CHRISTIAN MAY FALL? It is not death; he was dead once, but he is now alive in Christ Jesus, and therefore he shall never die eternally. But though a living man shall not die, being quickened by an immortal life, yet that living man may sleep, and that sleep is so nearly akin to death that I have known slumbering Christians mistaken for dead, carnal sinners! Come, beloved; let me picture to you the state of the Christian while he is in a condition of sleep.

First, sleep is a state of *insensibility*, and such is that state which too often is upon even the best children of God. When a man is asleep, he is insensible; the world goes on, and he knows nothing about it. The watchman calls beneath his window, and he sleeps on; a fire is in a neighboring street; his neighbor's house is burned to ashes, but he is asleep and knows it not! Persons are sick in the house, but he is not awakened; they may die and he weeps not for them; a revolution may be raging in the streets of his city; a king may be losing his crown, but he that is asleep shares not in the turmoil of politics. A volcano may burst somewhere near him, and he may be in imminent peril, but he escapes not; he is sound asleep, he is insensible! The winds are howling; the thunders are rolling across the sky, and the lightning flashes at his window, but he that can sleep on, cares not for these, and is insensible to them all. The sweetest music is passing through the street, but he sleeps, and only in dreams does he hear the sweetness. The most terrific wailings may assail his ears, but sleep has sealed them with the wax of slumber, and he hears not. Let the world break in sunder, and the elements go to ruin—keep him asleep, and he will not perceive it! Christian, behold your condition! Have you not sometimes been brought into a condition of insensibility? You wished you could feel, but all you felt was pain because you could not feel! You wished you could pray; it was not

that you felt prayerless, but it was because you did not feel at all! Once you sighed—you would give a world if you could sigh now! Once you used to groan—a groan, now, would be worth a golden star if you could buy it! As for songs, you can sing them, but then your heart does not go with them. You go to the house of God, but when “the multitude that keep the holy day” in the full tide of song send their music up to heaven, you hear it, but your heart does not leap at the sound! prayer goes solemnly like the evening sacrifice up to God’s throne—once you could pray, but now, while your body is in the house of God, your heart is not there; you feel you have brought the chrysalis of your being, but the fly is gone away from it; it is a dead lifeless case! You have become like a formalist; you feel that there is not that savor, that unction in the preaching that there used to be. There is no difference in your minister, you know; the change is in *you!* The hymns and the prayers are just the same, but you have fallen into a state of slumber! Once if you thought of a man’s being damned, you would weep your very soul out in tears, but now you could sit unmoved at the very brink of hell and hear its wailings. Once the thought of restoring a sinner from the error of his ways would have made you start from your bed at midnight, and you would have rushed through the cold air to help to rescue a sinner from his sins; now talk to you about perishing multitudes, and you hear it as an old, old tale; tell you of thousands swept by the mighty flood of sin onwards to the precipice of destruction—you express your regret, you give your contribution, but your heart goes not with it! You must confess that you are insensible—not entirely, but too much so; you want to be awake, but you groan because you feel yourselves to be in this state of slumber.

Then again, he that sleeps is *subject to many illusions*. When we sleep, judgment goes from us, and fancy holds carnival within our brain; when we sleep, dreams arise and fashion in our head strange things. Sometimes we are tossed on the stormy deep, and another we revel in kings’ palaces; we gather up gold and silver as if they were but the pebbles of the shore, and another time we are poor and naked, shivering in the blast. What illusions deceive us! The beggar in his dreams becomes richer than Plutus, and the rich man as poor as Lazarus! The sick man is well; the healthy man has lost his limbs, or is dead! Yes, dreams make us descend to hell, or even carry us to heaven. Christian, if you are one of the sleepy brethren, you are subject to many illusions; strange thoughts come to you which you never had before. Sometimes you doubt if there is a God, or if you exist yourself! You tremble lest the gospel should not be true, and the old doctrine which once you held with a stern hand, you are almost inclined to let go! Vile heresies assail you;

you think that the Lord who bought you was not the Son of God! The devil tells you that you are none of the Lord's, and you dream that you are cast away from the love of the covenant. You cry—

***“I would, but cannot sing!  
I would, but cannot pray,”***

and you feel as if it were all in question whether you are one of the Lord's or not! Or perhaps your dreams are brighter, and you dream that you are somebody, great and mighty, a special favorite of heaven. Pride puffs you up; you dream that you are rich, and have need of nothing, while you are naked, poor, and miserable! Is this your state, O Christian? If so, may God wake you up from it!

Again, sleep is *a state of inaction*. No daily bread is earned by him that sleeps; the man who is stretched upon his couch neither writes books, nor tills the ground, nor plows the sea, nor does anything else! His hands hang down, his pulse beats, and there is life, but he is positively dead as to activity. Oh, beloved, here is the state of many of you! How many Christians are inactive; once it was their delight to instruct the young in the Sunday school, but that is now given up. Once they attended the early prayer meeting—but not now; once they would be hewers of wood, and drawers of water, but alas—they are now asleep! Am I talking of what *may* happen? Is it not too true almost universally? Are not the churches asleep? Where are the ministers who preach? We have men who read their manuscripts, and talk essays, but that is not preaching! We have men who can amuse an audience for 20 minutes—is that preaching? Where are the men who preach their hearts out, and reveal their souls in every sentence? Where are the men who make it not a profession, but a vocation—the breath of their bodies, the marrow of their bones, the delight of their spirits? Where are the Whitefields and Wesleys now? Are they not gone, gone, gone? Where are the Rowland Hills now, who preached every day, and three times a day, and were not afraid of preaching everywhere the unsearchable riches of Christ? Brothers, the church slumbers! It is not merely that the pulpit is a sentry box with the sentinel fast asleep, but the pews are affected; the prayer meetings almost universally neglected! Our own church stands out like an almost solitary green islet in the midst of a dark, dark sea! By God's grace we are one bright pearl in the depths of an ocean of discord and confusion! Look at neighboring churches; step into the vestry, and see a smaller band of people than you would like to think of, assembled round the pastor, whose heart is dull and heavy. Hear one brother after another pour out the dull monotonous prayer that he has said by heart these 50 years, and then go away and say, “Where is the spirit of prayer? Where is the

life of devotion?" Is it not almost extinct? Are not our churches "fallen, fallen, fallen, from their high estate"? God wake them up, and send them more earnest and praying men!

Once more—the man who is asleep is *in a state of insecurity*. The murderer smites him that sleeps; the midnight robber plunders his house that rests listlessly on his pillow. Jael smites a sleeping Sisera! David takes away the spear from the bolster of a slumbering Saul! A sleeping Eutychus falls from the third loft and is taken up dead! A sleeping Samson is shorn of his locks, and the Philistines are upon him! Sleeping men are always in danger; they cannot ward off the blow of the enemy or strike another. Christian, if you are sleeping, you are in danger; your life, I know, can never be taken from you—that is hid with Christ in God, but oh, you may lose your spear from your bolster! You may lose much of your faith! And your cruse of water wherewith you moisten your lips may be stolen by the prowling thief! Oh, you little know your danger! Even now the black-winged angel takes his spear, and standing at your head, he says to Jesus, (to David) "Shall I smite him? I will smite him but once." (David says) our Jesus whispers, "You shall not smite him; take his spear and his cruse, but you shall not kill him." But oh, awake, you who slumber! Start up from the place where you now lie in your insecurity! This is not the sleep of Jacob, in which ladders unite heaven and earth, and angels tread their ascending rounds; but this is the sleep where ladders are raised from hell, and devils climb upward from the pit of hell to molest your spirit!

**II.** This brings me to the second point, SOME CONSIDERATIONS TO WAKE UP SLEEPY CHRISTIANS. I remember once in my life having a sleepy congregation; they had been eating too much dinner, and they came to the chapel in the afternoon very sleepy, so I tried an old expedient to awaken them. I shouted with all my might, "Fire! Fire! Fire!" When starting from their seats, some of the congregation asked where it was, and I told them it was in hell for such sleepy sinners as they were! So, beloved, I might cry, "Fire! Fire!" this morning to awaken sleepy Christians; but that would be a false cry, because the fire of hell was never made for Christians at all—and they need never tremble at it! The honor of God is engaged to save the meanest sheep, and whether that sheep is asleep or awake, it is perfectly safe, so far as *final salvation* is concerned. There are better reasons why I should stir up a Christian, and I shall use a very few of them.

And first, O Christian, awake from your slumber, *because your Lord is coming*. That is the grand reason used in the text. The Apostle says, "You are all the children of light, and the children of the day." You know per-

fectly well that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. You, brothers and Sisters, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief! O Christians, do you know that your Lord is coming? In such an hour as you think not, the man who once hung quivering on Calvary will descend in glory! “The head that once was crowned with thorns” will soon be crowned with a diadem of brilliant jewels; He will come in the clouds of heaven to His church. Would you wish to be sleeping when your Lord comes? Do you want to be like the foolish virgins, who while the bridegroom tarried, slumbered and slept, or like the wise ones? If our Master were to appear this morning, are there not half of us in such a state that we would be afraid to see Him? Why? You know when a friend comes to your house, if he is some great man, what brushing and dusting there is! Every corner of the room has its cobwebs removed! Every carpet is turned up, and you make every effort to have the house clean for his coming. What? And will you have your house dusty, and the spiders of neglect building the cobwebs of indolence in the corners of your house when your Lord may arrive tomorrow? And if we are to have an audience with the Queen, what dressing there is! How careful will men be that everything should be put on aright, that they should appear properly in court dress! Do you not know, servant of the Lord, that you are to appear before the king in His beauty, and to see Him soon on earth? What? Will you be asleep when He comes? When He knocks at the door, shall He have for an answer, “The good man is asleep; he did not expect You”? Oh, no! Be like men who watch for their Lord, that at His coming He may find you ready! Ah, you carnal professors who attend plays and balls, would you like Christ to come and find you in the middle of your dance? Would you like Him to look you in the face in the opera? Ah, you carnal tradesmen, can you cheat, and then pray after it? Would you like Christ to find you cheating? You devour widows’ houses, and for a show make long prayers; you would not mind Him coming in the middle of your long prayer; but He will come just as that poor widows’ house is sticking in your throat, just as you are swallowing the lands of the poor oppressed one, and putting in your own pocket the wages of which you have defrauded the laborer! Then He will come, and how terrible will He be to such as you! We have heard of the sailor, who, when his ship was sinking, rushed to the cabin to steal a bag of gold—and though warned that he could not swim with it tied it about his loins, he leaped into the sea with it, and sank to rise no more! And I am afraid there are some rich men who know not how to use their money, who will sink to hell, strangled by their gold, hanging like millstones round their necks! O

Christian, it shall not be so with you—but wake from your slumbers, for your Lord comes!

But again, Christian, you are benevolent; you love men's souls, and I will speak to you of that which will touch your heart. Will you weep while *souls are being lost*? A brother here, some time ago, rushed into a house which was burning, and he saved a person from it. He then returned to his wife, and what did she say to him? "Go back again, my husband, and see if you cannot save another. We will not rest till all are delivered." I think that is what the Christian would say, "If I have been the means of saving one soul, I will not rest until I have saved another." Oh, have you ever thought how many souls sink to hell every hour? Did the dreary thought that the death knell of a soul is tolled by every tick of yonder clock ever strike you? Have you ever thought that myriads of your fellow creatures are now in hell—and that myriads more are hurrying there? And yet do you sleep? What? Physician, will you sleep when men are dying? Sailor, will you sleep when the wreck is out at sea, and the lifeboat is waiting for hands to man it? Christian, will you tarry while souls are being lost? I do not say that *you* can save them—God alone can do that—but you may be the instrument! And would you lose the opportunity of winning another jewel for your crown in heaven? Would you sleep while work is being done? "Well," said the British king, at the Battle of Agincourt, "Come on, and conquer"—

***"And gentlemen in England—now a-bed,  
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here;  
And hold their manhood cheap, when any speaks  
That fought with us upon this glorious day."***

So I think, when souls are being saved, Christians in bed may think themselves accursed they are not here! Sleepy Christian, let me shout in your ears—you are sleeping while souls are being lost; sleeping while men are being damned; sleeping while hell is being peopled; sleeping while Christ is being dishonored; sleeping while the devil is grinning at your sleepy face; sleeping while demons are dancing round your slumbering carcass, and shouting it in hell that a Christian is asleep! You will never catch the devil asleep; let not the devil catch you asleep! Watch, and be sober, that you may be always up to do your duty.

I have no time to use other considerations, though the subject is large enough, and I should have no difficulty in finding sticks enough to beat a sleeping dog with. "Let us not sleep as do others."

**III.** Now it may be asked, WHEN IS THE CHRISTIAN MOST LIABLE TO SLEEP?

First, I answer, he is most liable to sleep *when his temporal circumstances are all right*. When your nest is well feathered, you are then most

likely to sleep. There is little danger of your sleeping when there is a bramble bush in the bed! When all is downy, then the most likely thing will be that you will say, "Soul, soul, you have much goods laid up for many years—take your rest—eat, drink, and be merry!" Let me ask some of you, when you were more straitened in circumstances, when you had to rely upon providence each hour, and had troubles to take to the throne of grace—were you not more wakeful than you are now? The miller who has his wheel turned by a constant stream goes to sleep, but he that attends on the wind, which sometimes blows hard, and sometimes gently, sleeps not, lest haply the full gust might rend the sails, or there should not be enough to make them go round! Those who live by the day often sleep not by day, but they sleep in the night—the sleep of the beloved. Easy roads tend to make us slumber; few sleep in a storm. Many sleep on a calm night; he is a brave boy, indeed, who can have his eyes sealed when "upon the high and giddy mast, in bosom of the rude imperious surge"; but he is no wonder who sleeps when there is no danger! Why is the church asleep now? She would not sleep if Smithfield were filled with stakes, if Bartholomew's bells were ringing in her ears! She would not sleep if Sicilian Vespers might be sung on tomorrow's eve; she would not sleep if massacres were common. But what is her condition: every man sitting under his own vine, and his own fig tree; none daring to make him afraid. Tread softly! She is fast asleep! Wake up, church! Or else we will cut down the fig tree about your ears. Start up, for the figs are ripe, they hang into your sleepy mouth, and you are too lazy to bite them off!

Now, another dangerous time is *when all goes well in spiritual matters*. You never read that Christian went to sleep when lions were in the way; he never slept when he was going through the river death, or when he was in Giant Despair's castle, or when he was fighting with Apollyon. Poor creature, he almost wished he *could* sleep then. But when he had got half way up the Hill Difficulty, and came to a pretty little arbor, in he went, and sat down and began to read his roll. Oh, how he rested himself! How he undid his sandals, and rubbed his weary feet! Very soon his mouth was open, his arms hung down, and he was fast asleep! Again, the Enchanted Ground was a very easy, smooth place, and liable to send the pilgrim to sleep. You remember Bunyan's description of some of the arbors—"Then they came to an arbor, warm, and promising much refreshing to the weary pilgrims; for it was finely worked above head, beautified with greens, and furnished with benches and settles; it also had in it a soft couch, where the weary might sleep. The arbor was called the Slothful's Friend, and was made on purpose to allure, if it might, some of

the pilgrims to take up their rest there when weary.” Depend upon it, it is in easy places that men shut their eyes, and wander into the dreamy land of forgetfulness! Old Erskine said a good thing when he remarked—“I like a roaring devil better than a sleeping devil.” There is no temptation half as bad as not being tempted! The distressed soul does not sleep; it is after we get into confidence and full assurance that we are in danger of slumbering! Take care, you who are full of gladness, there is no season in which we are so likely to fall asleep as that of high enjoyment. The disciples went to sleep after they had seen Christ transfigured on the mountaintop; take heed, joyous Christian, good times are very dangerous—they often lull you into a sound sleep!

Yet there is one more thing, and if ever I were afraid of anything, I would fear to speak before my grave and reverend fathers in the faith the fact that one of the most likely places for us to sleep in is *when we get near our journey’s end*. It is ill for a child to say that, and I will therefore back it up by the words of that great pilot, John Bunyan—“For this Enchanted Ground is one of the last refuges that the enemy to pilgrims has; therefore it is, as you see, placed almost at the end of the way, and so it stands against us with the more advantage. For when, thinks the enemy, will these fools be so desirous to sit down as when they are weary? And when so like to be weary as when almost at their journey’s end? Therefore it is, I say, that the enchanted ground is paced so near to the land, Beulah, and so near the end of their race. Therefore let pilgrims look to themselves, lest it happen to them as it has done to these who, as you see, are fallen asleep, and none can awake them.” May a child speak to those who are far before him in years and experience? But I am not a child when I preach; in the pulpit we stand as ambassadors of God, and God knows nothing of childhood or age; He teaches whom He wills, and speaks as He pleases! It is true, my brethren, that those who have been years in grace are most in danger of slumbering; somehow we get into the routine of the thing; it is usual for us to go to the house of God; it is usual for us to belong to the church, and that of itself tends to make people sleepy. Go into some of your churches in London, and you will hear a most delicious sermon preached to a people all sound asleep! The reason is that the service is all alike; they know when they have got to the third “Our Father which are in heaven,” when they have passed the general confession, and when they have got to the sermon—then it is the time to sleep for 20 minutes! If the minister should smite his ecclesiastic fist upon the Bible, or enliven his faculties with a pinch of snuff, or even use his pocket handkerchief, the people would wake up because it would be something out of the usual course! Or, if he uttered an old sentiment,

they might be awakened, and would probably think that he had broken the 59<sup>th</sup> commandment, in making some of the congregation smile! But he never violates decorum! He stands the very mirror of modesty, and the picture of everything that is orderly! I have digressed, but you will see what I mean. If we are always going on the same road, we are liable to sleep. If Moab gets at ease, and is not emptied from vessel to vessel, he sleeps on, for he knows no change, and when years have worn our road with a rut of godliness, we are apt to throw the reins on our horse's neck and sleep soundly!

**IV.** Now, lastly, let me give a little GOOD ADVICE to the sleeping Christian. But Christian, if you *are* asleep, you will not hear me! I will speak gently then, and let you sleep on. No I will not! I will shout in your ears, "Awake you that sleep! Arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light! Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider her ways and be wise! Put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem; put on your glorious array, you church of the living God."

But now what is the best plan to stay awake when you are going across the enchanted ground? This book tells us that one of the best plans is *to keep Christian company*, and talk about the ways of the Lord. Christian and Hopeful said to themselves, "Let us talk together, and then we shall not sleep." Christian said, "Brother where shall we begin?" And Hopeful said, "We will begin where God began with us." There is no subject so likely to keep a man awake as talking of the place where God began with him! When Christians talk together, they won't sleep! Hold Christian company, and you will not be so likely to slumber; Christians who isolate themselves, and stand alone, are very liable to lie down and sleep on the settle or the soft couch, and go to sleep, but if you talk much together, as they did in old times, you will find it extremely beneficial. Two Christians talking together of the ways of the Lord will go much faster to heaven than one! And when a whole church unites in speaking of the Lord's loving kindness, verily, beloved, there is no way like that of keeping themselves awake!

Then let me remind you that if you will *look at interesting things*, you will not sleep. And how can you be kept awake in the Enchanted Ground better than by holding up your Savior before your eyes? There are some things, it is said, which will not let men shut their eyes if they are held before them. Jesus Christ, crucified on Calvary is one of these! I never knew a Christian go to sleep at the foot of the cross; but he always said—

***"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,  
Which before the cross I spend."***

And he said too—

***"Here I'd sit forever viewing***

***Mercy's streams in streams of blood.***

But he never said, "Here I would lie down and sleep," for he could not sleep with that shriek, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani?*" in his ears! He could not sleep with "It is finished!" going into his very soul. Stay near to the cross, Christian, and you will not sleep.

Then I would advise you to *let the wind blow on you*. Let the breath of the Holy Spirit continually fan your temples, and you will not sleep; seek to live daily under the influence of the Holy Spirit—derive all your strength from Him, and you will not slumber!

Lastly, labor to *impress yourself with a deep sense of the value of the place to which you are going*. If you remember that you are going to heaven, you will not sleep on the road! If you think that hell is behind you, and the devil pursuing you, I am sure you will not be inclined to sleep. Would the manslayer sleep if the avenger of blood were behind him, and the city of refuge before him? Christian, will you sleep while the pearly gates are open, the songs of angels waiting for you to join them; a crown decorated with delight to be worn upon your brow? Ah, no—

***"Forget the steps already trod  
And onward urge your way!  
Weak as you are, you shall not faint,  
Or, fainting, shall not die.  
He feeds the strength of every saint,  
He'll help you from on high."***

Dearly beloved, I have finished my sermon. There are some of you that I must dismiss, because I find nothing in the text for you. It is said, "Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober." There are some here who do not sleep at all, because they are positively dead! And if it takes a stronger voice than mine to wake the sleeper, how much more mighty must be that voice which wakes the dead? Yet even to the dead I speak, for God can wake them, though I cannot. O, dead man! Do you not know that your body and your soul are worthless carrion; that while you are dead, you lie abhorred of God, and abhorred of man; that soon the vulture of remorse will come and devour your lifeless soul, and though you have lived in this world these 70 years (perhaps) without God, and without Christ—in your last hour, the vulture of remorse shall come and tear your spirit? And though you now laugh at the wild bird circling in the sky, he will soon descend upon you, and your death will be a bed of shrieks, howling and wailings, and lamentations? Do you not know that afterwards that dead soul will be cast into hell? And as in the East they burn the bodies, so your body and your soul together shall be burned in hell! Go not away and dream that this is a metaphor! It is the truth of God! Say not it is a fiction—laugh not at it as a mere picture!

Hell is a positive flame—it is a fire that burns the body, albeit that it burns the soul too! There is physical fire for the body, and there is spiritual fire for the soul. Go your way, O man, such shall be your fate. Even now your funeral pile is building; your years of sin have laid huge trees across each other. Look! The angel is flying down from heaven with a brand already lit! You are lying dead upon the pile—he puts the brand to the base; your disease proves that the lower parts are kindling with the flame—those pains of yours are the crackling of the fire! It shall reach you soon, old man—it shall reach you soon, you poor diseased one! You are near death, and when it reaches you, you shall know the meaning of the fire that is unquenchable, and the worm that dies not!

Yet while there is hope I will tell you the gospel. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be,” *must* be “damned.” He that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, with a simple naked faith, comes and puts his trust in Him, shall be saved! But he that believes not shall inevitably—hear it, men and women, and tremble—*he that believes not shall assuredly be damned.*

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P.S.—It is frequently objected that the preacher is censorious—he is not desirous of defending himself from the charge. He is confident that many are conscious that his charges are *true*, and if true, Christian love requires us to warn those who err. Nor will candid men condemn the minister who is bold enough to point out the faults of the church and the age, even when all classes are moved to anger by his faithful rebukes, and pour on his head the full vials of their wrath. IF THIS IS VILE, WE PURPOSE TO BE VILER STILL!—C. H. S.

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# LIONS LACKING—BUT THE CHILDREN SATISFIED NO. 65

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 10, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

ON BEHALF OF THE BAPTIST FUND  
FOR THE RELIEF OF POOR MINISTERS.

*“The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they  
who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”  
Psalm 34:10.*

RIGHT truly did Paul say, “Whereby He has given unto us exceeding great and precious promises,” for surely this promise is exceedingly great, indeed! In the entire compass of God’s holy word, there is not to be found a precious declaration which can excel this in sweetness, for how could God promise to us more than all things? How could even *His* infinite benevolence stretch the line of His divine grace farther than it has gone in this verse of the Psalm?—“They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” There is here no reserve, nothing is kept back; there is no solitary word of exception; there is no codicil in this will striking out even the smallest portion of the estate; there is no *caveat* put in to warn us that there are domains upon which we must not intrude. A large field is laid before the children of God; a wide door is open, and no man can shut it! “They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

Now, we shall notice, first of all, the *Christian character beautifully delineated*. “They who seek the Lord”; secondly, we shall notice a promise set in a glorious light by a contrast, “they shall not want any good thing,” although “the young lions do lack and suffer hunger”; and thirdly, we shall consider whether we cannot bring some *evidence to prove the fulfillment of the promise*.

I. First, we have here a very short, but very beautiful DESCRIPTION OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN—he is said to “seek the Lord.” “They who seek the Lord (or Jehovah, as the original has it) shall not want any good thing.” Ah, beloved, if some of us had the drawing up of this description, we would have made it too narrow. Possibly some of you might have said, “They who seek the Lord in the established church, within the pale of the

state religion, shall not lack any good thing.” Others might have said, “They who seek the Lord in the orthodox Calvinistic manner shall not lack any good thing.” Others might have said, “They who seek the Lord in the Baptist fashion, or the Methodist fashion, or some other, shall not lack any good thing.” But it is not written so! It is written, “They who seek the Lord,” in order that it may take in the Lord’s people of all classes and denominations, and all shades of character! It is a very brief description, yet full and comprehensive, including Christians in all stages and positions. Now let me show you that the Christian, in whatever portion of his spiritual history he may be, is one who seeks the Lord.

We commence with *conviction of sin*. That is where God begins with us, and no man is a Christian unless the Holy Spirit has revealed to him his own entire helplessness, his lack of merit, and absence of power to ever accumulate merit in the sight of God! Well, then, the man who is under a conviction of sin, and feels his need of a Savior—what is he doing? What is his occupation, now that he is hungering and thirsting after righteousness? Why, he is *seeking* the Lord! Ask him what his one need is, and he will say, “Christ is all my desire—I rise early in the morning, and the first thought I have is, ‘O that I knew where I might find Him!’ I am in my business, and my prayers go up to heaven like hands searching for Jesus! And when I lie down upon my bed, my heart says, ‘I seek Him whom my soul loves—I seek Him, but I find Him not.’” Such a man will offer prayer. Why? Not because there is any merit in it, not because he will be praised for it, but to seek the Lord! He turns the pages of Scripture, not as he would a book of philosophy, from curiosity, or for mere instruction, but to seek the Lord! He has one passion, one desire—to *seek the Lord!* For that he would barter his life, and be content to have his name cancelled from the register of men below, if he might but find the Lord Jesus; he desires above everything to have his name recorded in some humble place in the Lamb’s book of life. Are you thus in the dim morn of spiritual life seeking the Lord? Is He your one objective of pursuit? Rejoice then, and tremble not, for the promise is to you in this earlier stage of your calling, when you are only just struggling into being! “They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

But let us go a stage further on, when the Christian *has found the Savior*, and is justified—when he can say in those sweet words I so often repeat—

**“Now, freed from sin I walk at large,  
My Jesus’ blood’s my full discharge.”**

You will find that he has not left off seeking the Lord. No, he now seeks to know more of Him; he seeks to understand more of the heights and

depths, and lengths and breadths of the love of Christ, which passes knowledge. I ask anyone here who has an assurance that he is a pardoned man, thoroughly justified and complete in Christ—are you not seeking the Lord? “Oh,” you say, “I thirst, I long to know more of Him I feel that all I have ever known of Him is like the whispering of the sea in the shell, while the awful roar of the sea itself has not yet reached my ears! I have heard the whisperings of Christ in some little mercy, and I have heard His bounties sing of bottomless, eternal, unchangeable love—but oh, I long to plunge into the sea itself, to bathe myself in the broad ocean of His infinite generosity and love to me!” No Christian ever fancies that he knows enough of his Master; there is no Christian who has found the Lord who does not desire to be better acquainted with Him. “Lord, I will follow You wherever You go,” is the cry of the man who has had his sins forgiven! He sits down at the feet of Jesus, and looks up to Him and says, “Master, teach me more; I am a little child, You are a great instructor; oh, I long to love and learn more of You.” He is always seeking the Lord, and in this more advanced stage, the promise to him is, “They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

But go a little further on, when the Christian *has scarcely ever a shadow of a doubt of his acceptance*; he has progressed so far in spiritual life that he has attained to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus; his faith has become so confident, that—

**“His steady soul does fear no more  
Than solid rocks when billows roar.”**

He can read his “title clear to mansions in the skies.” He has climbed the Delectable Mountain; his feet are standing fast upon a rock, and his goings are established; but even then he is seeking the Lord—in the highest flights of his assurance, on the topmost pinnacle of his faith, there is something yet beyond! When he had sailed farthest into the Sea of Acceptance, there are Fortunate Isles that he has not reached; there is an *ultima thule*, a distant land that he has not yet seen! He is still seeking the Lord; he feels that he has “not yet attained”; he is still “pressing forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” But then he seeks the Lord in a different fashion—he seeks Him that he may put a crown on His Head; he is not seeking him for mercy, but to *give Him praise!* Oh, that my heart could find You; that all its strings might sing sweet music to You! Oh that my mouth could find Your ear, and that I might bid it open and listen to the whisper of my song! Oh that I knew where You did dwell, that I might sing hard by the eaves of Your habitation, and that You might hear me forever; that I might perpetually send the songs of my gratitude up to Your sacred courts! I seek You that

I may break the alabaster box of praise on Your dear sacred head! I seek You that I may put my soul upon the altar, and sacrifice my living self to You! I seek You that I may go where cherubim are singing, whom I envy, because they—

***“All night long unwearied sing  
High praises to the Eternal King!”***

I will seek You in business, that there I may adorn the doctrine of God my Savior in all things! I will seek You in my songs that I may hymn Your praise; I will seek You in my musings, that I may magnify the Lord in my thoughts; I will seek You in my words, that my conversation may show forth Your praise; I will seek You in my gifts of benevolence, that I may be like my Savior; I will seek You forever, for I have attained enough to know that I am Yours and You are mine! Though I have nothing else to ask of You, seeing you have given me Yourself—though You are—

***“Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh,  
My kinsman near allied by blood,”***

though now my soul stands perfect in You and—

***“Not a shadow of a spot  
Can on my soul be found,”***

yet still I will seek You—seek to honor You—seek to kiss those blessed feet that bled for me—seek to worship that dear “man who once on Calvary died,” and put crowns of eternal unfading honor upon His blessed, thorn-crowned, but now exalted brow!

Then bring the Christian to the last period of life, to the *brink of death*; set him on those hoary rocks that skirt the edge of Jordan; let him sit there, looking down at the dark stream rolling rapidly below, not afraid to wade in, but rather wishing to die that he may be with Jesus. Ask the old man what he is doing and he will answer, “Seeking the Lord.” But I thought you had found Him many a year ago, old man. “So I have, but when I found Him, I sought Him more, and I am seeking Him now—seeking Him that I may be complete in Him at His appearing; that I may be like He when I shall see Him as He is. I have sought to understand more of His love to me, and even now I do not know it all. I know as much as mortal can know—I am living in the land of Beulah. See this bunch of spices? Angel hands have brought it to me—a present from my King—here are tokens of His love, His mercy and His grace! And do you see yonder the golden light of the celestial city? And did you hear, just now, the sweet singing of the angels?” “No, no,” says the young man, “I hear them not.” “But,” the old man replies, “I am on the edge of Jordan, and my ears are open, whereas yours are dull. Still I am doing what I have done all my lifelong—seeking the Lord; and till this pulse shall

cease its perpetual beating, I will still seek Him, that dying, I may clasp Him in my arms, the antidote of death!”

You will readily confess that this description of a Christian is invariably correct. You may take the youngest child of God—yon little boy, ten years old, who has just been baptized and received into the church. Ask what he is doing? “*Seeking the Lord*”; follow him till he becomes a middle-aged man with all the cares of life about him. Ask what he is doing then? Still he answers, “*Seeking the Lord.*” Put a few gray hairs upon his head, and let him know that half a century has gone; again, ask what he is doing? “*Seeking the Lord.*” Then make his head all frosty with the winters of old age, and ask him the same question. And he will still reply, “*Seeking the Lord.*” Take away those hairs until the head is entirely bald, and the man is trembling on the grave. What is he doing then? “*Seeking the Lord.*” Yes, as long as we are in this body, whatever our position, or condition; this will always apply to us—“They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

But let us not leave this one point without asking you one solemn question. Will you answer it? I beseech you to answer it to yourselves. Are you seeking the Lord? No, some of you here, if you only can have your bottle of wine, and your fowl, that will satisfy you better than seeking the Lord. There is another—give you health and strength, and let you enjoy the pleasures of this world, and that will be better to you than seeking the Lord. There is another flying in the face of the Almighty, cursing and swearing—you are not seeking the Lord! Another is here this morning who once thought that he did seek the Lord but he has left off doing it now; he went away from us because he was not of us, for, “if he had been of us, he doubtless would have continued with us.” There is a young woman who once thought she sought the Lord, but she has gone astray—she has backslidden—proving after all that it was mere excitement. Would to God I could include you *all* in this promise this morning, but can I, *dare* I, must I? No, I must not. As the Lord lives, if you are not seeking the Lord, the devil is seeking you—if you are not seeking the Lord, judgment is at your heels! Even now, the swift-winged angel of justice is holding the torch before the fierce messenger of vengeance who with his naked dagger is about to execute the wrath of God upon your spirit! Ah, take no lease of your lives—fancy not that you are to live forever; if you have not sought the Lord, as Jonathan Edwards said, “You stand over the mouth of hell upon a single plank—and that plank is rotten.” You are hanging over hell by a single rope, and all the strands of the rope are creaking, snapping, breaking! Remember after death, judgment! And after judgment, woe, and after woe, torment, for woe, woe,

woe, must be forever! “The wrath to come! The wrath to come! The wrath to come!” It needs a damned spirit to start from the grave to preach to you, and let you know something of it; but though one should rise from the grave with all the scars of all his torments upon him, with his hair all crisp by the hot fire of vengeance; though his body were scorched in the flames which know no abatement; though he should tell you with a tear at every word, and a groan as a stop at every sentence, and a deep sigh on every syllable how horribly he feels, how damnably he is tormented—still you would not repent! Therefore we will say little of it. May God the Holy Spirit seek you, and then you will seek Him, and you shall be turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God!

**II.** Now we come to THE PROMISE SET FORTH BY WAY OF CONTRAST. “They shall not want any good thing.” That is the jewel! “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger”; that is the foil to set off the jewel, and make it shine more brightly! “They shall not want any good thing.” I can hardly speak of that, for there is too much to say. Did you ever see a horse let into a wide field where the grass grew so thickly that he scarcely knew where to begin to eat? If not, you have seen children taken into the field where wild flowers grow; it is so full of them in their liveries of white and yellow, that the children know not where to pluck first, they have so wide a choice! That is how I feel when I have such a text as this—“They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” We have heard of the celebrated check for a million pounds which has been preserved—here is one for millions of millions! Here is a promise wide as our needs, large as our necessities, deep as our distresses! There are some persons whose ambitious desires are very much like the Slough of Despond, which, though the king’s laborers cast in thousands of tons of good material, never could be filled up. But the Lord can fill them. However bottomless our desires, however deep our wishes, however high our aspirations, all things meet in this promise, “They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

We take it concerning *things spiritual*. Are we wanting a sense of pardon? We shall not want it long. Are we desiring stronger faith? We shall not desire it long. Do you wish to have more love to your Savior, to understand more concerning inward communion with Jesus? You shall have it! “They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” Do you desire to renounce you sins, to be able to overcome this corruption or that? to attain this virtue, or that excellence? “They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” Is it adoption, justification, sanctification, that you want? “You shall not lack any good thing.”

But are your *wants temporal*? Do you want bread and water? No, I know you do not, for it is said, “Bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure.” Or if you do want it somewhat, it shall come before long; it shall not be to starvation. David said, “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” Do you want clothes; you shall have them, “He that clothes the lilies of the valley, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?” Do you need temporary supplies; you shall receive them, for “Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things.” Whatever your desire, there is the promise, only go and plead it at the throne and God will fulfill it! We have no right to look for the fulfillment of the promises unless we put the Promiser in mind of them, although truly, at times, He exceeds our desires or wishes. He gives us these promises as His notes of hand, His bills of exchange, and if we do not take our notes to get them cashed at the throne, it is our fault, for the promise is just as good—“They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

But there is a contrast, and we will proceed to that at once. “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” The old Psalter has it—“*The rich* had need, and they hungered, but seekers of the Lord shall not be deprived of all good.” It appears that there is only the difference of a very little mark in the Hebrew between the words, “mighty men” and “young lions.” But it is of very little consequence, for doubtless “the young lions” are put by way of figure to denominate certain characters of men who do “lack and suffer hunger.”

There are certain men in the world who, like the lions, are *kings over others*. The lion is lord of the forest, and at his roar others tremble. So are there men who walk about among us—noblemen, respectable, great, honorable persons who are had in reverence and esteem, and they suppose, sometimes, because they are lions, they are surely never to have any spiritual hunger! They are great and mighty men; they have no need of a Savior; are they not the elders of the city? Are they not mighty men of valor? Are they not noble and great? They are, moreover, so excellent in their own esteem that their proper language seems to be when they come before their Maker’s bar: “Lord, I had not a very bad nature, and wherein it was a little bad, I made the best of it! And wherein I did not do quite as well as I ought, Jesus Christ will make it up for me.” Talk to these men about being depraved—they say, “Rubbish!” They know better—their heart is pure enough! They have no need of the Holy Spirit; they are young lions—you small mice may need it, but not they! They have no need of another’s righteousness to cover them—their old shaggy

mane is glory enough to them! But do you know these young lions “lack and suffer hunger”? Yes, even when we do not know anything about it! They can play long-windedness before men, but they “lack and suffer hunger” when they are alone! A suspicion often crosses their minds that their righteousness is not good for much; they know very well that while they can make a long prayer, the poor widow’s house sticks in their throat; they know that while they boast of their good works, they are no better than they should be. You may think, perhaps, like David, that, “they are not plagued like other men.” But you don’t know that, for they are very often plagued when they do not tell you—when they roar so loudly their mane scarcely covers their bare ribs! “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger”; but, blessed be God, “They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” Poor and helpless though they are, having no works of righteousness of their own, confessing their sin and depravity, they shall want no good thing! Is it not amazing? There is a poor sinner who has sinned against God, and in every way dishonored His name; yet he cannot lack any good thing—

***“Poor, helpless worms in Christ possess  
Grace, wisdom, peace, and righteousness.”***

Again—by young lions we may understand men of cunning, and men of wisdom. The lion goes out at night, and prowls silently through the jungle. It has a keen scent, and knows where to find its prey; it smells the fountain, and knows that the antelope will go there to drink. When he comes, the lion crouches down, and with wild eyes looks upon him, and in a moment, before the antelope is aware, he is in the fangs of the lion! Men of cunning and wisdom—have you not seen such? Have you not heard their boastful exclamation, “Submit myself to a dogmatic preacher; no, sir, I will not! Believe in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures? I cannot believe in any such absurdity! Sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him in the Scriptures! No, sir, I cannot! I like something to discuss; I like an intellectual religion; I cannot believe everything simply because God says it; I want to be allowed to judge for myself! Am I not wise and learned?” And when he sees us in distress, he sometimes says, “Nonsense! You have no brains; you poor Calvinists must be bereft of your senses.” And yet we can show as many men of sense as they can, and we are not afraid of them, however much they glory in their wisdom! But sometimes the poor Christian is frightened by them; he cannot answer their sophisms; he does not see his way through their labyrinths, and cannot escape from their nets. Well, don’t try to escape from them! Let them talk on; the best answer is often silence. But do you know that these young lions, so gloriously self-sufficient, when in argument with

you, in secrecy often “lack and suffer hunger”? There was never an infidel in the world that did not suffer spiritual hunger, though he might not confess it. His creed did not satisfy him; there was a hollow place, an aching void somewhere, which the world could never fill! But “They who seek the Lord,” who take the Scriptures for their guide, who bow implicitly to the words of Jehovah, “do not lack any good thing.” They feel no hollow unoccupied—Christ has filled their hearts; and they are satisfied with His presence and His love. “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

Again—the young lions denote those who are very strong, so that they hope to save themselves, and *very swift* in their course of profession. Some are very fierce in the matter of religion, very anxious to obtain salvation, and they are very strong, so that they think it scorn to borrow strength of another. Like the Jews, they follow after righteousness, but they do not attain it because they seek it by the works of the law. Have you ever seen what they will do? There is a goodly chapel they have built; they are engaged at six o’clock in the morning at prayers, and repeat so many Ave Marias, and Pater Nosters; then comes the daily service, the “mass,” and all that rubbish—the *messe*—as they call it in France, and verily a mess it is! Then they whip themselves, fetch blood from their bodies, and perform all kinds of penances. Even among Protestants, merit-mongers have not quite disappeared, for there are many who are full of holy works in which they are trusting for salvation. The poor Christian says, “I cannot perform all these works; I wish it were in my power to serve the Lord more devoutly.” But do you not know that these “young lions do lack and suffer hunger”? The formalist is never satisfied with all his forms; the hypocrite is never contented; there is always something he misses that makes his heart ache.

Then we may take it in a temporal sense. Young lions may mean deep cunning schemers. Have you ever seen men with their thousand schemes and plans to make themselves rich—men who can overreach others—who are so subtle that you cannot see through them? Their instinct seems to be cunning; they are always lying in wait to take advantage of others; they prowl the world to seize on the helpless widow and the defenseless orphan. Or, perhaps they may be following more legitimate schemes—such as are full of speculation, and will involve the exercise of all their wits. Surely such can live if others stand. But no, they are just the men who “lack and suffer hunger”; their schemes all prove futile—the arrow which they shoot returns on their own head and wounds them! But they who lie gently down in passive faith, singing—

***“Father, I wait Your daily will.”***

***You shall divide my portion still.  
Give me on earth what seems to You best,  
‘Till death and heaven reveal the rest,”***

do not lack any good thing!

Again—by “young lions,” we may understand “rich men”—men who have abundance. We have known persons who have ridden in fine carriages, and dwelt in noble mansions brought to the depths of poverty. Every now and then we hear of men, almost millionaires, who are turned out into the very streets. Kings have walked our soil without their crowns, and nobles even now are living on our charity. Daughters of men in high positions have to work as menials, and sometimes long to be allowed to do that. The rich sometimes “lack and suffer hunger; but they who wait on the Lord,” poor as they may be, “do not lack any good thing.”

Again—this may apply to you who earn your living by bodily labor. Perhaps you are a weak and sickly man; you are not one of the “young lions,” like your neighbor, a strong big fellow who can earn his day’s wages without the least difficulty. He says to you, perhaps, “I shouldn’t like to be such a poor lean thing as you are; if you should be ill, what would become of you? You trust in providence, but I trust in my big arms! The best providence is to take care of yourself; to go and eat a good dinner and keep yourself trim.” No, no! Have you not seen those young lions, “lack and suffer hunger”? Our missionary can tell of strong men whom he visits who cannot find employment, and are brought almost to starvation; while he finds that they who wait on the Lord lack no good thing. Don’t be afraid because you have a sick and weakly frame—labor as hard as you can, and be sure—if you wait on the Lord you will not lack any good thing!

Once more—the lion is a creature that *overcomes and devours all others*. We have some such in our society. You find them everywhere; they put their hand upon you, and you feel you are in a vice. They understand law better than you do—and woe be to you if you make a mistake! Won’t they take advantage of you? So in business they can always overreach you; like sharks, if they do not devour you altogether, they leave you minus a leg or an arm. Yes, but you have seen these men, too, “lack and suffer hunger.” And among all the miserable heretics that walk the earth, there is none as destitute as the young lion that lacks and suffers hunger! He puts his money into a bag full of holes, and I think hell laughs at the covetous man—at him who grasps his neighbor’s wealth. “Ha! Ha!” says the devil, “damn your soul to win nothing! Send your soul to hell to win a dream! A thing which you had, but it is gone! You did grasp it—it was a shadow! You sold your immortal spirit to win a bubble which burst in your grasp.” Christian, do not be concerned about temporal things—

trust in God—for while, “young lions do lack and suffer hunger, they who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

**III.** And now, I come to the third part, which is THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE. Time fails me, and I shall not try to prove to you that God can in the ordinary course of His providence make a distinction between the righteous and the wicked; that would be an easy task. While God has the hearts of all men under His control, He can make the rich give where He pleases, and He can influence the church, and those who love the Lord, always to take care of the Lord’s poor. But I am going to state one or two facts by way of stimulating you to assist me in the noble enterprise of endeavoring to support the poor disabled ministers of the everlasting gospel. Amongst the particular Baptists, we have a fund called the Baptists’ Fund. It was instituted in 1717 in order to afford assistance to ministers in England and Wales, who were in poverty and distress, in consequence of the inability of their churches and congregations to furnish them with a competent maintenance for themselves and their families. During nearly a century and a half, it has carried out, as far as its funds were sufficient, the benevolent purposes for which it was established. It publishes its accounts yearly, and from the last printed statement for 1854-5, it appears that in that year, one hundred and sixty-five cases were relieved in England, and sixty-five in the Principality, by grants in money to the amount of £1,560, no one receiving a larger sum than £10, and no grant being in any case made where the minister’s income from every source exceeded £80. In addition to the money grants, books also of the value together of £155 have been presented to 35 poor ministers unable to purchase them. Towards raising the necessary funds to meet these cases, collections are annually made in this, and in eight or nine other Baptist churches in and about the metropolis; and when the number, character, and circumstances of the objects to be relieved, and the purpose for which the relief is afforded are considered, it will be well understood that this is no ordinary collection. We have the right of four votes, one for the pastor and three messengers sent by us, owing to our fathers having in olden times deposited £150 by way of starting the fund, the interest of which sum, and of that given by other churches, is spent every year. Different legacies having been left by other persons, a considerable sum has accumulated, and I believe the yearly income is somewhere about £2,000 at the present time. We need, however, much more. I am not going to detain you long by telling you about the fund, but I will read you one or two letters from the recipients. The first is from an old minister aged eighty.

**[It is thought best not to print these, lest the worthy men who wrote them should feel embarrassed.]**

I think I need add nothing more to move you. There are many poor ministers now, who, when they go up the pulpit stairs, are obliged to hold their arms pretty close to their bodies lest they should tear their coats to pieces. And I have seen them with such coats on—as you would not like to put on if you were going into the meanest chapel in London! I have myself found livery for some of these holy men, year by year, but one person cannot supply the necessities of all. I know the case of a preacher who walked to a chapel within ten miles of this spot, and preached in the morning, and walked back again. He also preached in the evening, and had to walk back to his house. And what do you think the deacons gave him? The poor man had nothing else to live upon, and he was nearly 80 years of age; when he had finished (oh, don't hear it, you angels! Pray shut up your ears) they gave him—a *shilling!* That was for his day's work. Another brother told me some time ago that he preached three sermons, walking eight miles and back again and going dinnerless all the while. And the deacons gave him the munificent sum of—half-a-crown! Oh, if you knew all the circumstances connected with the fund, you would not long restrain your benevolence! The funds are mostly given to those who preach the gospel—gospel ministers of the best sort—men who preach what we consider to be gospel—Calvinistic sentiments. And the funds must always be given in that way, for so the deed directs it. I bless God for this society, and I ask you, under God, to take care of it, that while “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger,” the ministers of the Lord shall “not want any good thing.”

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# THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

## NOS. 66-67

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 17, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”  
Acts 24:15.***

REFLECTING, the other day, upon the sad state of the churches at the present time, I was led to look back to apostolic times, and to consider wherein the preaching of the present day differed from the preaching of the apostles. I remarked the vast difference in their style from the set and formal oratory of the present age; I remarked that the apostles did not take a text when they preached, nor did they confine themselves to one subject, much less to any place of worship, but I find that they stood up in any place, and declared from the fullness of their heart what they knew of Jesus Christ. But the main difference I observed was in the *subjects* of their preaching. I was surprised when I discovered that the very staple of the preaching of the apostles was the resurrection of the dead! I found myself to have been preaching the doctrine of the grace of God, to have been upholding free election, to have been leading the people of God as well as I was enabled into the deep things of His word; but I was surprised to find that I had not been copying the apostolic fashion half as nearly as I might have done. The apostles, when they preached, always testified concerning the resurrection of Jesus, and the consequent resurrection of the dead. It appears that the Alpha and the Omega of their gospel was the testimony that Jesus Christ died and rose again from the dead according to the Scriptures. When they chose another apostle in the place of Judas, who had become apostate, (Acts 1:22), they said, “One must be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection,” so that the very office of an apostle was to be a witness of the resurrection. And well did they fulfill their office! When Peter stood up before the multitude, he declared unto them that “David spoke of the resurrection of Christ.” When Peter and John were taken before the council, the great cause of their arrest was that the rulers were grieved “because they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead” (Acts 4:2). When they were set free, after having been examined, it is said, “With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33). It was

this which stirred the curiosity of the Athenians when Paul preached among them—"They said, he seems to be a proclaimer of strange gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection of the dead." And this moved the laughter of the Areopagites, for when he spoke of the resurrection of the dead, "Some mocked and others said, we will hear you again of this matter."

Truly did Paul say, when he stood before the council of the Pharisees and Sadducees, "Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am called in question"; and equally did he constantly assert, "If Christ is not risen from the dead, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is vain, and you are yet in your sins." The resurrection of Jesus, and the resurrection of the righteous is a doctrine which we believe, but which we too seldom preach or care to read about. Though I have inquired of several booksellers for a book especially upon the subject of the resurrection, I have not yet been able to purchase one of any sort whatever! And when I turned to Dr. Owen's works, which are a most invaluable storehouse of divine knowledge, containing much that is valuable on almost every subject—I could find even there scarcely more than the slightest mention of the resurrection of the dead. It has been set down as a well-known truth of God, and therefore has never been discussed. Heresies have not risen up respecting it; it would almost have been a mercy if there had been, for whenever a truth of God is contested by heretics, the orthodox fight strongly for it, and the pulpit resounds with it every day! I am persuaded, however, that there is much power in this doctrine, and if I preach it this morning, you will see that God will acknowledge the apostolic preaching, and there will be conversions! I intend putting it to the test now, to see whether there is not something which we cannot perceive at present in the resurrection of the dead which is capable of moving the hearts of men, and bringing them into subjection to the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

There are very few Christians who believe the resurrection of the dead! You may be surprised to hear that, but I should not wonder if I discovered that you yourself have doubts on the subject. By the resurrection of the dead is meant something very different from the immortality of the soul. *That*, every Christian believes, but therein is only on a level with the heathen who also believes it! The light of nature is sufficient to tell us that the soul is immortal, so that the infidel who doubts it is a worse fool even than a heathen, for he, before Revelation was given, had discovered it—there are some faint glimmerings in men of reason which teach that the soul is something so amazing that it must endure forever! But the resurrection of the *dead* is quite another doctrine, dealing not with the

soul, but with the *body*. The doctrine is that this actual body in which I now exist is to live with my soul; that not only is the “vital spark of heavenly flame” to burn in heaven, but the very censer in which the incense of my life does smoke is holy unto the Lord, and is to be preserved forever! The spirit, everyone confesses, is eternal; but how many there are who deny that the bodies of men will actually start up from their graves at the great day! Many of you believe you will have a body in heaven, but you think it will be an airy fantastic body instead of believing that it will be a body like this—flesh and blood (although not the same kind of flesh, for all flesh is not the same flesh), a solid, substantial body, even such as we have here! And there are yet fewer of you who believe that the wicked will have bodies in hell, for it is gaining ground everywhere that there are to be no positive torments for the damned in hell to affect their bodies, but that it is to be *metaphorical* fire, *metaphorical* brimstone, *metaphorical* chains, *metaphorical* torture! But if you were Christians as you profess to be, you would believe that every mortal man who ever existed shall not only live by the immortality of his soul, but his body shall live again—that the very flesh in which he now walks the earth is as eternal as the soul, and shall exist forever! That is the peculiar doctrine of Christianity; the heathens never guessed or imagined such a thing; and consequently when Paul spoke of the resurrection of the dead, “Some mocked,” which proves that they understood him to speak of the resurrection of the *body*, for they would not have mocked had he only spoken of the immortality of the *soul*—that having been already proclaimed by Plato and Socrates, and received with reverence!

We are now about to preach that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. We shall consider first, the *resurrection of the just*, and secondly, the *resurrection of the unjust*.

#### I. There shall be A RESURRECTION OF THE JUST.

The first proof I will offer of this is that it has been the *constant and unvarying faith of the saints from the earliest periods of time*. Abraham believed the resurrection of the dead, for it is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews, 11:19, that he, “accounted that God was able to raise up Isaac even from the dead; from where also he received him in a figure.” I have no doubt that Joseph believed in the resurrection, for he gave commandment concerning his bones, and surely he would not have been so careful of his body if he had not believed that it should be raised from the dead. The Patriarch Job was a firm believer in it, for he said in that oft repeated text, Job 19:25, 26—“For I know that my Redeemer lives; and that He shall stand at last on the earth: and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” David believed

it beyond the shadow of a doubt, for he sang of Christ, “You will not leave my soul in hell, neither will you allow Your holy one to see corruption.” Daniel believed it, for he said that “Many who sleep in the dust shall rise, some to everlasting life and some to everlasting contempt.” souls do not sleep in the dust—*bodies* do! It will do you good to turn to one or two passages, and see what these holy men thought. For instance, in Isaiah 26:19, you read—“Your dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise; awake, and sing, you that dwell in the dust; for your dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.” We will offer no explanation; the text is positive and sure. Let another prophet speak—Hosea, 6:1, 2—“Come and let us return unto the Lord: for He has torn, and He will heal us; He has smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight.” Although this does not declare the resurrection, yet it uses it as a figure which it would not do were it not regarded as a settled truth of God. It is declared by Paul, also, in Hebrews 11:35, that such was the constant faith of the martyrs, for he says, “Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.” All those holy men and women, who, during the time of the Maccabees, stood fast by their faith, and endured the fire, sword and unutterable tortures, believed in the resurrection, and that resurrection stimulated them to give their bodies to the flames—not caring even for death, but believing that thereby they should attain to a blessed resurrection!

But our Savior brought the resurrection to light in the most excellent manner, for He explicitly and frequently declared it. “Marvel not,” He said, “at what I have said unto you. Behold the hour comes when they who are in their graves shall hear the voice of God.” “The hour is coming when He will call the dead to judgment, and they shall stand before His throne.” Indeed, throughout His preaching there was one continued flow of firm belief, and a public and positive declaration of the resurrection of the dead! I will not trouble you with any passages from the writings of the apostles—they abound therewith! In fact, Holy Scripture is so full of this doctrine, that I marvel, brethren, that we should so soon have departed from the steadfastness of our faith; that it should be believed in many churches that the actual bodies of the saints will not live again, and especially that the bodies of the wicked will not have a future existence. We maintain as our text does, that “There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”

A second proof, we think, we find in the *translation of Enoch and Elijah to heaven*. We read of two men who went to heaven in their bodies.

Enoch “was not; for God took him.” And Elijah was carried to heaven in a chariot of fire. Neither of these men left his ashes in the grave—neither left his body to be consumed by the worm; but both of them in their mortal frames (doubtless changed and glorified) ascended up on high. Now those two were the pledge to us that all of us shall rise in the same manner! Would it be likely that two bright spirits would sit in heaven clothed in flesh, while the rest of us were unclothed? Would it be at all reasonable that Enoch and Elijah should be the only saints who should have their bodies in heaven, and that we should be there only in our souls—poor souls—longing to have our bodies again? No! Our faith tells us that these two men, having safely gone to heaven, as John Bunyan has it, by a bridge that no one else trod, by which they were not under the necessity to wade the river—we shall also rise from the flood, and our flesh shall not forever dwell with corruption!

There is a remarkable passage in Jude, where it speaks of Michael the Archangel contending with the devil about the body of Moses, and using no “railing accusation.” Now, this refers to the great doctrine of *angels watching over the bones of the saints*. Certainly, it tells us that the body of Moses was watched over by a great archangel; the devil thought to disturb that body, but Michael contended with him about it. Now would there be a contention about that body if it had been of no value? Would Michael contend for that which was only to be the food of worms? Would he wrestle with the enemy for that which was to be scattered to the four winds of heaven, never to be united again into a new and goodlier fabric? No! Assuredly not! From this we learn that an angel watches over every tomb; it is no fiction, when on the marble we carve the cherubs with their wings. There are cherubs with outstretched wings over the head of the gravestones of all the righteous. Yes, and where “the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep,” in some nook overgrown by nettles, there an angel stands night and day to watch each bone, and guard each atom, that at the resurrection, those bodies, with more glory than they had on earth, may start up to dwell forever with the Lord! The guardianship of the bodies of the saints by angels proves that they shall rise again from the dead!

Yet, further, the *resurrections that have already taken place* give us hope and confidence that there shall be a resurrection of all saints. Do you not remember that it is written when Jesus rose from the dead, many of the saints who were in their graves arose? They came into the city and appeared unto many. Have you not heard that Lazarus, though he had been dead three days, came from the grave at the word of Jesus? Have you never read how the daughter of Jairus awoke from the sleep of

death when Jesus said, "*Talitha cumi*"? Have you never seen Him at the gates of Nain, bidding that widow's son rise from the bier? Have you forgotten that Dorcas, who made garments for the poor, sat up and saw Peter after she had been dead? And do you not remember Eutychus, who fell from the third loft, and was taken up dead, but who, at the prayer of Paul, was raised again? Or does not your memory roll back to the time when hoary Elijah stretched himself upon the dead child, and the child breathed and sneezed seven times, and his soul came to him? Or have you not read that when they buried a man, as soon as he touched the prophet's bones he rose again to life? These are *pledges* of the resurrection! A few specimens, a few chance gems flung into the world to tell us how full God's hand is of resurrection jewels! He has given us proof that He is able to raise the dead by the resurrection of a few, who afterwards were seen on earth by infallible witnesses.

We must now, however, leave these things, and refer you once more to the Holy Spirit by way of confirming the doctrine that the saints' bodies shall rise again. The chapter in which you will find one great proof is in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, 6:13, 14—"Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord. And the Lord for the body." *The body, then, is the Lord's.* Christ died not only to save my soul, but to save my *body!* It is said He "came to seek and to save that which was lost." When Adam sinned, he lost his body and he lost his soul, too. He was a lost man, lost altogether. And when Christ came to save His people, He came to save their bodies and their souls. "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord." Is this body for the Lord and shall death devour it? Is this body for the Lord and shall winds scatter its particles far away where they never shall discover their fellows? No! The body is for the Lord and the Lord shall have it. "And God has both raised up the Lord and will also raise us by His own power." Now look at the next verse—"Know you not that *your bodies are the members of Christ.*" Not merely is the *soul* a part of Christ—united to Christ, but the *body* is, also! These hands, these feet, these eyes are members of Christ, if I am a child of God. I am one with Him, not merely as to my mind, but one with Him as to this outward frame! The very body is taken into union. The golden chain which binds Christ to His people goes round the body and soul, too! Did not the apostle say, "they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery. But I speak concerning Christ and the church"?—Ephesians 5:31, 32. "They are one flesh." And Christ's people are not only one with Him in spirit, but they are "one flesh," too. The flesh of man is united with the flesh of the God-Man. And our bodies are members of Jesus Christ. Well, while the head lives, the body cannot die. And while Jesus lives, the

members cannot perish! Further, the apostle says, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> verses of 1 Corinthians 6, “Know you not that your *body is the temple of the Holy Spirit* which is in you, which you have of God and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price.” This body, he says, is the temple of the Holy Spirit. And where the Holy Spirit dwells in a body, He not only sanctifies it, but renders it eternal! The temple of the Holy Spirit is as eternal as the Holy Spirit! You may demolish other temples and their gods, too, but the Holy Spirit cannot die, nor “can His temple perish.” Shall this body which has once had the Holy Spirit in it, be always food for worms? Shall it never be seen more but be like the dry bones of the valley? No! The dry bones shall live and the temple of the Holy Spirit shall be built up again! Though the legs, the pillars, of that temple fall—though the eyes, the windows of it, are darkened and those that look out of them see no more—yet God shall rebuild this fabric, relight the eyes and restore its pillars and rebuild it with beauty—“this mortal shall put on immortality and this corruptible put on incorruption!”

But the master argument with which we close our proof is that *Christ rose from the dead* and verily His people shall. The chapter which we read at the commencement of the service is proof to a demonstration that if Christ rose from the dead, all His people must; if there is no resurrection, then is Christ not risen! But we will not long dwell on this proof, because I know you all feel its power, and there is no need for me to bring it out clearly. As Christ actually rose from the dead; flesh and blood—so shall we! Christ was not a spirit when He rose from the dead—His body could be touched; did not Thomas put his hand into His side? And did not Christ say, “Handle Me and see; a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see I have”? And if we are to rise as Christ did, and we are taught so; then we shall rise in our *bodies*; not spirits. Not fine aerial things, made of I know not what—some very refined and elastic substance, perhaps? No, but “as the Lord our Savior rose, so all His followers must.” We shall rise in our flesh, “though all flesh is not the same flesh.” We shall rise in our bodies, though all bodies are not the same bodies, and we shall rise in glory, though all glories are not the same glories. “There is one flesh of man, and another of beasts”; and there is one flesh of this body, and another flesh of the heavenly body! There is one body for the soul here, and another body for the spirit up there. And yet it shall be the same body that will rise again from the grave—the same, I say, in identity—though not in glory or in adaptation.

I come now to some practical thoughts from this doctrine before I go to the other.

My brethren, what thoughts of comfort there are in this doctrine, that the dead shall rise again! Some of us have this week been standing by the grave, and one of our brothers, who long served his Master in our midst, was placed in the tomb. He was a man valiant for the truth of God, indefatigable in labor, self-denying in duty, and always prepared to follow his Lord [Mr. Turner, of Lamb and Flag School] and to the utmost of his ability, serviceable to the church. Now, there were tears shed there—do you know what they were about? There was not a solitary tear shed about his soul! The doctrine of the immortality of the soul was not required to give us comfort, for we knew it well; we were perfectly assured that he had ascended to heaven. The burial service used in the Church of England most wisely offers us no comfort concerning the soul of the departed believer, since that is in bliss; but it cheers us by reminding us of the promised resurrection for the body! And when I speak concerning the dead, it is not to give comfort as to the soul, but as to the body, and this doctrine of the resurrection has comfort for the mourners in regard to the buried mortality. You do not weep because your father, brother, wife, husband, has ascended to heaven—you would be cruel to weep about that. None of you weep because your dear mother is before the throne of God; but you weep because her *body* is in the grave, because those eyes can no more smile on you, because those hands cannot caress you, because those sweet lips cannot speak melodious notes of affection. You weep because the body is cold and dead, and clay-like; for the *soul* you do not weep. But I have comfort for you; that very body will rise again! Those eyes will flash with genius again! Those hands will be held out in affection once more! Believe me, I am speaking no fiction! Those very hands, those positive hands; those cold, clay-like arms that hung down by the side, and fell when you lifted them up—shall hold a harp one day! And those poor fingers, now icy and hard, shall be swept along the living strings of golden harps in heaven! Yes, you shall see that body once more—

***“Their inbred sins require  
Their flesh to see the dust,  
But as the Lord, their Savior, rose  
So all His followers must.”***

Will not that remove your tears? “He is not dead, but sleeps.” He is not lost, he is “seed sown against harvest time to ripen.” His body is resting a little while, bathing itself in spices, that it may be fit for the embraces of its Lord!

And here is comfort for you, too, you poor sufferers, who suffer in your bodies. Some of you are almost martyrs with aches of one kind and another—lumbagos, gouts, rheumatisms, and all sorts of sad afflictions

that flesh is heir to. Scarcely a day passes but you are tormented with some suffering or other, and if you were silly enough to be always doctoring yourselves, you might always be having the doctor in your house. Here is comfort for you; that poor old rickety body of yours will live again without its pains, without its agonies; that poor shaky frame will be repaid all it has suffered. Ah, poor Negro slave, every scar upon your back shall have a stripe of honor in heaven! Ah, poor martyr, the crackling of your bones in the fire shall earn you sonnets in glory! All your sufferings shall be well repaid by the happiness you shall experience there; don't fear to suffer in your body, because your body will one day share in your delights; every nerve will thrill with delight, every muscle move with bliss; your eyes will flash with the fire of eternity; your heart will beat and pulsate with immortal blessedness! Your body shall be the channel of beatitude—the body which is now often a cup of wormwood will be a vessel of honey; this body which is now often a comb out of which gall distills, shall be a honeycomb of blessedness to you! Comfort yourselves then, you sufferers, weary languishers upon the bed—fear not, your bodies shall live!

But I want to draw a word of *instruction* from the text, concerning the doctrine of recognition. Many have puzzled themselves as to whether they will know their friends in heaven. Well now, if the bodies are to rise from the dead, I see no reason why we should not know them! I think I should know some of my brethren, even by their spirits, for I know their character so well, having talked with them of the things of Jesus, and being well acquainted with the most prominent parts of their character. But I shall see their bodies too. I always thought that the quietus to the question was exemplified in a conversation between old John Ryland and his wife. "Do you think," she said, "you will know me in heaven?" "Why," he said, "I know you *here*; and do you think I shall be a bigger fool in heaven than I am on earth?" The question is beyond dispute! We shall live in heaven with bodies, and that decides the matter. We shall know each other in heaven; you may take that as a positive fact, and not mere fancy.

But now a word of *warning*, and then I have done with this part of the subject. If your bodies are to dwell in heaven, I beseech you take care of them. I do not mean, take care of what you eat and drink, and with what you shall be clothed; but I mean, take care that you do not let your bodies be polluted by sin. If this throat is to warble forever with songs of glory, let not words of lust defile it; if these eyes are to see the king in His beauty, even let this be your prayer, "Turn off my eyes from beholding vanities." If these hands are to hold a palm branch, oh, let them never

take a bribe, let them never seek after evil. If these feet are to walk the golden streets, let them not be swift after mischief. If this tongue is forever to talk of all He said and did, ah, let it not utter light and frothy things! And if this heart is to pulsate forever with bliss, I beseech you give it not unto strangers; neither let it wander after evil! If this body is to live forever, what care we ought to take of it—for our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and they are members of the Lord Jesus!

Now, will you believe this doctrine or not? If you will not, you are excommunicated from the faith! This is the faith of the gospel, and if you do not believe it, you have not yet received the gospel. “For if the dead rise not, then your faith is vain, and you are yet in your sins.” The dead in Christ *shall* rise, and they shall rise *first*.

**II.** Now we come to the RESURRECTION OF THE WICKED. Will the wicked rise too? Here is a point of controversy. I shall now have some hard things to say: I may detain you long, but I beg you, nevertheless, listen to me. Yes, the wicked shall rise.

The first proof is given in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Epistle to the Corinthians, 5:10—“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it is good or bad.” Now, since we are *all to appear*, the wicked must appear, and they will receive the deeds done in the body. Since the body sins, it is only natural that the body should be punished; it would be unjust to punish the soul, and not the body, for the body has had as much to do with sin as ever the soul has had. But wherever I go now, I hear it said, “The ministers in old times were known to say there was fire in hell for our bodies, but it is not so; it is metaphorical fire, fancied fire.” Ah, it IS so! You shall receive the things done in your body; though your souls shall be punished, your bodies will be punished as well. You who are sensual and devilish, do not care about your souls being punished because you never think about your souls. But if I tell you of *bodily* punishment, you will think of it far more! Christ may have said that the soul should be punished—but He far more frequently described the body in misery in order to impress His hearers, for He knew that they were sensual and devilish, and that nothing that did not affect the body would touch them in the least. “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to receive the things done in the body according to what we have done, whether it is good or evil.”

But this is not the only text to prove the doctrine. I will give you a better one—Matthew 5:29. “If your right eye offends you, pluck it out, and cast it from you: for it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body should be cast into hell.”

Not, “your whole *soul*,” but, “your whole *body*.” Man, this does not say that your soul shall be in hell; that is affirmed many times, but it positively declares that *your body* shall! That same body which is now standing in the aisle, or sitting in the pew—if you die without Christ, shall burn forever in the flames of hell! It is not a fancy of man but a truth of God that your actual flesh and blood, and those very bones shall suffer—“your whole body shall be cast into hell.”

But lest that one proof should not suffice you, hear another out of the same gospel—chapter 10:28. “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and *body* in hell.” Hell will be the place for bodies as well as for souls! As I have remarked, wherever Christ speaks of hell, and of the lost state of the wicked, He always speaks of their bodies; you scarcely find Him saying anything about their souls. He says, “Where their worm dies not,” which is a figure of *physical* suffering—the worm torturing forever the inmost heart, like a cancer within the very soul. He speaks of the “fire that never shall be quenched.” Now, do not begin telling me that *that* is a metaphorical fire—who cares about that? If a man were to threaten to give me a metaphorical blow on the head, I would care very little about it! He would be welcome to give me as many as he pleased; and what say the wicked? “We do not care about metaphorical fires.” But they are *real*, sir—as real as yourself! There is a real fire in hell, as truly as you have now a real body—a fire exactly like that which we have on earth in everything except this: it will not consume, though it will torture you! You have seen the asbestos lying in the fire red hot, but when you take it out it is unconsumed. So your body will be prepared by God in such a way that it will burn forever without being consumed; it will lie, not as you consider, in metaphorical fire, but in *actual flames*. Did our Savior mean fictions when He said He would cast body and soul into hell? What would there be a pit for if there were no bodies? Why fire? Why chains, if there were to be no bodies? Can fire touch the soul? Can pits shut in spirits? Can chains fetter souls? No, pits and fire and chains are for *bodies*, and *bodies* will be there! You will sleep in the dust a little while. When you die, your soul will be tormented alone—there will be a hell for it; but at the day of judgment, your body will join your soul, and then you will have twin hells, body and soul shall be together, each full of pain, your soul sweating in its inmost pore drops of blood, and your body from head to foot suffused with agony; conscience, judgment, memory, all tortured, but more—your head tormented with racking pains, your eyes starting from their sockets with sights of blood and woe; your ears tormented with—

***“Sullen moans and hollow groans,  
And shrieks of tortured ghosts.”***

Your heart beating high with fever; your pulse rattling at an enormous rate in agony; your limbs cracking like the martyrs in the fire, and yet unburnt; yourself put in a vessel of hot oil, pained, yet coming out undestroyed. All your veins becoming roads for the hot feet of pain to travel on; every nerve a string on which the devil shall ever play his diabolical tune of hell’s unutterable lament; your soul forever and ever aching, and your body palpitating in unison with your soul. Fictions, sir? Again, I say, they are no fictions, and as God lives, but solid, stern truth! If God is true, and this Bible is true, what I have said is the truth of God—and you will find it one day to be so!

But now I must have a little reasoning with the ungodly on one or two points. First, I will reason with such of you as are very proud of your comely bodies, and array yourselves in goodly ornaments, and make yourselves glorious in your apparel. There are some of you who have no time for prayer, but you have time enough for your wardrobe; you have no time for the prayer meeting, but you have time enough to be brushing your hair to all eternity; you have no time to bend your knees, but plenty of time to make yourselves look smart and grand. Ah, fine lady, you who take care of your goodly fashioned face—remember what was said by one of old when he held up a skull—

***“Tell her, though she paint herself an inch thick  
To this complexion she must come at last.”***

And something more than that—that fair face shall be scarred with the claws of fiends, and that fine body shall be only the medium for torment! Ah, dress yourself, proud gentleman for the worm! Anoint yourself for the crawling creatures of the grave, and worse, come to hell with powdered hair—a gentleman in hell! Come down to the pit of hell in goodly apparel; my lord, come there to find yourself no higher than others, except it is higher in torture, and plunged deeper in flames! Yes, it ill becomes us to waste so much time upon the trifling things here, when there is so much to be done, and so little time for doing it in the saving of men’s souls! O God, our God, deliver men from feasting and pampering their bodies when they are only fattening them for the slaughter, and feeding them to be devoured in the flame!

Again—hear me when I say to you who are gratifying your lusts—do you know that those bodies, the lusts of which you gratify, here, will be in hell, and that you will have the same lusts in hell that you have here? The debauchee hastens to indulge his body in what he desires—can he do that in hell? Can he find a place there where he shall gratify his lust, and find indulgence for his foul desires? The drunk here can pour down

his throat the intoxicating and deadly draught; but where will he find the liquor to drink in hell, when his drunkenness will be as hot upon him as it is here? Yes, where will he find so much as a drop of water to cool his parched tongue? The man who loves gluttony here will be a glutton there; but where will be the food to satisfy him, when he may hold his finger up, and see the loaves go away from him, and the fruits refuse his grasp? Oh, to have your passions, and yet not to satisfy them! To shut a drunk up in his cell, and give him nothing to drink, he would dash himself against the wall to get the liquor, but there is none for him! What will you do in hell, O drunk, with that thirst in your throat, and having nothing but flames to swallow? And what will you do, O profligate, when you would still be seducing others, but there are none with whom you can sin? Do I speak plainly? Did not Christ do so? If men will sin, they shall find men who are not ashamed to reprove them. Ah, to have a body in hell, with all its lusts, but not the power to satisfy them! How horrible that hell will be!

But hear me yet again. Oh, poor sinner, if I saw you going into the inquisitor's den to be tormented, would I not beg of you to stop before you should put your foot upon the threshold? And now I am talking to you of things that are real. If I were standing on a stage this morning, and were acting these things as fancies, I would make you weep—I would make the godly weep to think that so many should be damned, and I would make the ungodly weep to think that *they* should be damned! But when I speak of realities, they do not move you half as much as fictions would, and you sit just as you did before the service had commenced. But hear me while I again affirm God's truth. I tell you sinner that those eyes that now look on lust shall look on miseries that shall vex and torment you! Those ears which now you lend to hear the song of blasphemy, shall hear moans and groans, and horrid sounds—such as only the damned know! That very throat down which you pour drink shall be filled with fire; those very lips and arms of yours will be tortured all at once! Why, if you have a headache now, you will run to your physician; but what will you do when your head, and heart, and hands, and feet ache all at once? If you have but a pain in your body, you will search out medicines to heal you; but what will you do when gout, rheum, vertigo, and all else that is vile, attack your body at once? How will you bear yourself when you shall be loathsome with every kind of disease, leprous, palsied, black, rotten, your bones aching, your marrow quivering, every limb you have filled with pain? When your body is a temple of demons, and a channel of miseries? And will you march blindly on? As the ox goes to the slaughter, and the sheep licks the butcher's knife, so is it with many of you! Sirs,

you are living without Christ, many of you; you are self-righteous and ungodly! One of you is going out this afternoon to take his day's pleasure; another is a fornicator in secret; another can cheat his neighbor; another can now and then curse God; another comes to this chapel, but in secret he is a drunk; another prates about godliness, and God knows he is a wretched hypocrite! What will you do in that day when you stand before your Maker? It is a little thing to have your minister upbraid you now; it is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment—what will you do when God shall thunder out not your accusation, but your condemnation, "Depart you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Ah, you sensual ones, I knew I could never move you while I spoke about torments for your souls. Do I move you now? Ah no! Many of you will go away and laugh, and call me, as I remember once being called before, "a hell-fire parson." Well, go; but you will see the hell-fire preacher one day in heaven, perhaps, and you yourselves will be cast out; and looking down then with reproving glance, it may be I shall remind you that you heard the word, and listened not to it. Ah, men, women, it is a light thing to hear it, but it will be hard enough to bear it! You listen unmoved to me now; it will be harder work when death gets hold of you, and you lie roasting in the fire! Now you despise Christ; you will not despise Him then! Now you can waste your Sabbaths; then you would give a thousand worlds for a Sabbath if you could but have it in hell! Now you can scoff and jeer; there will be no scoffing or jeering, then—you will be shrieking, howling, wailing for mercy; but—

***"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."***

O my hearers! The wrath to come! The wrath to come! The wrath to come! Who among you can dwell with devouring fire? Who among you can dwell with everlasting burnings? Can you, sir? Can you, woman? Can you abide the flames forever? "Oh, no," you say, "what can I do to be saved?" Hear you what Christ has to say—"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." "Come, now, 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."

## **EXPOSITION**

### **1 Corinthians 15.**

THERE were people in the apostles' days who had an idea that there was no resurrection. Paul endeavors to refute the idea, and teaches the Corinthians that there was a resurrection from the dead. From the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> verse he proves the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and upon that grounds the doctrine of the resurrection of the just.

*“Moreover, Brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you 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.”* Now, we expect to hear a whole list of doctrines when the apostle says, “I declare unto you the gospel.” But instead of that, he simply tells us of the resurrection of Jesus, for that is the very marrow of the gospel, the foundation of it—that Jesus Christ died and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.

*“For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”* That is the whole of the gospel! He who perfectly understands that, understands the first principles; he has begun aright. This is the starting point if we wish to learn the truth of God, “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

*“And that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that He was seen of about 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 apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.”* The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is one of the best attested facts on record. There were so many witnesses to behold it, that if we do in the least degree, receive the credibility of men's testimonies, we cannot, and we dare not doubt that Jesus rose from the dead! It is all very easy for infidels to say that these persons were deceived; but it is equally foolish, for these persons could not every one of them, have been so positively deceived as to say that they had seen this man whom they knew to have been dead, afterwards alive! They could not all, surely, have agreed together to help on this lie—if they did, it is the most amazing thing we have on record—that not one of them ever broke faith with the others, but that the whole mass of them remained firm! We believe it to be quite impossible that so many rogues could have agreed forever. They were men who had nothing to gain by it; they subjected themselves to persecution by affirming the very fact; they were ready to die for it, and did die for it! Five hundred or a thousand persons who had seen Him at different times declared that they did see

Him, and that He rose from the dead. The fact of His death having been attested beforehand; how then dare any man say that the Christian religion is not true, when we know for a certainty that Christ died, and rose again from the dead? And knowing that, who shall deny the divinity of the Savior? Who shall say that He is not mighty to save? Our faith has a solid basis, for it has all these witnesses on which to rest, and the more sure witness of the Holy Spirit witnessing in our hearts! “And last of all,” says the apostle, “He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time—for I am the least of the apostles.” We would not have thought Paul proud if he had said, “I am the greatest of the apostles,” for his writings occupy the largest portion of the sacred Scriptures, and he preached more abundantly than they all. There was not one who could exceed Paul, or even come near him in his arduous labors! Yet he says,

*“For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.”* When he looked upon the mercies that God gave to him, he always remembered how little he deserved, and when he found himself preaching—oh, with what quality did he preach to the ungodly, for he could always close up—“But I obtained mercy, that in me first, Christ might show forth all long-suffering as a pattern to them who believe.” Have I a persecutor here? Let him know that his sin is a most damnable sin that will sink him lower into hell than any other; but even for him there is mercy and abundant pardon, for Paul says he obtained mercy even though he persecuted the Church of God.

*“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. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so you believed.”* “But by the grace of God I am what I am.” That is about as far as most of us can get; we shall never get any further. “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.” Then he stops himself—“Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” We should always take care that we do not take any of our good works to ourselves—they are the effects of *grace* within us! If we once get to putting the crown on our own heads, we shall soon have heavy heads for our trouble; but if we put them all on the head of Jesus, He will honor us if we honor Him!

Having thus proved the resurrection of Christ, he goes on—

*“Now if Christ is preached that He rose from the dead, how many among you can say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen! And if Christ is not*

*risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ to whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 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.*" Perhaps it does not strike you at first sight, that there is an indissoluble connection between the resurrection of Christ, and that of all His people. Perhaps you do not see the marrow of the argument. The apostle says, "If the dead do not rise, then Christ did not rise; and if Christ did rise, then all the dead will rise." Do you see how it is? Why, because Christ and human nature are now so linked together that what Christ did, He did as the representative of all His people! When Adam sinned, the world sinned, and the world died. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." Christ could not rise except as the representative of His people. And "if Christ rose," says Paul, "then His people will rise. And if He did not rise, then we shall not rise, because we are one with Him. And if we do not rise, Christ did not rise, because we are one with Him." See here a connection which cannot be broken—that if Christ rose, then must the dead rise also. This brings another argument.

*"Then they, also, which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."* How do you like that thought?

*"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."* For they were then persecuted, cast to the wild beasts, shut up in prison; and if this life were all, what would be the value of the Christian religion? It would only make men miserable!

*"But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."* It is no use for the Arminian to strain this, and say that it proves that *everyone* receives grace through Christ. It says no such thing! It simply says, "die" and "live." Everybody shall live at the resurrection!

*"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."* Here the great proof flashes out—if death is to be destroyed, then there must be a resurrection, for death cannot be destroyed until the very bones of the saints are delivered from the strongholds of the enemy!

*“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 excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all-in-all.”* We are not to suppose, when we read that Jesus Christ will deliver up His kingdom to God, even to His Father, that He will therefore cease to be God or cease to be a King! Understand this, God the Father gave to the Son a Mediatorial Kingdom as Man-God; but the Father was just as much God when He had given Him that kingdom; it was His own special kingdom which He, as the Man-God Mediator, was to take and God the Father lost no glory by giving it to Him. When Christ shall have worked out all His Mediatorial purposes, when He shall have finished the salvation of all His elect, He will lay the crown of His Mediatorial Kingdom at the feet of God, and as the Man-Mediator, He too will be subject unto the great Jehovah, the Three-in-One; then there will be no Mediator any longer, since there will be no necessity for any mediation, but we shall all be gathered in one, even the things that are on earth, and the things that are in heaven—one in Christ Jesus! Then Christ will have His kingdom as God, but as Mediator He will have no kingdom. It is a destruction of *office*, not of person, nor yet of honor; it is a laying aside of His official capacity, not in any degree a diminution of His glory and honor.

*“Else 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 text has had 30 or 40 explanations. Doddridge and a great many more think it refers to the practice, when a martyr died, for another person to come forward and fill the offices which he held, and so to be “baptized for the dead.” But the meaning I like best is: What shall they do who are baptized with the certainty that they are not baptized to live a long while, but that immediately after baptism, they will be dragged away to die—baptized in the very teeth of death? For as soon as anyone was baptized, the Romans would be looking for him or her, to drag them away to death. Thus they were many of them baptized as if they were being washed for their burial, and dedicating themselves to the grave. They came forward and said, “O Lord, I give myself unto Your service—not to serve You here below, for that the enemy will not let me do, but since I must die, I will be baptized and brave it all; I will be baptized even for death itself.” Well, what shall these do who are baptized in the certain prospect of death if the dead rise not? “Why are they then baptized for the dead?”

*“And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of*

*men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantages it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.*" It does not say that Paul did fight with beasts at Ephesus; but a great many others did. It was a common practice to put Christians to the lions, giving them a short sword, and bidding them fight for their lives. And sometimes, strengthened by God, they fought manfully, and came out alive. But "if," says Paul, "I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantages it me, if the dead rise not?" I might as well give up my religion; then I could lie down and be at peace. "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Oh, wicked Paul! To quote from a heathen poet! How disgraceful! If I were to repeat a verse, and it looked as if Shakespeare or any profane author ever wrote such a thing, you would say, "how criminal!" But I like good things wherever I find them. I have often quoted from the devil, and I dare say I shall often quote from his people! Paul quoted this from Meander, and another heathen poet who wrote far worse things than have been written by modern poets! If any of us who may have stored our minds with the contents of books we wish we had never read—and if there were some choice gems in them which may be used for the service of God—by His help we will so use them!

*"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness and sin not. For some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame."* You can read what follows at home. It is so beautiful, like one great rolling poem, with more music in it than Milton's "Paradise Lost." We will conclude by reading the last few verses.

*"Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."* Christ is coming, and He will find some alive on the earth, and those who are alive will not die. Paul was so full of the Second Coming, that he says—"We shall not all sleep." He did not know but what Christ might come while he was writing the letter! And we are so earnestly looking for Christ, that we too are compelled to say, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

*"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory. 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 to God which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* What a shame it is, when we sometimes attend a funeral

and hear that magnificent portion of Scripture read over by a chaplain without heart, or soul, or life—the quicker he can get through the service, the better. Oh that such noble words should be so awfully spoiled by men who know nothing about them!

*“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”*

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# A SOLEMN WARNING FOR ALL CHURCHES NO. 68

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 24, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“You have a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments.  
And they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.”  
Revelation 3:4.***

MY learned and eminently pious predecessor, Dr. Gill, is of opinion that the different churches spoken of in the Book of Revelation are types of different states through which the church of God shall pass until it comes into the Philadelphian state, the state of love, in which Jesus Christ shall reign in its midst. And afterwards, as he thinks, the church shall pass into the state of Laodicea, in which condition it shall be when suddenly the Son of Man shall come to judge the world in righteousness and the people in equity. I do not go along with him in all his suppositions with regard to these seven churches as following each other in seven periods of time. But I do think he was correct when he declared that the church in Sardis was a most fitting emblem of the church in his days, as also in these. The good old doctor says, “When shall we find any period in which the church was more like the state of Sardis as described here, than it is now?” And he points out the different particulars in which the church of his day (and I am sure it is yet more true of the church at the present day) was exactly like the church in Sardis. I shall use the church in Sardis as a figure of what I conceive to be the sad condition of Christendom at the present moment. My first point will be general defilement—there were but “a few names” in Sardis who had not “defiled their garments.” Secondly, special preservation—there were a few who had not defiled their garments, and thirdly, a peculiar reward—“And they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.”

**I. GENERAL DEFILEMENT.** The holy apostle, John, said of the church in Sardis, “These things says He that has the Seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars. I know your works that you have a name that you live and are dead. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die. For I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard and hold fast and repent. If, therefore, you shall not watch, I will come on you as a thief and you shall not know what hour I will come upon you. You have a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments.”

The first charge of general defilement He brings against the church in Sardis was that they had a vast deal of open profession but little of sincere religion. "I know your works that you have a name that you live and are dead." That is the crying sin of the present age. I am not inclined to be morbid in my temperament, or to take a melancholy view of the church of God. I would wish at all times to exhibit a liberality of spirit and to speak as well as I can of the church at large. But God forbid that any minister should shrink from declaring what he believes to be the truth! In going up and down this land, I am obliged to come to this conclusion—that throughout the churches there are multitudes who have "a name to live and are dead." Religion has become fashionable. The shopkeeper could scarcely succeed in a respectable business if he were not united with a church. It is reckoned to be reputable and honorable to attend a place of worship and hence men are made religious in shoals. And especially now that Parliament, itself, does, in some measure, sanction religion, we may expect that hypocrisy will abound yet more and more—and formality everywhere to take the place of true religion! You can scarcely meet with a man who does not call himself a Christian, and yet it is equally difficult to meet with one who is—in the very marrow of his bones—thoroughly sanctified to the good work of the kingdom of heaven. We meet with professors by hundreds! But we must still expect to meet with *possessors* by units. The whole nation appears to have been Christianized in an hour! But is this real? Is this sincere? Ah, we fear not. How is it that professors can live like other men? How is it that there is so little distinction between the church and the world? Or, that if there is any difference, you are frequently safer in dealing with an ungodly man than with one who is professedly righteous? How is it that men who make high professions can live in worldly conformity, indulge in the same pleasures, live in the same style, act from the same motives, deal in the same manner as other people do? Are not these days when the sons of God have made affinity with the sons of men? And may we not fear that something terrible may yet occur unless God shall send a voice which shall say, "Come out of them, My people, lest you be partakers of their plagues"? Take our churches at large—there is no lack of names, but there is a lack of life! Otherwise, how is it that our prayer meetings are so badly attended? Where is the zeal or the energy shown by the apostles? Where is the Spirit of the living God? Is He not departed? Might not, "Ichabod," be written on the walls of many a sanctuary? They have a name to live, but are dead. They have their societies, their organisms, but where is the life of godliness? Where is inward piety? Where is sincere religion? Where is practical godliness? Where is firm, decisive, puritanical piety? Thank God there are a few names even in Sardis which

have not defiled their garments, but charity, itself, will not allow us to say that the church generally possesses the Spirit of God!

Then the next charge was that there was *a lack of zeal* throughout the church of Sardis. He says, "Be watchful." He looked on the church and saw the bishops slumbering, the elders slumbering and the people slumbering. They were not, as once they were, watchful for the faith, striving together and earnestly contending for it, not wrestling against the enemy of souls, not laboring to spread their Master's kingdom. The apostle saw sleepiness, coldness, lethargy—therefore he said, "Be watchful." Oh, John, if from your grave you could start up and see the church as you did at Sardis, having your eyes anointed by the Spirit, you would say it is even so now! Ah, we have abundance of cold, calculating Christians—multitudes of professors—but where are the zealous ones? Where are the leaders of the children of God? Where are your heroes who stand in the day of battle? Where are your men who "count not their lives dear unto them," that they might win Christ and be found in Him? Where are those who have an impassioned love for souls? How many of our pulpits are filled by earnest, enthusiastic preachers? Alas, look, at the church—she has built herself fine palaces, imitating popery! She has girded herself with vestments. She has gone astray from her simplicity. She has lost the fire and the life which she once had. We go into our chapels, now, and we see everything in good taste—we hear the organ play. The psalmody is in keeping with the most correct ear, the gown and the noble vestments are there and everything is grand and goodly and we think that God is honored! Oh for the days when Whitefields would preach on tubs, once more, when their pulpits would be on Kennington Common and their roofs the ceiling of God's sky! Oh for the time when we might preach in barns, again, or even in catacombs, if we might but have the life of God that once they had in such places! What is the use of garnishing the shell when you have lost the kernel? Go and whitewash the outside of your father's tomb, but know it is a tomb of whitewash, for the life is gone. Garnish the outside of your cups and platters. But you have lost the pure Word of God! You have it not, now, preached to you in simple, earnest, pleading tones. But men enter the ministry for a piece of bread! They flinch to speak the whole truth of God, or if they seem to speak it, it is with cold meaningless passionless words, as if it were nothing whether souls were damned or saved, whether heaven were filled or heaven depopulated, or whether Christ should see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied! Do I speak fierce things? I can say as Irving once did—I might deserve to be broken on the wheel if I did not believe what I say to be the truth! For the utterance of such things I might deserve the stake! But God is my witness I have endeavored to judge and to speak impartially!

With all that universal cant of charity, now so prevalent, I am at arm's length, I care not for it! Let us speak of things as we find them! We believe that the church has lost her zeal and her energy. But what do men say of us? "Oh, you are too excited." Good God! Excited? When men are being damned? *Excited?* When we have the mission of heaven to preach to dying souls? *Excited?* *Preaching too much* when souls are lost? Why should it come to pass that one man should be perpetually laboring all the week, while others are lolling upon their couches and preach only upon the Sabbath? Can I bear to see the laziness, the slothfulness, the indifference of ministers and of churches without speaking? No! There must be a protest entered and we enter it now! Oh, church of God, you have a name to live and are dead! You are not watchful. Awake! Awake! Arise from the dead and Christ shall give you light!

The third charge which John brought against Sardis was that they *did not "look to things that remained and were ready to die."* I take it that this may relate to the poor feeble saints, the true children of God, who were sorrowing, mourning and groaning in their midst. They were so oppressed with sorrow on account of the state of Sardis, that they were, "ready to die." And what does the church do now? Do the shepherds go after those that are wounded and sick and those that are weary? Do they carry the lambs in their bosom and gently lead those who are with young? Do they see to poor distressed consciences and speak to those who feel their deadness in trespasses and sins? Yes, but how do they speak? They tell them to do things they cannot do—to perform impossible duties—instead of "strengthening the things that remain and are ready to die." In how much contempt are the truly newborn children of God held in these times! They are called peculiar men, taunted as Antinomians, hissed at as being oddities, high doctrine men who have departed from the usual mode of pulling down God's Word to men's fancies! They are called bigots, narrow-minded souls and their creed is set down as dry, hard, rough, severe Calvinism! God's gospel called hard, rough and severe? The things for which our fathers died are now called infamous things! Mark whether, if you stand out prominently in the truth of God, you will not be abhorred and taunted! If you go into a village and hear of poor people who are said to be doing a deal of mischief, are they not the people who understand most of the gospel? Go and ask the minister who are the persons who he most dislikes and he will say, "We have a nasty lot of Antinomians here." What does he mean by that? Men who love the truth of God, the whole truth of God and nothing but the truth of God—and will have it—and are, therefore, called a nasty set of Antinomians. Ah, we have lost what once we had! We do not, now, "strengthen the things that remain and are ready to die." They are not looked after as they ought to be. They are not beloved, not fostered. The salt of the

earth are now the offscouring of all things! Men whom God has loved and who have attained a high standing in godliness—these are the men who will not bow the knee to Baal and who, therefore, are cast into “the fiery furnace of persecution and slander.” O Sardis! Sardis! I see you now. You have defiled your garments! Thank God there are a few who have not followed the multitude to do evil and who shall “walk in white for they are worthy.”

Another charge which God has brought against the church is that *they were careless about the things that they heard*. He says, “Remember, therefore, how you have received and heard and hold fast. And repent.” If I am wrong upon other points, I am positive that the sin of this age is impurity of doctrine and laxity of faith. Now you know you are told every Sunday that it does not matter what you believe—that all sects and denominations will be saved—that doctrines are unimportant things. You are told that as to the doctrines of God’s grace, they are rather dangerous than otherwise and the less you inquire about them the better. They are very good things for the priests but you common people cannot understand them! Thus they keep back a portion of the gospel with cautious reserve. But having studied in the devil’s new Jesuitical college, they understand how to call themselves particular Baptists, and then preach general doctrines, to call themselves Calvinists! And they preach Arminianism—telling the people that it does not matter whether they preach damnable heresies of the truth of God. And what do the congregations say? “Well, he is a wise man and ought to know.” So you are going back into as bad a priestcraft as ever! Presbyter has become, PRIEST, written large—and minister, has become, PRIEST, in many a place because persons do not search for themselves and endeavor to get hold of the truth of God. It is everywhere proclaimed that we are all right. That though one says God loved His people from before the foundation of the world and the other that He did not—though one says that God is changeable and turns away from His people and the other that He will hold them fast to the end—though the one says that the blood of Christ avails for all for whom it was shed and the other that it is inefficacious for a large number of those for whom He died! Though one says that the works of the Law are, in some measure, necessary, or at any rate that we must endeavor to improve what we have and then we shall get more—and the other says, that, “by grace we are saved through faith and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God”—yet both are right! A new age, this, when lies and truth can kiss each other! New times, these, when fire and water can become friendly! Glorious times, these, when there is an alliance between hell and heaven! Lies and errors are linked hand in hand—“we are all Brethren,” is the cry now, though God knows we are of vastly different families! Ah, now, who cares for the truth of God except a few narrow-

minded bigots as they are called? Election—*horrible!* Predestination—*awful!* Final perseverance—*desperate!* Yet, turn to the pages of the Puritans and you will see that these truths of God were preached every day! Turn to the Fathers. Read Augustine, and you will see that these were the truths for which he would have bled and died! Read the Scriptures and if every page is not full of them, I have not read them aright, or any child of God either! Yes, laxity of doctrine is the great fault now. We solemnly protest against it! You may fancy that I am raising an outcry about nothing at all. Ah, no! My anxious spirit sees the next generation—what will that be? *This* generation—Arminianism. What next? Palagianism? And what next? Popery? And what next? I leave you to guess. The path of error is always downward! We have taken one step in the wrong direction. Only God knows where we shall stop! If there had not been sturdy men in ages gone by, the Lord would not have left to us a remnant even now. All grace would have died and we had become like Sodom and Gomorrah! Oh, church of the living God, awake! Awake! Once more write, truth, upon your banner! Stamp *truth* upon your sword! And for God and for His Word, charge home! You knights of truth, charge home! Spare not, but slay. Let error die before you until the truth of God and the truth of God, alone, shall sit king over the whole world!

But now I have lifted up the whip, I must have another lash. Look on any section of the church you like to mention, not excepting that to which I belong. And let me ask you whether they have not defiled their garments. Look at the Church of England. Her articles are pure and right in most respects. Yet see how her garments are defiled—he has made the Queen, her Head, instead of God! She bows before the state and worships the golden calf that is set up before her. Look at her abominations, her pluralities, her easy-living bishops doing nothing! Look at her ungodly clergymen in the country, living in sin! The churchman who does not know that his church has defiled her garments is partial to his mother, as indeed he ought to be, but he is too partial to speak the truth! But good churchmen, themselves, weep because what I say is true! Then look at John Wesley's body. Have not they defiled their garments? See how they have lately been contending with a despotism as accursed as any that ever brooded over the slaves in America! See how they have been torn in two and how imperfect in doctrine they are, too, after all, professedly at least, not holding the truth of God! Look into what denomination you please, Independent, or Baptist, or any other—have they not all defiled their garments in some way or other? Look at the churches around and see how they have defiled their garments by giving baptism to those for whom it was never intended and degrading a holy church ordinance to become a mere sop with which they feed their babies! And see how they have taken away Christ's honor, how they have taken the bread that

was meant for the children and cast it to ungodly persons. Look at our own denomination—see how it has deserted the leading truths of the gospel. For a proof hereof, I refer you to hundreds of our pulpits. Oh church of God! I am but a voice crying in the wilderness, but I must still cry, “How are you fallen from heaven, you son of the morning! How are you fallen!” “Remember how you have received and heard and hold fast and repent.” If you do not watch, your Master will come upon you as a thief and you shall not know in what hour He will come unto you.

**II.** But now we come to far easier work. Not because we would shun what we conceive to be our duty, even at the expense of offending many now present, but because we always delight to speak well if we can. “You have a few names even in Sardis that have not defiled their garments.” Here we have SPECIAL PRESERVATION. Mark—“You have a few names.” Only a few; not as few as some think, but not as many as others imagine! A few compared with the mass of professors. A few compared, even, with the true children of God, for many of them have defiled their garments. They were but a few and those few were even in Sardis! There is not a church on earth that is so corrupt but has “a few.” You who are always fighting so much for your denomination, you think other denominations are Sardis—but there are a few even in Sardis. Even if the denomination is the worst of all Protestant sections, there are a few in Sardis. And perhaps that is as much as we can say of *our* denomination—so we will treat them all alike. There are a few in Sardis—mark that. Not in what you conceive to be Philadelphia, your own blessed church, but in Sardis—there are a few there. Where there is heresy and false doctrine, where there are many mistakes about rites and ceremonies, there are a few there. And even where they cringe before the state, there are a few there—yes and a goodly few, too, a few whom we love, with whom we can hold communion! This makes us severe against the whole body, but it makes us very loving towards all the dear people of God everywhere. There are a few even in Sardis! Well, when I meet a brother who lives in Sardis, I will hope he is one of the few. And when you meet such, do you say, “Ah, well, I know my brother comes out of a bad church, but there are a few in Sardis and very likely he is one of them”? That is the kind of charity God loves. Not the universal charity which says Sardis is all right—but that which says some in her are sincere. We stand this morning like old Elijah, when he stood before God and said, “I, only I, am left and they seek my life.” But God whispers, “I have yet reserved unto Myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” Take heart, Christian, there are a few in Sardis—do not forget that—who have not defiled their garments! Take heart. It is not yet all rotten! There is soundness in the eye after all. There is “a remnant according to the election of grace.” There is “a salt” and for the sake of that salt, many who

have defiled their garments in a measure will be saved. They will enter into heaven even as these few will! And unto the few there will be special honor and special blessing. Take heart, then.

And whenever you go to your chamber and mourn over the sad condition of the church, think of those good old women in their closets groaning and crying! Think of those ministers faithfully dispensing the Word! Think of those valiant deacons standing up for God's truth! Think of those young men and women strong in the midst of temptation! Think of these few in Sardis and they will cheer you! Do not be quite downcast. Some heroes have not turned their backs in the day of battle! Some mighty men still fight for the truth. Be encouraged. There are a few in Sardis. But be careful, for perhaps *you* are not one of the few! Since there are but a few, there ought to be great searching of heart. Let us look to our garments and see whether they are defiled. If they are not, we shall walk in white, for we are worthy through Jesus. Be active. Be prayerful. The fewer the workmen to do the work, the greater reason is there that you should be active. Be instant in season and out of season because there are so few. Oh, if we had hundreds behind us, we might say, "Let them do the work." But if we stand with only a few, how should each of those few rush here and there! A city is besieged—it is full of inhabitants—half of them are asleep! The others watch the walls and thus they relieve each other. Another city has but a few defenders—see how that champion rushes first to that breach and routs the enemy. Now he brings his might to another place. A bastion is assaulted and he is there. Now a rear gate is attacked—there he is with all his force behind him! He is here, he is there, he is everywhere because he feels there is but a handful of men who can gather round him. Take courage, take heart! Stir yourselves up to the sternest activity for verily there are but a few in Sardis who have not defiled their garments! Above all, be prayerful! Put up your earnest cries to God that He would multiply the faithful, that He would increase the number of chosen ones who stand fast! That He would purify the church with fire in a furnace seven times heated, so that He might bring out her third part through the fire! Cry unto God that the day may come when the much fine gold shall be no longer dim, when the glory shall again return unto Zion! Beg of God to remove the cloud, to take away "the darkness that may be felt." Be doubly prayerful, for there are but a few in Sardis who have not defiled their garments!

**III.** This brings us to the third point, which is a PECULIAR REWARD. "They shall walk in white, for they are worthy." The attentive reader will observe that in quoting the passage, just now, I left out two of the sweetest words in the passage. It reads—"They shall walk *with Me* in white, for they are worthy." That is the very pith of the honor! If the rest of it is gold, this is the jewel. "They shall walk *with Me* in white." That is to say,

communion with Christ on earth shall be the special reward of those who have not defiled their garments! Now, I must say a very hard thing again but it is a true one. Go into what company you please, do you meet with many men who hold communion with Christ? Though they may be godly men, upright men, ask them if they hold communion with Christ and will they understand you? If you give them some of those sweetly spiritual books that those who hold fellowship love to read, they will say they are mystical and they do not love them. Ask them whether they can spend an hour in meditation upon Christ, whether they ever rise to heaven and lay their head on the breast of the Savior, whether they ever know what it is to enter into rest and get into Canaan. Whether they understand how He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus—whether they can often say—

**“Abundant sweetness while I sing  
Your love, my ravished heart overflows!  
Secure in You my God and King  
Of glory that no period knows”?**

Ask them that and they will say, “We don’t understand you.” Now the reason for it, is in the first part of my sermon—they have defiled their garments and, therefore, Christ will not walk with them. He says, “Those who have *not* defiled their garments shall walk *with Me*.” Those who hold fast the truth, who take care to be free from the prevailing sins of the times, “these,” He says, “shall walk *with Me*.” They shall be in constant fellowship *with Me*. I will let them see that I am bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh—I will bring them into the banqueting house. My banner over them shall be love. They shall drink wine on the lees well refined. They shall have the secrets of the Lord revealed unto them because they are the people who truly fear Me—“they shall walk *with Me* in white.” Oh, Christian, if you would have communion with Christ, the special way to win it is by not defiling your garments as the church has done!

But we must dwell on the rest of the passage. “They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.” A good old author says there is a reference, here, to that fact that the rabbis allowed persons to walk in white who could trace their pedigree without a flaw. But if they found any blot on their escutcheon and could not trace their birth up to Abraham, they were not allowed to walk in white on certain days. Well, he says he thinks the passage means that those who have not defiled their garments will be able to prove their *adoption* and will walk in white garments as being sure that they are the sons of God. If we could be certain that we are the people of God, we must take care that we have no blots on our garments, for each one of those splatterings of the mire of this earth will cry out and say, “Perhaps you are *not* a child of God!” Nothing is such a

father of doubts as *sin*. Sin is the very mother of our distress. He who is covered with sin must not expect to enjoy full assurance, but he who lives close to his God and keeps his garments unspotted from the world—he shall walk in white, knowing that his adoption is sure!

But chiefly we should understand this to refer to justification. “They shall walk in white.” That is, they shall enjoy a constant sense of their own justification by faith. They shall understand that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them, that they have—

**“A matchless robe which far exceeds  
What earthly princes wear”—**

that they have been washed and made whiter than snow and purified and made more clean than wool!

Again—it refers to *joy and gladness*—for white robes were holiday dresses among the Jews. They who have not defiled their garments shall have their faces always bright. They shall understand what Solomon meant when he said, “Go your way, eat your bread with joy and drink your wine with a merry heart. Let your garments be always white, for God has accepted your works.” He who is accepted of God shall wear white garments, being received by the Father—garments of joy and gladness! Why so many doubts, so much distress and misery and mourning? It is because the church has defiled her garments! They do not, here below walk, in white because they are not worthy!

And lastly it refers to *walking in white before the throne of God*. Those who have not defiled their garments, here, shall most certainly walk in white up yonder, where the white-robed hosts sing perpetual hallelujahs to the Most high! If you have not defiled your garments, you may say, “I know whom I have believed,” and you may cry, “when this earthly house of my tabernacle is dissolved, I know I have a mansion of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Not for my works, not by way of merit but as the reward of divine grace! If there are joys inconceivable, happiness beyond a dream, bliss which imagination knows not, blessedness which even the stretch of desire has not reached—you shall have all these—you shall walk in white, since you are worthy! Christ shall say to you, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter you into the joy of your Lord.”

But what shall be done with such persons as live in the church, but are not of it?—“Having a name to live, but are dead.” What shall be done with mere professors who are not possessors? What shall become of those who are only outwardly religious, but inwardly are in the gall of bitterness? We answer, as good Calvin did once—“They shall walk in black, for they are unworthy.” They shall walk in black—the blackness of God’s destruction! They shall walk in black—the blackness of hopeless despair! They shall walk in black—the blackness of incomparable an-

guish! They shall walk in black—the blackness of damnation! They shall forever walk in black because they were found unworthy! O professors, search yourselves! O ministers, search yourselves! O you who make a profession of religion, put your hands within your hearts and search your souls! You live in the sight of a rein-trying God. Oh, try your own reins and search your own hearts. It is not a matter of half-importance for which I plead, but a matter of double importance! I beseech you examine and cross-examine your own souls and see whether you are in the path, for it will go ill with you if you shall find, at last, that you were in the church but not of it—that you made a profession of religion but it was only a cloak for your hypocrisy—if you should have entered into His courts below and be shut out of the courts above! Remember, the higher the pinnacle of profession, the direr your fall of destruction. Beggared kings, exiled princes, crownless emperors are always subjects of pity. Professor, what will you think of yourself when your robes are taken from you, when your crown of profession is taken from your head and you stand the hiss of even vile men, the scoff of blasphemers, the jeer of those who, whatever they were, were not hypocrites, as you are? They will cry to you, “Have you become like one of us? You professor, you high-flying man—have you become like one of us?” And you will hide your guilty heads in the dark pit of hell but all in vain, for you never will be able to avoid that hiss which shall always greet you! “What? *You?*” the drunkard, whom you told to drink no more, will say, “Have *you* become like one of us?” And the harlot whom you scorned and the young debauched man whom you warned, will stare you in the face and say, “What? You? You who talked of religion? A pretty fellow you were! Have you become one of us?”

Oh, I think I hear them saying in hell, “Here’s a parson! Come here! Here’s a deacon! Here’s a church member—here’s a man who has had the sacramental wine within his lips! Here’s a man who has had the baptismal water on his garments.” Ah, take care. There are but a few names in Sardis who shall walk in white. Be you of that few! May God give you grace that you be not reprobates but may be accepted of the Lord in that day! May He give you mercy that when He severs the chaff from the wheat, you may abide as the good corn and may not be swept away into unquenchable fire! The Lord in mercy bless His warning, and hear our supplication, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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# THE ALLEGORIES OF SARAH AND HAGAR

## NO. 69

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 2, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

*“These are the two covenants.”*  
*Galatians 4:24.*

THERE cannot be a greater difference in the world between two things than there is between law and grace. And yet, strange to say, while the things are diametrically opposed and essentially different from each other, the human mind is so depraved and the intellect, even when blessed by the Spirit, has become so turned aside from right judgment, that one of the most difficult things in the world is to discriminate properly between law and grace. He who knows the difference—and always remembers the essential difference between law and grace—has grasped the marrow of divinity. He is not far from understanding the gospel theme in all its ramifications, its outlets and its branches, who can properly tell the difference between law and grace! There is always in a science, some part which is very simple and easy when we have learned it, but which, in the commencement, stands like a high threshold before the porch. Now, the first difficulty in striving to learn the gospel is this—between law and grace there is a plain enough difference to every Christian and especially to every enlightened and instructed one. But still, when most enlightened and instructed, there is always a tendency in us to confuse the two things. They are as opposite as light and darkness and can no more agree than fire and water. Yet man will be perpetually striving to make a compound of them—often ignorantly and sometimes willfully. They seek to blend the two, when God has positively put them asunder!

We shall attempt, this morning, to teach you something of the allegories of Sarah and Hagar, so that you may, thereby, better understand the essential difference between the covenants of law and of grace. We shall not go fully into the subject, but shall only give such illustrations of it as the text may furnish us. First, I shall want you to notice *the two women* whom Paul uses as types—Hagar and Sarah. Then I shall notice *the two sons*—Ishmael and Isaac. In the third place, I shall notice *Ishmael’s conduct to Isaac*. And I shall conclude by noticing *the different fates of the two*.

**I.** First, we invite you to notice THE TWO WOMEN—Hagar and Sarah. It is said that they are the types of the two covenants. And before we start, we must not forget to tell you what the covenants are. The first

covenant for which Hagar stands is the covenant of works which is this—“There is My law, O man. If you on your side will engage to keep it, I, on My side will engage that you shall live by keeping it. If you will promise to obey My commands perfectly, wholly, fully, without a single flaw, I will carry you to heaven. But mark Me, if you violate one command, if you do rebel against a single ordinance, I will destroy you forever.” That is the Hagar covenant—the covenant propounded on Sinai, amidst tempests, fire and smoke—or rather, propounded, first of all, in the garden of Eden where God said to Adam, “In the day that you eat, thereof, you shall surely die. As long as he did not eat of the tree, but remained spotless and sinless, he was most assuredly to live. That is the covenant of the law—the Hagar covenant.

The Sarah covenant is the covenant of grace or the everlasting covenant, not made with God and man, but made with God and Christ Jesus, which covenant is this—“Christ Jesus, on His part, engages to bear the penalty of all His people’s sins, to die, to pay their debts, to take their iniquities upon His shoulders. And the Father promises on His part that all for whom the Son does die shall most assuredly be saved! That seeing they have evil hearts, He will put His law in their hearts, that they shall not depart from it and that seeing they have sins, He will pass thereby and not remember them any more forever.” The covenant of works was, “Do this and live, O man!” But the covenant of grace is, “Do this, O Christ and you shall live, O man!” The difference of the covenants rests here—the one was made with man, the other with Christ. The one was a conditional covenant, conditional on Adam’s standing—the other is a conditional covenant with Christ, but as perfectly unconditional with us! There are no conditions, whatever, in the covenant of grace, or if there are conditions, the covenant *gives* them. The covenant of grace *gives* faith, *gives* repentance, *gives* good works, *gives* salvation as a purely gratuitous unconditional act! Nor does our continuance in that covenant depend in the least degree on ourselves. The covenant was made by God with Christ, signed, sealed and ratified, in all things ordered well!

Now come and look at the allegory. First, I would have you notice that *Sarah, who is the type of the new covenant of grace, was the original wife of Abraham*. Before he knew anything about Hagar, Sarah was his wife. The covenant of grace was the original covenant after all. There are some bad theologians who teach that God made man upright and made a covenant with him; that man sinned and that as a kind of afterthought God made a new covenant with Christ for the salvation of His people. Now, that is a complete mistake! The covenant of grace was made before the covenant of works. For Christ Jesus, before the *foundation of the world*, did stand as its head and representative. And we are said to be elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. We, long before we fell, were loved of

God! He did not love us out of pity to us, but He loved His people, considered purely as creatures. He loved them when they became sinners—but when He started with them He considered them as creatures. He allowed them to fall into sin to show forth the riches of His grace, which existed *before* their sin. He did not love them and choose them from among the rest, after their fall, but He loved them beyond their sin and before their sin! He made the covenant of grace before we fell by the covenant of works. If you could go back to eternity and ask which is the older born, you would hear that grace was born before law—that it came into the world long before the law was promulgated. Older, even, than the fundamental principles which guide our morals is that great fundamental rock of grace, in covenant made of old, long before seers preached the law and long before Sinai smoked. Long before Adam stood in the garden, God had ordained His people to eternal life that they might be saved through Jesus Christ!

Notice next—*though Sarah was the elder wife, yet Hagar bore the first son*. So the first man, Adam, was the son of Hagar. Though he was born perfectly pure and spotless, he was not the son of Sarah when he was in the garden. Hagar had the first son. She bore Adam, who lived for a time under the covenant of works. Adam lived in the garden on this principle. Sins of commission were to be his fall. And if he omitted to do the sin, then he was to stand forever. Adam had it entirely in his own power whether he would obey God or not—his salvation, then, rested simply on this basis, “If you touch that fruit, you die. If you obey My command and do not touch it, you shall live.” And Adam, perfect as he was, was but an Ishmael and not an Isaac, till after his fall. *Apparently*, at any rate, he was a Hagarene, though *secretly*, in the covenant of grace, he may have been a child of promise. Blessed be God, we are not now under Hagar! We are not under the law since Adam fell. Now Sarah has brought forth children. The new covenant is, “The mother of us all.”

But notice again, *Hagar was not intended to be a wife. She never ought to have been anything but a handmaid to Sarah*. The law was never intended to save men—it was only designed to be a handmaid to the covenant of grace. When God delivered the law on Sinai, it was apart from His ideas that any man would ever be saved by it. He never conceived that man would attain perfection thereby. But you know that the law is a wondrous handmaid to grace. Who brought us to the Savior? Was it not the law thundering in our ears? We would never have come to Christ if the law had not driven us there! We would never have known sin if the law had not revealed it. The law is Sarah’s handmaid to sweep our hearts and make the dust fly so that we may cry for blood to be sprinkled, that the dust may be laid. The law is, so to speak, Jesus Christ’s dog, to go after His sheep and bring them to the shepherd. The law is the thunderbolt which frightens ungodly men and makes them turn from the error of

their ways and seek God! Ah, if we know rightly how to use the law, if we understand how to put her in her proper place and make her obedient to her mistress, then all will be well. But this Hagar will always be wishing to be mistress, as well as Sarah. And Sarah will never allow that, but will be sure to treat her harshly and drive her out. We must do the same! And let none murmur at us if we treat the Hagarene harshly in these days—if we sometimes speak hard things against those who are trusting in the works of the law. We will quote Sarah as an example. *She* treated Hagar harshly and so will we. We mean to make Hagar flee into the wilderness—we wish to have nothing to do with her. Yet it is very remarkable that as coarse and ill-featured as Hagar is, men have always a greater love for her than they have for Sarah—and they are prone to be continually crying, “Hagar, you shall be my mistress,” instead of saying, “No, Sarah, I will be your son and Hagar shall be bondmaid.” What is God’s law now? It is not *above* a Christian—it is *under* a Christian. Some men hold God’s law like a rod *in terror* over Christians and say, “If you sin, you will be punished with it.” It is not so! The law is *under* a Christian. It is for him to walk on, to be his guide, his rule, his pattern. “We are not under the law, but under grace.” law is the road which guides us, not the rod which drives us, nor the spirit which actuates us! The law is good and excellent if it keeps its place. Nobody finds fault with the handmaid, because she is not the wife—and no one shall despise Hagar because she is not Sarah. If she had but remembered her office, it had been all well and her mistress had never driven her out. We do not wish to drive the law out of chapels, as long as it is kept in its right position. But when it is set up as mistress—away with her—we will have nothing to do with legality!

Again—*Hagar never was a free woman and Sarah never was a slave.* So, beloved, the covenant of works never was free and none of her children ever were. all those who trust in works never are free and never can be even could they be perfect in good works. Even if they have no sin, still they are bond slaves, for when we have done all that we ought to have done, God is not our debtor, we are still debtors to Him and still remain as bond slaves. If I could keep all God’s law, I should have no right to favor, for I should have done no more than was my *duty* and still be a bond slave! The law is the most rigorous master in the world, no wise man would love its service. For after all you have done, the law never gives you a, “Thank you,” for it, but says, “Go on, sir, go on!” The poor sinner trying to be saved by law is like a blind horse going round and round a mill and never getting a step further, but only being continually whipped. The faster he goes, the more work he does and the more he is tired—so much the worse for him! The better legalist a man is, the more sure he is of being damned. The more holy a man is, if he trust to his works, the more he may rest assured of his own final rejection and eternal portion with Pharisees. Hagar was a slave—Ishmael, moral and good

as he was—was nothing but a slave and never could be more. Not all the works he ever rendered to his father could make him a free-born son! Sarah never was a slave. She might, sometimes, be taken prisoner by Pharaoh, but she was not a slave even then! Her husband might sometimes deny her, but she was still his wife—she was soon acknowledged by her husband and Pharaoh was soon obliged to send her back. So the covenant of grace might seem in jeopardy and the representative of it might cry, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me.” But it never was in real danger. And sometimes the people under the covenant of grace may seem to be captives and bond slaves. But they are still free. Oh, that we knew how to “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.”

One thought more. *Hagar was cast out, as well as her son. But Sarah never was.* So the covenant of works has ceased to be a covenant. Not only have the people been cast away who trusted in it—not simply was Ishmael cast out, but Ishmael’s mother, too! So the legalist may not only know himself to be damned, but the law as a covenant has ceased to be, for mother and son are both driven out by the gospel and those who trust in the law are sent away by God. You ask today who is Abraham’s wife? Why Sarah—does she not sleep side by side with her husband in the Machpelah’s cave at this instant? There she lies and if she lies there for a thousand years to come, she will still be Abraham’s wife, while Hagar never can be! Oh, how sweet to think that the covenant made of old was in all things ordered well and never, never shall be removed! “Although my house is not so with God yet He made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.” Ah, you legalists, I do not wonder that you teach the doctrine of falling away, because that is consistent with your theology! Of course Hagar has to be driven out, and Ishmael, too. But we who preach the covenant of free and full salvation know that Isaac never shall be driven out and that Sarah never shall cease to be the friend and wife of Abraham. You Hagarene! You ceremonialists! You hypocrites! You formalists! Of what use will it be, when at last you shall say, “Where is my mother? Where is my mother, the law?” Oh, she is driven out and you may go with her into eternal oblivion! But where is my mother? The Christian can say, at last, and it will be said, “There is the mother of the faithful, Jerusalem above, the mother of us all. And we shall enter in and dwell with our Father and our God.”

**II.** Now we are going to review the TWO SONS. While the two women were types of the two covenants, the two sons were types of those who live under each covenant. Isaac is a type of the man who walks by faith and not by sight, and who hopes to be saved by grace. Ishmael of the man who lives by works and hopes to be saved by his own good deeds. Let us look at these two.

First. *Ishmael is the elder*. So, beloved, the legalist is a great deal older than the Christian. If I were a legalist, today, I would be some 15 or 16 years older than I am as a Christian, for we are all born legalists. Speaking of Arminians, Whitefield said, "We are all born Arminians. It is grace that turns us into Calvinists! It is grace that makes Christians of us, grace that makes us free, and makes us know our standing in Christ Jesus." The legalist must be expected, then, to have more might of argument than Isaac. And when the two boys are wrestling, of course Isaac generally gets a fall, for Ishmael is the bigger fellow. And you must expect to hear Ishmael making the most noise, for he is to be a wild man, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him; whereas Isaac is a peaceful lad. He always stands up for his mother and when he is mocked, he can go and tell his mother that Ishmael mocked him but that is all that he can do—he has not much strength. So you notice now-a-days—the Ishmaelites are generally the stronger and they can give us desperate falls when we get into arguments with them. In fact, it is their boast and glory that the Isaacs have not much power of reasoning—not much logic. No, Isaac does not need it, for he is an heir according to promise—and promise and logic do not much consist together. His logic is his faith—his rhetoric is his earnestness. Never expect the gospel to be victorious when you are disputing after the manner of men—more usually look to be beaten. If you are discoursing with a legalist and he conquers you, say, "Ah, I expected that, it shows I am an Isaac, for Ishmael will be sure to give Isaac a thrashing and I am not at all sorry for it. Your father and mother were in the prime of life and were strong. And it was natural that you should overcome me, for my father and mother were quite old people."

But where was the *difference* between the two lads in their outward appearance? There was *no difference between them as to ordinances*, for both of them were circumcised. There was no distinction with regard to outward and visible signs. So, my dearly beloved, there is often no difference between Ishmael and Isaac—between the legalist and the Christian—in matters of outward ceremonies. The legalist takes the sacrament and is baptized. He would be afraid to die if he did not. And *I do not believe there was much difference as to character*. Ishmael was nearly as good and honorable a man as Isaac. There is nothing said against him in Scripture. Indeed, I am led to believe that he was an especially good lad, from the fact that when God gave a blessing, He said, "With Isaac shall the blessing be." Abraham said, "O that Ishmael might live before You." He cried to God for Ishmael because he loved the lad, doubtless, for his disposition! God said, I will give Ishmael such-and-such a blessing. He shall be the father of princes, he shall have temporal blessings. But God would not turn aside, even for Abraham's prayer. And when Sarah was rather fierce, as she must have been that day when she turned Hagar out

of the house, it is said, "It grieved Abraham because of his son." And I do not suspect that Abraham's attachment was a foolish one. There is one trait in Ishmael's character that you love very much. When Abraham died, he did not leave Ishmael a single stick or stone, for he had previously given him his portion and sent him away. Yet Ishmael came to his father's funeral, for it is said that his sons, Ishmael and Isaac, buried him in Machpelah. There seems, then, to have been but little difference in the characters of the two. So, dearly beloved, there is little difference between the legalist and the Christian as to the outward walk. They are both the visible sons of Abraham. It is not a distinction of life. For God allowed Ishmael to be as good as Isaac, in order to show that it was not the goodness of *man* that made any distinction, but that He "will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and whom He will, He hardens."

Then *what was the distinction?* Paul has told us that the first was born after the *flesh* and the second after the *Spirit*. The first was a natural son, the other a spiritual one. Ask the legalist, "You do good works. You have repented, you say—you are keeping the law and you have no need to repent. Now, where did you get your strength from?" Perhaps he says, "Grace." But if you ask him what he means, he says that he used it. He had grace, but he used it. Then the difference is, *you* used your grace and others did not. Yes. Well, then, it is your own *doing*. You may call it grace, or you may call it *mustard*. It was not grace, after all, for it was *your using*, you say, that made the difference! But ask poor Isaac how he has kept the law and what does he say? "Very badly, indeed." Are you a sinner, Isaac? "Oh, yes, an exceedingly great one. I have rebelled against my Father times without number. I have often gone astray from Him." Then you do not think yourself quite as good as Ishmael, do you? "No." But yet there is a difference between you and him after all. What has made the difference? "Why, grace has made me to differ." Why is not Ishmael an Isaac? Could Ishmael have been an Isaac? "No," says Isaac, "it was God who made me to differ, from the first to the last. He made me a child of promise before I was born and He must keep me so"—

**"Grace all the work shall crown  
Through everlasting days.  
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,  
And well deserves the praise."**

Isaac has more really good works. He does not stand second to Ishmael. When he is converted, he labors, if it is possible, to serve his Father far more than the legalist does his master. But still, doubtless, if you were to hear both their tales, you would hear Isaac say that he was a poor miserable sinner, while Ishmael would make himself out a very honorable Pharisaic gentleman! The difference is not in works, however, but in *motives*. Not in the life, but in the means of sustaining life—not in what they do, so much as in how they do it. Here, then, is the difference

between some of you. Not that you legalists are worse than Christians. You may be often better in your lives and yet you may be lost! Do you complain of that as unjust? Not in the least! God says men must be saved by *faith* and if you say, “No, I will be saved by works,” you may try it, but you will be lost forever! It is as if you had a servant and you should say, “John, go and do such-and-such a thing in the stable,” but he goes away and does the reverse and then says, “Sir, I have done it very nicely.” “Yes,” you say, “but that is not what I told you to do.” So God has not told you to work out your salvation by good works. But He has said, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure.” So when you come before God with your good works, He will say, “I never told you to do that. I said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized and you shall be saved.” “Ah,” you say, “I thought the other was a great deal better way.” Sir, you will be lost for your thoughts! “Why is it that the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, have attained unto righteousness,” when Israel, who followed after righteousness, has not attained it? It is this—“Because they sought it not by faith, but by the works of the law.”

**III.** Now I will briefly say a word or two concerning ISHMAEL’S CONDUCT TO ISAAC. It says that Ishmael mocked Isaac. Have not some of you, dear sons of Hagar, felt exceedingly irritated when you heard this doctrine? You have said, “It is dreadful! It is horrible! It is quite unjust, that I may be as good as I like, but if I am not a son of the promise, I cannot be saved! It is really awful! It is an immoral doctrine—it does a deal of damage and ought to be stopped.” Of course! That shows that you are an Ishmael. Of course Ishmael will mock at Isaac and we need no further explanation. Where the pure sovereignty of God is preached, where it is held that the child of the promise, and not the child of the flesh is the heir, the child of the flesh always makes a hubbub about it! What said Ishmael to Isaac? “What business have you here? Am I not my father’s eldest son? I would have had all the property, if it had not been for you. Are you above me?” That is how the legalist talks. “Is not God the father of everybody? Are we not all His children? He ought not to make any difference.” Said Ishmael—“Am not I as good as you? Do I not serve my father as well? As for you, you know you are your mother’s favorite, but my mother is as good as yours.” And so he teased and mocked Isaac. That is just how you Arminians do with free Salvation. The legalist says, “I don’t see it, I cannot have it and I won’t. If we are both equal in character, it cannot be fair that one should be lost and the other saved.” And thus he mocks free grace. You may get on very easily if you do not preach free grace too fully, but if you dare to speak such things that are obnoxious to the crowd, what will people say? They call them “baits for popularity.” (See the *so-called* FREEMAN Newspaper.) Few fishes howev-

er, bite at those baits! Most men say, "I hate him, I cannot stand him! He is so uncharitable." You say we preach this to gain popularity!? Why, it is, upon the surface of it, a bare-faced lie! For the doctrine of God's sovereignty will always be unpopular—men will always hate it and grind their teeth—just as they did when Jesus taught it! Many widows, He said, were in Israel, but to none of them was the Prophet sent, save unto a widow of Sarepta. And many lepers were in Israel, but none of them were healed, except one who came far away from Syria. A fine popularity our Savior got from that sermon! The people ground their teeth at Him and all the popularity He had would have been to be pushed down the hill, from which, it is said, they would have cast him headlong. But He made His way out of them and escaped. What? *Popular* to humble a man's pride, to abolish man's standing, and make him cringe before God as a poor sinner? No, it will never be popular till men are born angels and all men love the Lord—and that will not be just yet, I suppose.

#### IV. But we have to inquire WHAT BECAME OF THE TWO SONS?

First, *Isaac had all the inheritance and Ishmael none*. Not that Ishmael came off poorly, for he had many presents and became very rich and great in this world. But he had no *spiritual* inheritance. So the legalist will get many blessings, as a reward for his legality. He will be respected and honored. "Verily," said Christ, "the Pharisees have their reward." God does not rob any man of his reward. Whatever a man angles for, he catches. God pays men all He owes and a great deal more. And those who keep His law, even in this world, will receive great favors. By obeying God's command they will not injure their bodies as much as the vicious and they will better preserve their reputation—obedience does good in this world. But then Ishmael had none of the inheritance. So, you poor legalist, if you are depending on your works, or on anything, except the free sovereign grace of God for your deliverance from death, you will not have so much as a foot of the inheritance of Canaan! In that great day when God shall allot the portions of all the sons of Jacob, there will not be a scrap for you! But if you are a poor Isaac, a poor guilty trembling sinner—and if you say, "Ishmael has his hands full—

***But nothing in my hands I bring  
Simply to the cross I cling!***

If you are saying, this morning—

***"I am nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my all-in-all."***

If you renounce all the works of the flesh and do confess, "I am the chief of sinners, but I am the child of the promise and Jesus died for me," you shall have an inheritance and you shall not be robbed of it by all the mocking Ishmaels in the world! Nor shall it be diminished by the sons of Hagar. You may sometimes be sold and carried down to Egypt, but God will bring His Josephs and His Isaacs back and you shall yet be exalted

to glory and sit at Christ's right hand! Ah, I have often thought what consternation there will be in hell when outwardly good men go there. "Lord," says one as he goes in, "Am I to go into that loathsome dungeon? Did not I keep the Sabbath? Was not I a strict Sabbatarian? I never cursed or swore in all my life. Am I to go there? I paid tithes of all that I possessed and am I to be locked up there? I was baptized! I took the Lord's supper. I was everything that ever a man could be that was good. It is true, I did not believe in Christ. But I did not think I needed Christ, for I thought I was too good and too honorable! And am I to be locked up there?" Yes, sir! And among the damned you shall have this pre-eminence—that you did scorn Christ most of all! They never set up an anti-Christ. They followed sin and so did you, in your measure, but you did add to your sin this most damnable of sins—that you did set up yourself as an anti-Christ and bowed down and worshipped your own fancied goodness!

Then God will proceed to tell the legalist, "On such a day I heard you rail at My sovereignty. I heard you say it was unfair of Me to save My people and distribute My favors after the counsel of My own will. You did impugn your Creator's Justice, and justice you shall have in all its power." The man had thought he had a great balance on his side but he finds it is only some little grain of duty. But then God holds up the immense roll of his sins, with this at the bottom—"Without God, without hope, a stranger from the commonwealth of Israel!" The poor man then sees that his little treasure is not half a mite, while God's great bill is ten thousand million talents! And so with an awful howl and a desperate shriek, he runs away with all his little notes of merit that he had hoped would have saved him, crying, "I am lost! I am lost with all my good works! I find my good works were sands but my sins were mountains. And because I had not faith, all my righteousness was but white-washed hypocrisy."

Now, once more, *Ishmael was sent away and Isaac was kept in the house*. So there are some of you, when the searching day shall come to try God's church, though you have been living in the church as well as others, though you have got the mask of profession on you—you will find that it will not avail! You have been like the elder son—whenever a poor prodigal has come into the God's church, you have said, "As soon as your son is come which has devoured your living with harlots, you have killed for him the fatted calf." Ah, envious legalist, you will be banished, at last, from the house! I tell you legalist and formalist, that you have no more to do with Christ than the heathens have and though you have been baptized with Christian baptism, though you sit at a Christian table, though you hear a Christian sermon, you have neither part nor lot in the matter—any more than a Roman Catholic or a Muslim—unless you are trusting simply in the grace of God and are an heir according to the promise! Whoever trusts to his works, though it be ever so little, will find

that that little trust will ruin his soul! All that nature spins must be unraveled! That ship which works have built must have her keel cut in halves. A soul must trust simply and wholly to the covenant of God, or else that soul is lost! Legalist, you hope to be saved by works. Come, now, I will treat you respectfully. I will not charge you with having been a drunk, or a swearer. But I want to ask you, are you aware that in order to be saved by your works, it is requisite that you should be *entirely perfect*? God demands the keeping of the *whole law*. If you have a vessel with the smallest crack in it, it is not a whole one! Have you never committed sin in all your life? Have you never thought an evil thought? Never had an evil imagination? Come, sir, I would not suppose that you have stained those white kid gloves with anything like lust, or carnality, or that your fine mouth which uses such chaste language ever condescended to an oath, or anything like lasciviousness! I will not imagine that you have ever sung a lascivious song. I will leave that out of the question—but have you ever sinned? “Yes,” you say; then, mark this—“*the soul that sins, it shall die.*” And that is all I have to say to you. But if you will deny that you have ever sinned, do you know that if, in the future you commit but *one* sin—though you should live a perfect life for 70 years and at the end of that 70 years, you have committed but *one* sin, all your obedience would go for nothing, for “*He who offends in one point is guilty of all.*”

“Sir,” you say, “you are going on a wrong supposition, for though I believe I ought to do some good works, I believe Jesus Christ is very merciful and though I am not exactly perfect, I am sincere and I think *sincere* obedience will be accepted instead of *perfect* obedience.” You do, indeed! And pray tell, what is *sincere* obedience? I have known a man get drunk once a week. He was very sincere and he did not think he was doing wrong as long as he was sober on a Sunday. Many people have what they call a *sincere* obedience, but it is one which always leaves a little margin for iniquity. But then you say, “I do not take too much margin, it is only a little sin I allow.” My dear sir, you are quite in error as to your sincere obedience, for if this is what God requires, then hundreds of the vilest characters are as sincere as you are! But I do not believe you are sincere. If you were sincere, you would obey what God says—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” It strikes me your sincere obedience is a sincere delusion and such you will find it! “Oh,” you say, “I believe that after all we have done, we must go to Jesus Christ and we must say, ‘Lord, there is a great deficiency here, will You make it up?’” I have heard of weighing witches against the parish Bible and if they were found heavier, they were declared to be innocent. But to put the witch and the Bible in the same scale is a new idea! Why, Christ will not get in the scale with such a conceited fool as you are! You wish Christ to be a make-weight? He is much obliged to you for the compliment, but He will accept no such menial service! “Oh,” you say, “He shall *assist* me in the

matter of salvation.” Yes, I know that would please you. But Christ is a very different kind of Savior. He has a propensity, when He does a thing, to do it all. You may think it strange, but He never likes any assistance. When He made the world, He did not ask the angel Gabriel so much as to cool the molten matter with his wings— but He did it entirely Himself! So it is in salvation—He says, “My glory I will not give to another.”

And I beg to remind you, as you profess to go to Christ and have a little share in the business of salvation, yourself, that there is a passage in the Scriptures which is *appropriate to you* and which you may masticate at your leisure—“And if by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it is of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work.” For if you mix the two together, you spoil them both! Go home, sir and make yourself a mixture with fire and water! Endeavor to keep in your house a lion and a lamb—and when you have succeeded in doing these—tell me that you have made works and grace agree, and I will tell you, even then, you have told me a lie! For the two things are so essentially opposite, it cannot be done! Whoever among you will cast all his good works away and will come to Jesus, with this—“Nothing, *nothing*, NOTHING—

**‘Nothing in my hands I bring  
Simply to the cross I cling.’”**

Christ will give you good works enough! His Spirit will work in you to will and to do of His good pleasure and will make you holy and perfect. But if you have endeavored to get holiness before Christ, you have begun at the wrong end! You have sought the flower before you have the root, and are foolish for your pains! Ishmaels, tremble before Him now! If others of you are Isaacs, may you always remember that you are children of the promise. Stand fast. Be not entangled by the yoke of bondage, for you are not under the law, but under grace. Amen.

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# GOOD WORKS

## NO. 70

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 16, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

*“Zealous of good works.”  
Titus 2:14.*

WE shall not be afraid of leading any of you into a legal spirit this morning through what we shall say. After our frequent exhortations to avoid anything like trusting in your works, attended as they have been, we trust, by the Holy Spirit, we are not afraid that you will so misunderstand us as to suppose that when we speak of good works, today, we shall in any way whatever wish you to imagine that they can promote your eternal salvation! We labored when here the Sabbath morning before last, to let you know the difference between the two covenant, the covenant of grace and the covenant of works. [See Sermon #69, Volume 2—THE ALLEGORIES OF SARAH AND HAGAR—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at [www.spurgeongems.org](http://www.spurgeongems.org).] We shall beg you to remember what we then said, and if by any slips of the tongue we should say anything that should look like legality, we beg you will put the two together and wherein we shall err from the great truth of justification by faith, to reject our testimony!

“Zealous of good works”; there are some who hear us preach high doctrine and constantly declare that we are saved by grace through faith and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, who, therefore, suppose that we cannot preach good works. These also suppose that we could not preach a good sermon of exhortation to Christians to live in holiness. Well, we will not say that we can preach a good sermon at all! But we will say that we will try and preach one as to that matter that shall be as good as theirs and as much lead the children of God to live in holiness as any of their exhortations can do! For their sermons are grounded on trusting in the flesh and based on threats, regulations and promises—which they hope will induce God’s children, but which are well enough for slaves—though of little use in operating on the true-born believer! The children of God are a holy people—for this very purpose were they born and brought into the world—that they should be holy! For this they were redeemed with blood and made a peculiar people. God’s end in election, the end of all His purposes, is not answered until they become a people zealous of good works!

Now, this morning, we shall first of all tell you *the nature of good works*, for there are many things called “good works” that are not so at all. Secondly, we shall *trace good works to their origin*—and where good works came from. Thirdly, we shall attempt to show you *the use of good works*. And we shall close up by endeavoring to *prove that our doctrines, those of free, distinguishing, discriminating grace, have a tendency to make us who believe them, “zealous of good works.”*

**I.** First, then, we are about to answer the question, WHAT ARE GOOD WORKS? Now, I dare say we shall offend many here when we tell them what good works are. For in our opinion, good works are the rarest things in the world! And we believe we might walk for many a mile before we should see a good work at all. We use the word, *good*, in its proper sense. There are many works which are good enough between man and man, but we shall use the word, *good*, in a higher sense today as regards *God*. We think we shall be able to show you that there are very few good works anywhere and that there are none out of the pale of Christ’s Church! We think, if we read Scripture rightly, that no work can be good unless it is commanded of God. How this cuts off a large portion of what men will do in order to win salvation! The Pharisee said he tithed mint, anise and cummin—could he prove that God commanded him to tithe his mint, his anise, and his cummin? Perhaps not; he said he fasted so many times a week—could he prove that God told him to fast? If not, his fasting was not *obedience*. If I do a thing that I am not *commanded* to do, I do not *obey* in doing it. Vain, then, are all the pretences of men, that by mortifying their bodies, by denying their flesh, by doing this, that, or the other, they shall, therefore, win the favor of God! No work is good unless God has commanded it. A man may build a long row of almshouses—but if he builds without reference to the commandment—he has performed no good work.

Again—*nothing is a good work unless it is done with a good motive*. And there is no motive which can be said to be good but to the glory of God. He who performs good works with a view to save himself, does not do them from a good motive because his motive is selfish. He who does them, also, to gain the esteem of his fellows and for the good of society has a laudable motive, so far as *man* is concerned, but it is, after all, an inferior motive! What end had we in view? If for the benefit of our fellow creatures, then let our fellow creatures pay us. But that has nothing to do with God! work is not good unless a man does it with a view to God’s glory—and no man can do it with a view to that until God has taught him what His glory is and he has been brought into subjection to God’s divine will! If any work is to be a good work, it has to have an eye unto the Most High and has to promote His glory and honor in the world. And even, be-

loved, when our works are done from the best motives, nothing is a good work unless it is done with faith, for, “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Like Cain, we may build the altar and lay the first fruits of the earth upon it—and it may appear an acceptable sacrifice in itself—but if destitute of the salt of *faith*, there it will lie—it will not be accepted by God, for *without faith* it is impossible to please Him! Bring me a man who all his life long has been spending his health and strength for his fellow creatures. Fetch me some public officer who has fully discharged his trust—one who has labored night and day, even to the wearing down of his constitution because he believed that England expected every man to do his duty and he wished to do it. Bring me that man; let me see all his charitable works. Let me witness the most lavish benevolence, the most profuse bounty—tell me that he has always, with a consistent motive, labored for his country. And then, if he cannot answer this question, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” I shall be bound in all honesty to tell him that he has not done a solitary good work in all his life as far as God is concerned!

Furthermore, *when we have faith in God and perform all our works with the best of motives, even then we have not so much as a solitary good work until the blood of Christ is sprinkled thereon.* Looking on all that we have ever done in our lives, can we find a solitary thing which we dare call good until Christ’s blood is put upon it? Granted there is something good about it, for the Spirit worked it in our souls. There is also much that is evil about it, for even our best exercises are so terribly spoiled, marred and ruined by the sins and imperfections that are in them, that we dare not call them good until Jesus Christ has sprinkled them with His blood and taken the stain away! Oh, how often have I thought to myself, “Now, I have labored to preach God’s Word. I have not spared, at all times, before friends or foes, and I hope I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God!” And yet, beloved, how many of those sermons have not been good works at all, because I had not an eye out to my Master’s honor at the time, or because there was not faith mixed with them but I preached in a desponding, low, miserable frame? Or, perhaps, I had some natural aim—even in the winning of souls? I have often feared, even when we rejoice to see souls converted, that we may have some evil motive, such as honoring ourselves, that the world may say, “See how many souls are brought to God by him!” And even when the church associates in doing holy works, have you not noticed that something selfish creeps in? A wish to exalt our own church; to glorify our own people, and to make ourselves mighty? I am sure, beloved, if you sit down and pull your good works to pieces, you will find so many bad stitches in them that they need to be all unstitched and done over again!

There are so many spots and blurs about them, that you need to have them washed in the blood of Christ to make them good for anything!

And now, beloved, do you think you have any good works? “Oh!” you say “I am afraid I have not many—no, I know I have not. But thanks be unto His love, He who accepted my person in Christ, accepts my works through Christ and He who blessed me in Him, that I should be a chosen vessel, has been pleased to accept that which He Himself poured into the vessel, ‘to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made me accepted in the Beloved.’”

And now, *you moralists*, you who have trusted in yourselves that you are righteous; if what I have said is true, what has become of all your holiness? You are saying, “I am a charitable man.” Granted that you are! I tell you to go and appeal to your fellow creatures and let them pay you for your charity. You say, “Yes, but I am a consistent and moral man, I am a great credit to the country. If all men would act as I do, what a good thing for this world and generation!” Of course you have served your generation—then send in your bill and let your generation pay you. I tell you, you have toiled for nothing! You have only sown the wind. And likely enough you will reap the whirlwind. God owes you nothing. You have not lived to His honor. You must honestly confess that you have not performed a single action with a desire to please Him! You have labored to please yourself—that has been the highest motive you have had. You felt that if you were good, you would go to heaven and that if you were evil, you would be sure to go to hell. You have been thoroughly selfish, from first to last. Reckon up your accounts and settle with yourself! God owes you nothing. You have done nothing for Him. And if you have, then consider within yourself, you have so much violated God’s commands and so frequently done all you could to injure your Maker, if it were possible, that all your accounts are easily struck off. And as for your good works, where are they? Where are they? Ah, it is a figment and a fiction, a laugh and a dream. Good works in sinners? There are no such things! Augustine well said, “Good works, as they are called, in sinners, are nothing but splendid sins.” This is true of the best worlds of the best man who is out of Christ—they are nothing but splendid sins—varnished sins! God forgive you, dear Friends, for your good works! If you are out of Christ, you have as great need to be forgiven for your good works as you have for your bad ones!

## **II.** And now, secondly, WHERE DO GOOD WORKS COME FROM?

It is an old maxim that nature can never rise above itself. Water, coming from the top of a hill, will rise as high as its source. But unless there is some extraordinary pressure put upon it, it will never rise higher. So of human nature; Scripture says it is exceedingly vile. We cannot expect

good works out of an evil nature! Can a bitter well send forth sweet water? As poison grows not on healthful trees, with healthful fruit, so healthy fruit cannot grow on poisonous trees; we must not look for good works in an evil nature any more than we should look for the grapes of Sorek on the vines of Gomorrah! We cannot expect to find good works coming from nature. Truly it is vain and idle to think that good works can arise from the natural man. "Where, then," you ask, "Do they come from?" We answer: good works come from a real conversion, brought about by the Spirit of God. Until our conversion, there is not the shadow of goodness about us. In the eyes of the world, we may be reputable and respectable—but in the eyes of God we are nothing of the sort! Could we look into our hearts, as we sometimes look into other people's faces, we would see very much there which would drive out of our souls the very imagination of good works before our heart is changed! How many things there are in the world which we have upon our tables and which we even eat, that if we were to put beneath our microscope, we would be afraid to touch, for we would see all kinds of loathsome creatures creeping and crawling about in them—such things as we never conceived! And so it is with human nature—when once the human heart is put under the microscope of Scripture and we see it with a *spiritual eye*—we see it to be vile and filthy. We then realize that we are quite sure that until we have a new heart and a right spirit, it would be just as impossible to expect to find good works in an unrighteous, unconverted man, as to hope to see fire burning in the midst of the ocean! The two things would be incongruous.

Our good works, if we have any, spring from a real conversion. Yet more, they also spring from a constant spiritual influence exercised upon us, from the time of conversion even until the hour of death. Ah, Christian, you would have no good works if you had no fresh influence, day by day. You would not find the grace given you at your first hour sufficient to produce fruit today. It is not like the planting of a tree in our hearts, which naturally of itself brings forth fruit. The sap has to come up from the root, Jesus Christ! We are not trees by ourselves, but we are branches fixed on the living vine. Good works, I know from where you come! You come floating down on the stream of grace and if I did not have that stream of grace always flowing, I would never find good works coming from me. Good works from the creature? Impossible! Good works are the *gifts* of God, His choice pearls, which He sends down with His grace!

And again—we think that *good works spring from union with Christ*. We believe that the more a man knows and feels himself to be one with Jesus, the more holy he will be. The very fact that Christ and the Christian become one makes the Christian Christ-like. Why is a Christian's

character like Christ's character? Only for this reason—that he is joined and united to the Lord Jesus Christ. Why does that branch bring forth grapes? Simply because it has been engrafted into the Vine and therefore it partakes of the nature of the stem. So, Christian, the only way whereby you can bring forth fruit to God is by being grafted into Christ and united with Him! You Christians who think you can walk in holiness without keeping up perpetual fellowship with Christ have made a great mistake! If you would be holy, you must live close to Jesus. Good works spring only from there. Here we draw the most powerful reasons against anything like trusting in works, for as works are only the gift of God, how utterly impossible does it become for an unrighteous, unconverted, ungodly man to produce any such good works in himself? And if they are God's gifts, how little merit can there be in them!

**III.** We have thus tried to trace good works to their origin and foundation. And now we come to the third point, which is, **WHAT IS THE USE OF GOOD WORKS?**

I am rather fond of being *called* an Antinomian, for this reason—the term is generally applied to those who hold the truth of God very firmly and will not let it go. But I should not be fond of *being* an Antinomian. We are not against the law of God! We believe it is no longer binding on us as the covenant of salvation. But we have nothing to say against the law of God. “The law is holy—we are carnal; sold under sin.” None shall charge us truthfully with being Antinomians. We quarrel with Antinomians. But as for some poor souls who are so inconsistent as to say the law is not binding and yet try to keep it with all their might, we do not quarrel with them! They will never do much mischief. But we think they might learn to distinguish between the law as a covenant of life and a direction after we have obtained life.

Well, we do love good works. Do you ask, of what use are they? I reply, first—*Good works are useful as evidences of grace.* The Antinomian says, “But I do not require evidences, I can live without them.” This is unreasonable. Do you see yonder clock? That is the evidence of the time of day. The hour would be precisely the same if we had not that evidence. Still, we find the clock of great use. So we say, good works are the best evidence of spiritual life in the soul. Is it not written, “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren?” Loving the brethren is a good work! Again, “If any man abide in Me, he shall bring forth fruit.” Fruits of righteousness are good works and they are evidences that we abide in Christ! If I am living day by day in sin, what right have I to conclude I am a child of God? A man comes to this chapel and while he hears the gospel, he exclaims, “What delicious truth! What heavenly doctrine!” Yet when he leaves the place, you may see him enter

one public-house after another and get intoxicated! Has this man any right to think himself an heir of heaven? The man who comes to God's house and drinks "wine on the lees, well refined," and then goes away and drinks the cup and enjoys the company of the ungodly, gives no evidence that he is a partaker of divine grace! He says, "I do not like good works." Of course he does not! "I know I shall not be saved by good works." Of this we are certain, for he has none to be saved by! Many are ready enough to say—

***"Nothing in my hands I bring,  
Simply to Your cross I cling,"***

who believe they are children of God, because, though they have no good works as evidence, they think they have faith. Ah, sir, you have faith and there is another gentleman quite as respectable as you are, who has faith. I shall not tell you his name, this morning, but he is better than you are, for it is said, "he believes and trembles," while you sit unmoved by the most powerful appeals! Yes, you who think you are children of God while you live in sin, you are in the most dreadful error. There is no delusion, if you except the delusion of the Pharisee, which is more dreadful than the delusion of a man who thinks that sin and grace can reign together! The Christian has sins of heart, over which he groans and laments. But as regards his outward life, he is kept—so that the evil one touches him not—the Lord keeps him under the shadow of His wing. He does not, except in some falls, allow him to turn out of the way. Works are the evidences of our faith—by faith our souls are justified before God—by works our faith is justified before ourselves and fellow men.

Secondly, we think good works are *the witnesses or testimony to other people of the truth of what we believe*. Every Christian was sent into the world to be a preacher. And just like every other creature that God has made, he will always be preaching about his Lord. Does not the whole world preach God? Do not the stars, while they shine, look down from heaven and say there is a God? Do not the winds haunt God's name in their mighty howling? Do not the waves murmur it upon the shore or thunder it in the storms? Do not the floods and the fields, the skies and the plains, the mountains and the valleys, the streamlets and the rivers, all speak of God? Assuredly they do and a new-born creature—the man created in Christ—must preach Jesus Christ wherever he goes! This is the use of good works. He will preach, not always with his mouth, but with his life! The use of good works is that they are a Christian's sermon. A sermon is not what a man says but what he does. You who practice, are preaching. It is not preaching *and* practicing, but practicing *is* preaching! The sermon that is preached by the mouth is soon forgotten, but what we preach by our lives is never forgotten. There is nothing like

faithful practice and holy living if we would preach to the world! The reason why Christianity does not advance with a mightier stride is simply this—that professors are, in a large measure, a disgrace to religion and many of those who are joined to the church have no more godliness than those who are out of it. If I preached such a contradictory sermon on a Sunday as some of you have preached the most part of your lives, you would go out and say, “We will not go again till he can be a little more consistent with himself.” There is a difference in the very tone of the voice of some people when they are in the chapel engaged in prayer and when they are in the workshop! You would hardly think them the same persons. Away with your inconsistency! Professors, take heed lest your inconsistencies should blot your evidences and some of you should be found manifesting, not inconsistency, but a most fearful consistency—living in sin and iniquity—and therefore being consistent with yourselves in hypocrisy!

In the third place, *good works are of use to a Christian as an adornment*. You will all remember that passage in the Scriptures which tells us how a woman should adorn herself; “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.” The adornment of good works, the adornment in which we hope to enter heaven, is the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ—but the adornment of a Christian here below is his *holiness*, his *piety*, his *consistency*. If some people had a little more piety, they would not require such a showy dress. If they had a little more godliness to set them off, they would have no need whatever to be always decorating themselves. The best earrings that a woman can wear are the earrings of hearing the Word with attention. The very best ring that we can have upon our finger is the ring which the Father puts upon the finger of the prodigal son, when he is brought back. And the very best dress we can ever wear is a garment worked by the Holy Spirit—the garment of a consistent conduct. But it is marvelous, while many are taking all the trouble they can to array this poor body, they have very few ornaments for their soul. They forgot to dress the soul! Oh, no. They are too late at chapel, all because of that other pin, which they might have left out. They come here just when the service is beginning, because, in truth, they have so much to put on, they could not be expected to be here on time! And there are Christian men and Christian women who forget what God has written in His word, which is as true, now, as it ever was, that Christian women should array themselves with modesty. It would be a good thing, perhaps, if we went back to Wesley’s rule, to come out from the world in our apparel and to

dress as plainly and neatly as the Quakers, though alas, they have sadly gone from their primitive simplicity!

I am obliged to depart a little, sometimes, from what we call the high things of the gospel. For, really, the children of God cannot now be identified by outward appearance from the children of the devil and they really ought to be! There should be some distinction between the one and the other. And although religion allows distinction of rank and dress, yet everything in the Bible cries out against our arraying ourselves and making ourselves proud by reason of the goodness of our apparel! Some will say, "I wish you would leave that alone!" Of course you do, because it applies to yourself! But we let nothing alone which we believe to be in the Scriptures. And while I would not spare any man's soul, honesty to every man's conscience and honesty to myself demands that I should always speak of that which I see to be an evil breaking out in the church! We should always take care that in everything, we keep as near as possible to the written Word. If you want ornaments, here they are—here are jewels, rings, dresses and all kinds of ornaments—men and women, you may dress yourselves up till you shine like angels. How can you do it, but by dressing yourselves out in *benevolence*, in *love* to the saints, in *honesty* and *integrity*, in *uprightness*, in *godliness*, in *brotherly kindness*, in *charity*. These are the ornaments which angels admire, and which even the world will admire, for men must give admiration to the man or the woman who is arrayed in the jewels of a holy life and godly conversation. I beseech you, brothers and sisters, "adorn the doctrine of God, our Savior, in all things."

**IV.** Thus have I told you the use of good works; now just a moment or two to tell you that the religion which we profess in this place and which we preach IS CALCULATED TO PRODUCE GOOD WORKS IN THE CHILD OF GOD.

Some say that that which is called Calvinism, which is an *alias* for the true gospel, is calculated to lead men into sin. Now we will refute that, just by reminding them that the holiest people in the world have been those who professed the doctrines which we hold. If you ask who in the dark ages were the great moral lights of the world, the answer will be such as Athanasius, Ambrose, Chrysostom; and then coming still lower, such men as Wickliffe, Jerome of Prague, and Calvin. And every one of these held the doctrines which we love to proclaim. And just let me remind you, there never were better men in the world than the Puritans—and every one of them held fast the truths of God we love! I happened to find in a book, the other day, a statement which pleased me so much that I thought I would read it to you. The writer says, "The Puritans were the most resolved Protestants in the nation; zealous Calvinists, warm

and affectionate preachers, they were the most pious and devout people in the land—men of prayer in secret and in public—as well as in their families. Their manner of devotion was fervent and solemn, depending on the assistance of the divine Spirit. They had a profound reverence for the holy name of God and were great enemies, not only to profane swearing, but to foolish talking and jesting. They were strict observers of the Lord's Day, spending the whole of it in public and private devotion and charity. It was the distinguishing mark of a Puritan, in those times, to see him going to church twice a day, with his Bible under his arm. And while others were at plays and interludes, at revels, or walking in the fields, or at the diversions of bowling, fencing, etc.—on the eve of the Sabbath these Puritans, with their families were employed in reading the Scriptures, singing Psalms, repeating sermons, catechizing their children and prayer. Nor was this the work only of the Lord's Day, but they had their hours of family devotion on the week days. They were circumspect as to all excess in eating and drinking, apparel and lawful diversions—being frugal, industrious, exact in their dealings, and solicitous to give everyone his own.” That is a noble testimony to Puritan truth and the power of the gospel. But I have one which I think will please you in another part of the book. A learned infidel says of the modern Calvinists and Jansenists that, “When compared with their antagonists, they have excelled, in no small degree, in the most rigid and respectable virtues. That they have been an honor to their own age and the best model for imitation to every age succeeding.” Only think of an infidel speaking like that! I think it was an infidel who said, “Go to the Arminians to hear about good works; but go to the Calvinists to see them exhibited.” And even Dr. Priestly, who was a Unitarian, admits that “They, who hold the doctrines of grace, have less apparent conformity to the world, and more of a principle of real religion than his own followers—and that they who, from a principle of religion, ascribe more to God, and less to man than others, have the greatest elevation of piety.”

And just now, as the Unitarians are bringing up all their great men—so great that we never heard their names to this day—and endeavoring to do all they can in London to bring people to Unitarianism, we would just tell them this fact. Dr. Priestly ascribes the coolness of Unitarianism to their becoming more indifferent to religious doctrine—and accounts for the fact of their chapels not being well attended, by saying that Unitarians have a very slight attachment to their religious doctrines. What a mercy, for if they continued to hold them, they would inevitably be lost. A man who denies the divinity of Christ is sure to be lost; it is idle for them to talk of their being Christians! They might as well talk of being holy angels! The best proof I can give you of the holy tendency of our doctrines is

this great fact—in every age those who have held the doctrines of grace have exhibited in their lives a holy walk and conversation!

But once more—in just hastily running over the doctrines, we ask—*what could more tend to make men holy than the truths of God we preach?* Do we not teach you that God has chosen to Himself a people who must be holy? Is that an unholy doctrine? Do we not tell you that God has chosen to Himself a people who in this world shall show forth His praise by holy living? Is that an unholy doctrine? And we have told you that the Holy Spirit gives a new heart and a right spirit and that there is something more required than you can do yourselves—that you are unable to perform such good things as God expects from you—therefore God the Spirit must renovate you! Do you call that an unholy doctrine? Is the doctrine that men by nature are vile and need renewing grace, unholy? And the doctrine that the true saints will certainly hold onto the end; is that unholy? I think the contrary to these doctrines are the most unholy in the world! Is the doctrine that only those who believe have an interest in the blood of Christ, an unholy thing? Is the doctrine that I preach, that Christ has redeemed only such as live in holiness, having been brought thereto by the Holy Spirit, an unholy thing? I think not! We challenge all those who love to speak against our doctrines to prove that there is a single one of them which has an unholy tendency! Charge us with not holding good works? Come and try to get into our church and you will soon have a proof that you are wrong—why, we would not have you, sir, if you would give us a thousand pounds—unless we considered you were a holy man! If you have not good works, it will be a long time before we will receive you. And if you were to steal into our church, you would be turned out in a week if you lived in sin and unrighteousness, for it would soon be reported to the pastor and deacons, and you would see whether we did not hold the necessity of good works! If you did not exhibit them every day, we would cast you out from among us, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them! Our church order is the best refutation of the calumny.

What more can we say, then? We hope we have proved our points to all honest and consistent men. We only send you away, you hypocrites, with this ringing in your ears, “Except you have the Spirit of Christ, you are none of His.” Except you live like Christ, you shall not be with Christ at the last! If your spirit is not sanctified in this world, you will not find that God will sanctify you when you come before His Throne!

But you poor sinners who have no holiness of your own, and no good works at all; I know you have not any because you are not a child of God. Do you feel that you have not? Come, then, and Christ will give you some—He will give you Himself! If you believe on the Lord Jesus, He will

wash you from all your sins, give you a new heart, and henceforth your life shall be holy, and your conduct shall be consistent. He shall keep you to the end, and you shall most assuredly be saved! God bless this testimony to any such as are living in sin, that they may be reclaimed from it, for Christ's sake, and by His grace! Amen.

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# A BOTTLE IN THE SMOKE

## NO. 71

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 23, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“For I have become like a bottle in the smoke;  
yet I do not forget Your statutes.”  
Psalm 119:83.***

THE figure of “a bottle in the smoke” is essentially oriental. We must, therefore, go to the East for its explanation. This we will supply to our hearers and readers in the words of the Author of the Pictorial Bible—“This doubtless refers to a leather bottle of kid or goatskin. The peasants of Asia keep many articles, both dry and liquid, in such bottles, which, for security, are suspended from the roof, or hung against the walls of their humble dwellings. Here they soon become quite black with smoke, for as in the dwellings of the peasantry, there are seldom any chimneys and the smoke can only escape through an aperture in the roof, or by the door. Therefore the apartment is full of dense smoke whenever a fire is kindled in it. And in those nights and days when the smokiness of the hovels in which we daily rested during a winter’s journey in Persia, Armenia and Turkey, seemed to make the cold and weariness of actual travel a relief, we had ample occasion to observe the peculiar blackness of such skin vessels, arising from the manner in which substances offering a surface of this sort, receive the full influence of the smoke and detain the minute particles of soot which rest upon them. When such vessels do not contain liquids and are not quite filled by the solids which they hold, they contract a shrunk and shriveled appearance to which the Psalmist may also possibly allude as well as to the blackness. But we presume that the leading idea refers to the latter circumstance, as in the East, *blackness* has an opposite significance to the felicitous meaning of *whiteness*. David had doubtless seen bottles of this description hanging up in his tent when a wanderer and though he might have had but few in his palace, yet in the cottages of his own poor people, he had, no doubt, witnessed them. Hence he says of himself, ‘I have become,’ by trouble and affliction, by trial and persecution, ‘like a bottle in the smoke; yet I do not forget Your statutes.’”

First, *God’s people have there trials*—they get put in the smoke; secondly, *God’s people feel their trials*—they “become like a bottle in the smoke”; thirdly, *God’s people do not forget God’s statutes in their trials*—“I have become like a bottle in the smoke; yet I do not forget Your statutes.”

**I. GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE THEIR TRIALS.** This is an old truth, as old as the everlasting hills, because trials were in the covenant and certainly the covenant is as old as the eternal mountains! It was never designed by God, when He chose His people, that they should be an untried people—that they should be chosen to peace and safety, to perpetual happiness here below and freedom from sickness and the pains of mortality. But rather, on the other hand, when He made the covenant, He made the *rod* of the covenant, too! When He drew up the charter of privileges, He also drew up the charter of chastisements. When He gave us the roll of heirship, He put down the rods among the things to which we should inevitably be heirs! Trials are a part of our lot. They were predestinated for us in God's solemn decrees. And as surely as the stars are fashioned by His hands and He has fixed their orbits, so surely are our trials weighed in scales. He has predestinated their season and their place, their intensity and the effect they shall have upon us. Good men must never expect to escape troubles. If they do, they shall be disappointed—none of their predecessors have escaped them—

***“The path of sorrow and that path, alone,  
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.”***

Mark Job, of whose patience you have heard. Read you well of Abraham, for he had his trials and by his faith under them, when he offered up Isaac, he became, “the father of the faithful.” Note well the biographies of all the patriarchs, of all the prophets, of all the apostles and martyrs, and you shall discover none of those, whom God made vessels of mercy, who were not hung up like bottles in the smoke! It is ordained of old that the cross of trouble should be engraved on every vessel of mercy as the royal mark whereby the king's vessels of honor are distinguished. As surely as we are born, we are born to trouble, even as the sparks fly upwards. And when born-again, it does seem as if we had a birth to double trouble! And double toil and trouble come to the man who has double grace and double mercy bestowed upon him. Good men must have their trials—they must expect to be like bottles in the smoke!

Sometimes these trials arise from *the poverty of their condition*. It is the bottle in the cottage which gets into the smoke, not the bottle in the palace. The Queen's plate knows nothing of smoke. We have seen at Windsor how carefully it is preserved. It knows nothing of trial; no hands are allowed to touch that, so as to injure it, although even it may be stolen by accident when the guards are not careful over it. Still, it was not intended to be subject to smoke. It is the bottle in the tent of the poor Arab that dwells in the smoke. So with God's poor people; they must expect to have smoke in their dwellings. We would suppose that smoke does not enter into the house of the rich, although even then our supposition would be false. But certainly we must suppose there is more smoke where the chimney is ill built and the home is altogether of bad

construction. It is the poverty of the Arab that puts his bottle in the smoke—so the poverty of Christians exposes them to much trouble and in as much as God’s people are, for the most part, poor, for that reason must they always be, for the most part, in affliction. We shall not find many of God’s people in the higher ranks. Not many of them shall ever be illustrious in this world. Until happier times come, when kings shall be their nursing fathers and queens their nursing mothers, it must still be true, that, “God has chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, that they should be heirs of the kingdom.” Poverty has its privileges, for Christ has lived in it! But it has its ills—it has its smoke, it has its trials. You know not, sometimes, how you shall be provided for. You are often pinched for food and raiment, you are vexed with anxious cares, you wonder from where tomorrow’s food shall come and where you shall obtain your daily supplies. It is because of your poverty that you are hung up like a bottle in the smoke.

Many of God’s people, however, are not poor. And even if they are, poverty does not occasion so much trouble to them as some suppose—for God, in the midst of poverty, makes His children very glad and so cheers their hearts in the cottage that they scarcely know whether it is a palace or a hovel! Yes, He does send such sweet music across the waters of their woe, that they know not whether they are on dry land or not!

But there are other trials—and this brings us to remark that *our trials frequently result from our comforts*. What makes the smoke? Why, it is the fire by which the Arab warms his hands, that smokes his bottle and smokes him, too! So, beloved, our comforts usually furnish us with troubles. It is the law of Nature that there should never be a good without having an ill connected with it. What if the stream fertilizes the land? It can sometimes drown the inhabitants! What if the fire cheers us? Does it not frequently consume our dwellings? What if the sun enlightens us? Does he not sometimes scorch and smite us with his heat? What if the rain brings forth our food and causes the flowers to blossom on the face of the earth? Does it not also break the young blossom from the trees and cause many diseases? There is nothing good without its ill—there is no fire without its smoke! The fire of our comfort will always have the smoke of trial with it. You will find it so, if you study the comforts you have in your own family. You have relations. Mark you—every relationship engenders its trial and every fresh relationship upon which you enter opens to you, at one time, certainly, a new source of joys, but infallibly also a new source of sorrows! Are you parents? Your children are your joy. But those children cause you some smoke, because you fear lest they should not be brought up in “the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” And it may be, when they come to riper years, that they will grieve your spirits—God grant they may not break your hearts by their sins!

You have wealth. Well, that has its joys with it. But still, has it not its trials and its troubles? Has not the rich man more to care for than the poor? He who has nothing, sleeps soundly, for the thief will not molest him. But he who has abundance often trembles lest the rough wind should blow down that which he has built—lest the rude storm should wreck that argosy laden with his gold—lest an overwhelming and sudden turn in the tide of commerce should sweep away his speculations and destroy his hopes!

Just as the birds that visit us fly away from us, so do our joys bring sorrow with them. In fact, joy and sorrow are twins. The blood which runs in the veins of sorrow, runs in the veins of joy, too. For what is the blood of sorrow—is it not the tear? And what is the blood of joy? When we are full of joy do we not weep? Ah, that we do. The same drop which expresses joy is sorrow's own emblem! We weep for joy and we weep for sorrow. Our fire gives smoke to tell us that our comforts have their trials with them. Brothers and sisters, you have extraordinary fires which others have never kindled—expect then to have extraordinary smoke! You have the presence of Christ. But then you will have the smoke of fear, lest you should lose it. You have the promise of God's Word—there is the fire of it—but you have the smoke, sometimes, when you read it without the illumination of God's Spirit. You have the joy of assurance. But you also have the smoke of doubt which blows into your eyes and well near blinds you! You have your trials, and your trials arise from your comforts. The more comfort you have, the more fire you have, the more sorrows shall you have and the more smoke!

Again—the ministry is the great fire by which Christian men warm their hands. But the *ministry has much smoke with it*. How often have you come to this house of God and had your spirits lifted up! But perhaps as often you have come here to be cast down! Your harp strings, at times, have been all loose. You could not play a tune of joy upon them—you have come here and Christ tuned your harp so that it could awake, “like David's harp of solemn sound.” But at other times you have come here and had all the rejoicings removed from you by some solemn searching sermon. Last Sabbath-Day how many of you there were like bottles in the smoke! This pulpit, which is intended at times to give you fire, is also intended to have smoke with it. It would not be God's pulpit if no smoke issued from it. When God made Sinai His pulpit, Sinai was altogether on a smoke! You have often been like bottles in the smoke—the smoke caused by the fire of God's own kindling, the fire of the Gospel ministry!

I think, however, that David had one more thought. The poor bottle in the smoke *stays there for a long time, till it gets black*. It is not just one puff of smoke that comes upon it. The smoke is always going up, always

girding the poor bottle. It lives in an atmosphere of smoke. So, beloved, some of us hang up like bottles in the smoke for months, or for a whole year. No sooner do you get out of one trouble than you tumble into another! No sooner do you get up one hill than you have to mount another! It seems to be all up hill to heaven with you. You feel that John Bunyan is right in his ditty—"A Christian is seldom long at ease. When one trouble's gone, another seizes him." You are always in the smoke. You are linked, perhaps, with an ungodly partner. Or perhaps you are of a singular temperament and your temperament naturally puts clouds and darkness round about you so that you are always in the smoke. Well, beloved, that was the condition of David. He was not just, sometimes, in trial—it seemed as if trials came to him every day! Each day had its cares. Each hour carried on its wings some fresh tribulation. Instead of bringing joy, each moment did but toll the knell of happiness and bring another grief. Well, if this is your case, fear not, you are not alone in your trials—but you see the truth of what is uttered here—you have become like bottles in the smoke.

**II.** This brings us to the second point—CHRISTIANS FEEL THEIR TROUBLES. They are in the smoke. And they are like *bottles* in the smoke. There are some things that you might hang up in the smoke for many a day and they would never be much changed because they are so black, now, that they could never be made any blacker. They are so shriveled, now, that they never could become any worse. But the poor skin bottle shrivels up in the heat, gets blacker and shows at once the effect of the smoke. It is not an unfeeling thing, like a stone—it is at once affected! Now, some men think that divine grace makes a man unable to feel suffering. I have heard people insinuate that the martyrs did not endure much pain when they were being burned to death—but this is a mistake—Christians are not like stones. They are like *bottles* in the smoke. In fact, if there is any difference, a Christian feels his trials more than another because he traces them to God and that makes them more acute, as coming from the God whom he loves. But at the same time, I grant you, it makes them easier to bear because he believes they will work the comfortable fruits of righteousness! A dog will bite the stone that is thrown at it, but a man would resent the injury on the man that threw the stone. Stupid, foolish, carnal unbelief quarrels with the trial. But faith goes into the Court of King's Bench at once, and asks its God, "Why do You contend with me?" But even faith, itself, does not avert the pain of the chastisement—it enables us to endure it—but it does not remove the trial. The Christian is not wrong in giving way to his feelings—did not his Master shed tears when Lazarus was dead? And did He not, when on the cross, utter the exceedingly bitter cry, "My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?" *Our heavenly Father never intended to take*

*away our griefs when under trial.* He does not put us beyond the reach of the flood, but builds us an ark in which we float until the water is ultimately controlled and we rest on the Ararat of heaven forever! God takes not His people to an Elysium where they become impervious to painful feelings—but He gives us grace to endure our trials and to sing His praises while we suffer, “I have become like a bottle in the smoke.”

*The trial that we do not feel is no trial at all.* I remember a remarkable case of assault and battery that was tried sometime ago. I knew a friend who happened to be in court. It was a most singular affair. For when the prosecutor was requested to state in what the assault consisted, he said, in curious English, “Ah, sir, he struck me a most tremendous blow.” “Well, but where did he strike you?” “Well, sir, he did not hit me. It only just grazed me.” Of course the judge said here was no assault and battery, because there was no real blow struck. So we sometimes meet with persons who say, “I could bear that trial if it did not touch my feelings.” Of course you could, for then it would be no trial at all! Suppose a man were to see his house and property burned? Would you call it a trial, if he could do as Sheridan did, when his theater was burned? He went to a house opposite and sat down drinking and jokingly said, “Surely, every man has a right to sit and warm his hands by his own fireside.” It is *feeling* a trial that makes it a trial. The essence of the trial lies in my feeling it. And God intended His trials to be felt! His rods are not made of wheat straw—they are made of true birch. And His blows fall just where we feel them. He does not strike us on the iron plates of our armor. He smites us where we are sure to be affected.

And yet more—*trials which are not felt are unprofitable trials.* If there is no blueness in the wound, then the soul is not made better. If there is no crying out, then there will be no emptying out of our depravity. It is just so much as we *feel* that we are profited! A trial unfelt must be a trial unsanctified. A trial under which we do not feel at all cannot be a blessing to us because we are only blessed by feeling it, under the agency of God’s Holy Spirit. Christian men and women do not blush because you are like a *bottle* in the smoke—because you are sensitive under affliction—for so you ought to be! Do not let others say you ought not to feel it so much, because your husband is dead, or your child is dead, or you have lost your property! Just tell them that you know you ought, for God sent the trouble that you might feel it. (Not excessively and murmur against God) but that you might feel the rod and then kiss it. That is patience—not when we do not feel—but when we feel it and say, “Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him.” “I am like a bottle in the smoke.”

Now, a bottle, when it is in the smoke, *gets very black*—so does the Christian—when he is in the smoke of trial, or in the smoke of the Gospel ministry, or the smoke of persecution—gets very black in his own es-

teem. It is marvelous how bright we are when everything goes right with us. But it is equally marvelous how black we get when a little tribulation comes upon us! We think very well of ourselves while there is no smoke. But let the smoke come and it reveals the blackness of our hearts. Trials teach us what we are. They dig up the soil and let us see what we are made of. They turn up some of the ill weeds on the surface. They are good for this reason—they make us know our blackness!

A bottle that hangs up in the smoke, will become *very useless*. So do we, often, when we are under a trying ministry, or a trying providence, feel that we are very useless. We feel good for nothing, like a bottle that has been hung up in the smoke that nobody will ever drink out of any more, because it will smoke everything that is put in it. We feel that we are of no use to anybody—that we are poor unprofitable creatures! In our joys we are honorable creatures. We scarcely think the Creator could do without us—but when we are in trouble, we feel, “I am a worm and no man”—good for nothing! Let me die. I have become useless, as well as black, “like a bottle in the smoke.”

And then a bottle in the smoke is *an empty bottle*. It would not have been hung up in the smoke unless it had been empty. And very often under trials how empty we become. We are full enough in our joys. But the smoke and heat soon dry every atom of moisture out of us. All our hope is gone, all our strength is departed—we then feel that we are empty sinners and need a full Christ to save us. We are like bottles in the smoke.

Have I described any of your characters? I dare say some of you are like bottles in the smoke. You feel your trials. You have a soft, tender heart and the arrows of the Almighty stick fast in it. You are like a piece of seaweed, affected by every change of the weather. Not like a piece of rock, that might be hung up and would never change—you are capable of being affected and it is quite right you should be—you have “become like a bottle in the smoke.”

**III.** And now, beloved, the third and blessed thought is that CHRISTIANS, THOUGH THEY HAVE TROUBLES, AND FEEL THEIR TROUBLES, DO NOT, IN THEIR TROUBLES, FORGET GOD’S STATUTES.

What are God’s statutes? God has two kinds of statutes, both of them engraved in eternal brass. The first are *the statutes of His commands*. And of these He has said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the law shall fail till all is fulfilled.” These statutes are like the statutes of the Medes and Persians. They are binding upon all His people. His precepts are a light and easy yoke. But they are ones which no man must cast from his shoulders. All must carry the commands of Christ and all who hope to be saved by Him must take up his cross daily and follow Him. Well, the Psalmist said, “In the midst of my

trials I have not swerved from Your statutes. I have not attempted to violate Your commands. I have not in any way moved from the strict path of integrity. And in the midst of all my persecutions, I have gone straight on, never once forgetting God's statutes or commands." And then again—there are *statutes of promise*, which are equally firm, each of them as immortal as God who uttered them! David did not forget these, for he said of them, "Your statutes have been my song in the house of my pilgrimage." And he could not have sung about them if he had forgotten them!

Why was it David still held fast to God's statutes? First of all, *David was not a bottle in the fire*, or else he would have forgotten them. Our trials are smoke, but not fire. They are very uncomfortable, but they do not consume us. In other parts of Scripture, the figure of fire may be applied to our trials, but here it would not be appropriate because the bottle would be burned up if it were in the fire. But the Christian may say, "True, it is all smoke around about me, but there is nothing which tends to burn up my piety. Smoke may dim my evidence, but it cannot burn it. It may and certainly will be obnoxious to my eyes and nose and all my senses, but it cannot burn my limbs. It may stop my breath and prevent my drinking in the pure air of heaven, but it cannot consume my lungs and burn the vital parts of my body." Ah, it is well for you, O Christian, that there is more smoke than fire in your trials! And there is no cause why you should forget your God in your troubles. They may have a tendency to drive you *from* Him, but like great waves, they often wash the driftwood of the poor lost boats upon the beach of God's love! And the mast that might have floated out to sea and been carried—no one knows where—is often stranded on the shore and there once more is made to do fresh service. So are you, Christian, washed on shore by the waves of your trouble! But never are you washed away by them. "I have not forgotten Your statutes."

Another reason why, when David was in the smoke, he did not forget God's statutes was this—*Jesus Christ was in the smoke with him, and the statutes were in the smoke with him too*. God's statutes have been in the fire, as well as God's people. Both the promise and the precept are in the furnace. And if I hang up in the smoke, like a bottle, I see hanging up by my side, God's commands, covered with soot and smoke, subject to the same perils. Suppose I am persecuted—it is a comfort to know that men do not persecute *me*, but my Master's truth! It is a singular thing with regard to all the envenomed shafts that have been hurled at me—that they have generally fallen on that part of my frame which is most invulnerable—because they have generally fallen on something I have quoted from somebody else or proved from Scripture. They may go on. It is sweet to think that Jesus Christ is in the smoke as well as we are. And the

more flame there is, the better we shall be able to see our Master in the smoke with us—

***“By God’s command wherever I stray,  
Sorrow attends me all the way,  
A never failing friend;  
And if my sufferings may augment  
Your praise, behold me well content—  
Let sorrow still attend!  
It costs me no regret, that she  
Who followed Christ should follow me!  
And though wherever she goes,  
Thorns spring spontaneous at her feet,  
I love her and extract a sweet  
From all my bitter woes.”***

Another reason why David did not forget the statutes was *they were in the soul, where the smoke does not enter*. Smoke does not enter the interior of the bottle. It only affects the exterior. So it is with God’s children—the smoke does not enter into their hearts. Christ is there, and grace is there, and Christ and grace are both unaffected by the smoke. Come up, clouds of smoke! Curl upward till you envelop me! Still will I hang on the Nail, Christ Jesus—that sure Nail which can never be moved from its place! And I will feel that “while the outward man decays, the inward man is renewed day by day.” And the statutes being there, I do not forget them, “For I have become like a bottle in the smoke; yet I do not forget Your statutes.”

To such of you as can join with David, let me give a word of consolation. If you have been persecuted and still hold fast by God’s Word—if you have been afflicted and still persevere in the knowledge of our Lord and Master—you have every reason to believe yourself a Christian! If under your trials and troubles you remain just what you were when at ease, you may then hope, and not only so, but steadfastly believe and be assured that you are a child of God! Some of you, however, are very much like Christians when you hear sermons full of promises—when I preach to you about bruised reeds, or address you with the invitation, “Come unto Me, all you that labor.” But when I give you a smoky sermon—one which you cannot endure—if you then, can say, “Guilty, weak and helpless I may be, but still I fall into His arms. Sinful I know I am and I have grave cause for doubt, but still—

***‘There, there, unshaken will I rest,  
Till this vile body dies.’***

I know, poor, weak and helpless though I am, that I have a rich Almighty Friend.” If you can stand a little smoke, then you may believe yourself to be a child of God. But there are some people we know of who are shocked with a very puff of smoke—they cannot endure it, they go out at once—just like rats out of the hold of a ship when they begin to smoke it. But if

you can live in the smoke and say, “I feel it and can still endure it”—if you can stand a smoky sermon and endure a smoky trial and hold fast to God under a smoky persecution, then you have reason to believe that you are certainly a child of God! Fair-weather birds! You are good for nothing! It is the stormy birds who are God’s favorites! He loves the birds that can swim in the tempest. He loves those who can move in the storm, and like the eagle, companion of the lightning flash, can make the wind their chariot and ride upon forked flames of fire! If in the heat of battle, when your helmet is bruised by some powerful enemy, you can still hold up your head and say, “I know whom I have believed,” and do not swerve from your post, then you are, verily, a child of heaven! For constancy, endurance and perseverance are the true marks of a hero of the cross and of the invincible warriors of the Lord! Those are no invincible ships that flee away before a storm. He is no brave warrior who hears reports from others that a fort is impregnable and dares not attack it. But he is brave who dashes his ship beneath the guns, or runs her well-near aground and gives broadside after broadside with a desperate attack against his foe! He who in the smoke and the tempest, in the clamor and roar of the battle, can yet coolly give his commands, and knowing that every man is expected to do his duty, can fight valiantly—he is a brave commander, he is a true soldier! He shall receive from his master a crown of glory. O Christian! Cleave to your Master in the smoke! Hold on to your Lord in trials and you shall be refined by your afflictions! You shall exceedingly increase and be profited beyond measure!

However, I have some here who can consume their own smoke. There are some of my congregation who, when they have any trials, can manage to get over them very well, themselves. They say, “Well, I don’t care! You seem to be a sad set of simpletons, you feel everything. But as for me, it all rolls off and I don’t care for anything.” No, I dare say you don’t. But the time will come when you will find the truth of that little story you used to read when you were children that “don’t care” came to a very bad end! These persons are not like bottles in the smoke, but like pieces of wood hanging over it. But they will find there is something more than smoke, by-and-by. They will come to a place where there is not only smoke, but fire! And though they can endure the smoke of this world’s troubles, they will find it not as easy as they imagine to endure the unutterable burnings and the everlasting flames of that pit of hell whose fire knows no extinction and whose worm shall know no death! Oh, hardened sinner, you now have sorrows which are like the skirmishers before an army, a few light-armed troops to lead the way for whole hosts of God’s avengers, who shall trample you beneath their feet! One or two drops of woe have fallen on the pavement of your life—you laugh at them. Ah, but they are the heralds of a shower of fire and brimstone which God shall

rain out of heaven upon your soul throughout eternity! And yet you may pity us poor Christians because of our troubles and sufferings. Pity us, do you? Ah, but our light affliction is but for a moment—and it works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! Take your pity back, and reserve it for yourselves, for your light joy, which is but for a moment, works out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of torment! And your little bliss will be the mother of an everlasting, unutterable torture which we shall happily escape! Your sun will soon set, and at its setting, your night shall come and when your night comes, it will be night forever, without hope of light again! Before your sun sets, my hearer, may God give you grace. Do you inquire what you should do to be saved? Again comes the old answer—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized and you shall be saved.” If you are not a sinner, I have no salvation for you! If you are a Pharisee and know not your sins, I have no Christ to preach to you! I have no heaven to offer to you, as some have. But if you are a sinner, a *bona fide* sinner—if you are a real sinner, not a sham one, I have this to tell you—“Jesus Christ came to save sinners, even the chief.”

If you will believe on Him you shall go out of this house of prayer, absolved! Absolved, without a sin—forgiven, pardoned, washed, without a stain—accepted in the beloved! As long as you live, that pardon shall avail you. And when you die, you will have nothing to do but to show it at the gates of paradise to gain admittance. And then, in a nobler and sweeter song, that pardon shall form the basis of your praise while heaven’s choirs shall sing, or while the praise of the Eternal shall be the chant of the universe. God bless you! Amen.

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# ISRAEL AT THE RED SEA

## NO. 72

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 30, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“He rebuked the Red Sea also and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.”  
Psalm 106:9.***

SEVERAL Sabbaths ago we preached upon the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt by the blood of the Passover (See #55, Volume 2—THE EXODUS—by the grace of God, for all 63 volumes of C. H. Spurgeon sermons in Modern English, and more than 574 Spanish translations, visit: [www.spurgeongems.org](http://www.spurgeongems.org))—and we told you, then, that we believed that event to be typical of the coming forth of God’s people from that spiritual house of bondage, that furnace of mental suffering from where they are delivered by the omnipotent grace of God at the time of their conversion. This morning we pursue the narrative. No doubt the children of Israel supposed that now all was over. The Egyptians had sent them away, entreating them to depart and loading them with riches. Terror had smitten the heart of Egypt, for from the king on the throne, to the prisoner in the dungeon, all was dismay and fear on account of Israel. Egypt was glad for them when they departed. Therefore the children of Israel said within themselves, “We shall now march to Canaan at once. There will be no more dangers, no more troubles, no more trials. The Egyptians, themselves, have sent us away and they are too much afraid of us to ever molest us again. Now shall we tread the desert through with hasty footsteps, and when a few more days have passed, we shall enter into the land of our possession—the land that flows with milk and honey!” “Not quite so speedily,” says God. “The time is not arrived yet for you to rest. It is true I have delivered you from Egypt. But there is much you have to learn before you will be prepared to dwell in Canaan. Therefore I shall lead you about and instruct you and teach you.” And it came to pass that the Lord led the children of Israel about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea, till they arrived over against Baalzephon, where, on either side, the craggy mountains shut them in. Pharaoh hears of it. He comes upon them, to overcome them. And they stand in terrible fright and jeopardy of their lives!

Now, beloved, it is usually so with the believer—he marches out of Egypt spiritually at the time of his conversion and he says within him-

self, "Now I shall always be happy." He has bright eyes, and a light heart, for his fetters have been dashed to the ground! He feels no longer the lash of conscience upon his shoulders. "Now," he says, "I may have a short life, but it will be a happy one—

***'A few more rolling years at most,  
Will land me on fair Canaan's coast.'***

And then I shall have no more warfare, no more fighting, no more disturbance. I shall be at peace." "Not quite as you desire," says God. "Oh, you little one, I have more to teach you before you are prepared for My palace." Then He commences to lead us about and bring us into straits and perils. The sins which we thought had utterly left us are hunting us behind, while impassible floods block up the way! Even trembling Israel, halting by the Red Sea, is but a faint emblem of that terrible position into which the child of God usually falls within a few weeks or months after he has come out of the land of Egypt!

I shall preach, this morning, a sermon which I hope will be useful to such of you as have lately come to know the Lord. You were expecting to build tabernacles in which to dwell on the summit of the mountains of joy forever. But you find, on the contrary, that you have very great troubles and conflicts. And perhaps now you have a more terrible trial than you ever experienced in all your life before! I will endeavor to show you that this is just what you might have expected—that there will be a Red Sea very soon after you come out of your house of bondage! Others of you, my dear friends, have passed through all these things many years ago. You can say—

***"Many days have passed since then,  
Many changes I have seen,  
Yet have been upheld till now.  
Who could hold me up but You?"***

But I am sure you will be glad to revisit the spot where God delivered you from your distresses. We find it very pleasant to look upon the place where we were taught in our school days, or to visit the haunts of our childhood. So you who are gray-headed in the cause of your Master will not find it very tedious work to go back a little way—and look to that Red Sea which God rebuked and dried up—that you might be led through it even as through the wilderness!

Coming, then, to the subject; the children of Israel had their *difficulties*, and so, generally, the child of God has his very soon after he comes out of Egypt. But then they had their *refuges*, and moreover, God had a *great and grand design* to answer in all the troubles into which they were brought.

**I.** Taking the first point, the children of Israel just now had THREE DIFFICULTIES—three exceedingly great dangers. And so I believe that every heir of heaven, within a very short period after the time of his deliverance will meet with the same.

The first they had was a great trial sent by God, Himself. *There was the Red Sea in the front of them.* Now, it was not an enemy that put the sea there—it was God, Himself! We may therefore think that the Red Sea represents some great and trying providence which the Lord will be sure to place in the path of every new-born child. He does this in order to try our faith and to test the sincerity of our trust in God. I do not know, beloved, whether your experience will back up mine—but I can say this—the worst difficulty I ever met with, or I think I ever meet with, happened a little time after my conversion to God. And you must generally expect, very soon after you have been brought to know and love Him, that you will have some great, broad, deep Red Sea straight before your path, which you will scarcely know how to pass. Sometimes it will occur in the family. The husband says, for instance—if he is an ungodly man—“You shall not attend such-and-such a place of worship! I positively forbid you to be baptized, or to join that church.” There is a Red Sea before you. You have done nothing wrong. It is God, Himself, who places that Red Sea before your path. Or perhaps before that time, you were carrying on a business which now you cannot conscientiously continue. And there is a Red Sea which you have to cross in renouncing your means of livelihood. You don’t see how it is to be done—how you are to maintain yourself—and to provide things honest in the sight of all men. Or perhaps your employment calls you among men with whom you lived before on amicable terms, but now, all of a sudden, they say, “Come! Won’t you do as you used to do?” There, again, is a Red Sea before you! It is a hard struggle. You do not like to come out and say, “I cannot, I shall not, for I am a Christian.” You stand still, half afraid to go forward. Or perhaps it is something proceeding more immediately from God. You find that just when He plants a vine in your heart, He blasts all the vines in your vineyard; and when He plants you in His own garden, then it is that he uproots all your comforts and your joys. Just when the Sun of Righteousness is rising upon you, your own little candle is blown out—just when you seem to need it most, your gourd is withered, your prosperity departs and your flood becomes an ebb! I say again, it may not be so with all of you, but I think that most of God’s people have not long escaped the bondage of Egypt before they find some terrible rolling sea lashed, perhaps, by tempestuous winds directly in their path. They stand aghast and say, “God, how can I bear this? I thought I could give up all for You,

but now I feel as if I could do nothing! I thought I would be in heaven and all would be easy. But here is a sea I cannot ford—there is no squadron of ships to carry me across—it is not even bridged by Your mercy! I must swim it, or else I fear I will perish.”

Then the children of Israel had a second difficulty. They would not have cared about the Red Sea a single atom if they had not been *terrified by the Egyptians who were behind them*. These Egyptians, I think, may be interpreted this morning by way of parable. They represent those sins of ours which we thought were clean dead and gone. For a little while after conversion, sin does not trouble a Christian. He is very happy and cheerful in a sense of pardon. But before many days are past, he will understand what Paul said, “I find another law in my members so that when I would do good, evil is present with me.” The first moment when a new Christian wins his liberty, he laughs and leaps in an ecstasy of joy! He thinks, “Oh, I shall soon be in heaven! As for sin, I can trample that beneath my feet!” But mark you—scarcely has another Sabbath gladdened his spirit before he finds that sin is too much for him! The old corruptions which he fancied were laid in their graves get a resurrection and start up afresh! He begins to cry, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” He sees all his old sins galloping behind him—like Pharaoh and his host pursuing him to the borders of the Red Sea! There is a great trial *before* him. Oh, he thinks he could bear that. He thinks he could walk through the Red Sea. But oh, those Egyptians—they are *behind* him! He thought he would never have seen them again—they were the plague and torment of his life when they made him work in the brick kiln—he sees his old master, the very man who desired to lay the lash on his shoulders, riding post haste after him! And there are the eyes of that black Pharaoh, flashing like fire in the distance. He sees the horrid, scowling face of the tyrant and how he trembles! Satan is after him and all the legions of hell seem to be let loose, if possible, utterly to destroy his soul!

At such a time, moreover, our sins are more formidable to us than they were before they were forgiven, because when we were in Egypt, we never saw the Egyptians mounted on horses, or in chariots—they only appeared as our task-masters, with their whips. But now these people see the Egyptians on horseback, clad in armor. They behold all the mighty men of valor come out with their war-like instruments to slay them! So did I find, speaking for myself, that when I first knew the weight of sin, it was as a burden, as a labor, as a trouble. But when the second time—

***“I asked the Lord that I might grow,***

***In faith, and love and every grace.  
Might more of His salvation know,  
And seek more earnestly His face,”***

and when He answered me by letting all my sins loose upon me, they appeared more frightful than before! I thought the Egyptians in Egypt were not half as bad as the Egyptians out of Egypt. I thought the sins I knew before, though they were cruel taskmasters, were not half as much to be dreaded as those soldier-sins, armed with spears and axes, with chariots of iron, with scythes upon their axles, hastening to assault me! It is true—they did not come so near to me as before, nevertheless they occasioned more fright than when I was their slave! It may be, poor child of God, you are astonished and amazed to find that your sins are blacker now than they were when you were under conviction. You may feel that you have less hope than you had then, and that your condition is possibly far worse than when the Law was beating you from head to foot and rubbing brine into the wounds of your conscience! You may be saying, “Ah, well, I never thought of this. If I am a child of God—if I were really pardoned and forgiven—how could it be that I should be so vexed and tormented with a sense of my guilt? And if all my transgressions have been cast into the depths of the sea, how is it that I hear the armies of my sins rattling their hoofs and chariot wheels behind me?” I tell you, beloved, in the name of the Lord, that is just what you ought to have expected! The pangs after we come out of Egypt are at times even more painful than those we feel in the house of bondage! And there is usually a time of trial a little while after the new birth which is even more terrible and awful than the previous agony of the soul, though not usually so protracted. This was the second difficulty.

But there was a third difficulty which, perhaps, worked them more misery than either of the other two. These *poor children of Israel had such faint hearts*. They no sooner saw the Egyptians, than they began to cry out. And when they beheld the Red Sea before them, they murmured against their deliverer! A faint heart is the worst foe a Christian can have. While he keeps his faith firm—while the anchor is fixed deep in the rock—he never need fear the storm. But when the hand of faith is palsied, or the eye of faith is dim, it will go hard with us. As for the Egyptian, he may throw his spear—but we can catch it on the shield of faith—we are not terrified by the weapon. But if we lose our faith, the spear becomes a deadly dart! While we have faith, the Red Sea may flow before us as deep and dark as it pleases—for like Leviathan, we trust we can snuff up Jordan at a draught. But if we have no faith, then at the most insignificant streamlet, which Faith could take up in her hands in a single moment and drink like Gideon’s men, poor Unbelief stands quivering and

crying, “Ah, I shall be drowned in the floods, or I shall be slain by the foe! There is no hope for me. I am driven to despair. It would have been better for me that I had died in Egypt, than that I should come here to be slain by the hand of the enemy.” The child of God, when he is first born, has but very little faith because he has had but little experience. He has not tried the promises and, therefore, he does not know their faithfulness. He has not used the arm of his faith and, therefore, the sinews of it have not become strong. Let him live a little longer, and become confirmed in the faith, and he will not care for Red Seas, nor yet for the Egyptians; but just then his little heart beats against the walls of his body, and he laments, “Ah, me! Ah, me! O wretched man that I am! How shall I ever find deliverance?”

This description of spiritual geography may be uninteresting to some because they may not have traveled through this part of the wilderness—but others will view it with attention. Who cared about maps of the Crimea till there was war there? But as soon as our soldiers were engaged in that particular spot, every man bought a map of the Crimea and studied the boundaries of Russia. So if you have been in these straits, you will be very glad of my map, this morning, that you may see the way in which God leads His family. These are the three dangers—a great trial, sins pursuing us behind and an exceedingly faint heart.

**II.** But, thanks be to God! The children of Israel had THREE HELPS.

Oh, child of God, do you discern this mystery? Whenever you have three trials, you will always have three promises! And if you had 40 afflictions, you would have 40 measures of grace! Yes, and if you had a million troubles, you would have a million measures of mercy! The Israelites had three difficulties and they had three helps. And as the difficulty was put in the way by providence, so providence also furnished a relief.

The first help they had was *providence*. Providence put the Red Sea there, and piled the rocks on either side. Providence represented by the fiery cloudy pillar, had led them to its shore and conducted them into the trouble; and now the same pillar of providence came to their assistance! They had not come there undirected and, therefore, they would not be left unprotected, for the same cloudy pillar which led them there, came behind them to protect them!

Cheer up, then, heir of grace! What is your trial? Has providence brought it upon you? If so, unerring wisdom will deliver you from it. What is it you are now exercised upon? As truly as you are alive, God will remove it! Do you think God’s cloudy pillar would ever lead you to a place where God’s right arm would fail you? Do you imagine that He would ever guide you into such a trouble that He could not conduct you out

again? The providence which apparently misleads, will, in verity, befriend you! That which leads you into difficulties guards you against your foes. It casts darkness on your sins, while it gives light to you! How sweet is providence to a child of God, when he can reflect upon it! He can look out into this world and say, "However great my troubles, they are not as great as my Father's power! However difficult may be my circumstances, yet all things around me are working together for good. He who holds up yon unpillared arch of the starry heavens can also support my soul without a single apparent prop! He who guides the stars in their well-ordered courses, even when they seem to move in mazy dances—surely He can overrule my trials in such a way that out of confusion He will bring order! And from seeming evil, our God produces lasting good. He who bridles the storm and puts the bit in the mouth of the tempest, surely He can restrain my trial and keep my sorrows in subjection! I need not fear while the lightning is in His hands and the thunder sleeps within His lips—while the oceans gurgle from His fist—and the clouds are in the hollow of His hands. I need not fear while the rivers are turned by His foot and while He digs the channels of the sea. Surely He whose might wings an angel, can furnish a worm with strength! He who guides a cherub will not be overcome by the trials of an ant like I am! He who makes the most ponderous orb roll in dignity and keeps its predestined orbit, can make a little atom like myself move in my proper course and conduct me as He pleases." Christian, there is no sweeter pillow than providence! And when providence seems adverse, still believe it, lay it under your head—for, depend upon it—there is comfort in its bosom! There is hope for you, child of God! That great trouble which is to come in your way in the early part of your pilgrimage is planned by love, the same love which shall interpose as your protector!

Again—the children of Israel had another refuge, in the fact that *they knew that they were the covenant people of God* and that, though they were in difficulties, God had brought them there and, therefore, God, (with reverence let me say it), was bound in honor to bring them out of that trouble into which He had brought them! "Well," says the child of God, "I know I am in a strait but this one thing I also know, that I did not come out of Egypt by myself—I know that *He* brought me out. I know that I did not escape by my own power, or slay my first-born sins myself—I know that He did it. And though I fled from the tyrant—I know that He made my feet mighty for travel, for there was not one feeble in all our tribes. I know that though I am at the Red Sea, I did not run there uncalled, but He bade me go there and, therefore, I give my fears to the

winds! For if He has led me here into this difficulty, He will lead me out and lead me through!”

But the point to which I want to direct your attention most of all is this. The third refuge which the children of Israel had *was in a man*—and neither of the two others, without that, would have been of any use. It was the man, Moses. He did everything for them. Your greatest refuge, O child of God, in all your trials, is in a *man*—not in Moses—but in Jesus Christ! Not in the servant, but in the Master. He is interceding for you, unseen and unheard by you, even as Moses did for the children of Israel. If you could but, in the dim distance, catch the sweet syllables of His voice as they distil from His lips and see His heart as it speaks for you, you would take comfort! God hears *that man* when He pleads! He can overcome every difficulty. He has not a rod, but a cross, which can divide the Red Sea. He has not only a cloudy pillar of forgiving grace, which can dim the eyes of your foes and keep them at a distance—He has a cross—which can open the Red Sea and drown your sins in the very midst! He will not leave you. Look on yonder rock of heaven—He stands, cross in hand, even as Moses with his rod! Cry to Him, for with that uplifted cross He will cleave a path for you, and guide you through the sea! He will make those hoary floods, which had been friends, forever, stand asunder like foes! Call to Him and He will make you a way in the midst of the ocean, and a path through the pathless sea. Cry to Him and there shall not a sin of yours be left alive—He will sweep them all away! And the king of sin, the devil, shall be overwhelmed beneath the Savior’s blood, while you shall sing—

***“Hell and my sins obstruct my path,  
But hell and sin are conquered foes!  
My Jesus nailed them to His cross,  
And sang the triumph as He rose.”***

Look you to that man who once on Calvary died!

**III. GOD HAD A DESIGN IN IT.** And here, also, we wish you to regard with attention what God’s design is in leading the Christian into exceedingly great trials in the early part of his life. This is explained to us by the Apostle Paul. A reference Bible is the best commentator in the world. And the most heavenly exposition is the searching out of kindred texts and comparing their meaning. “They were all baptized,” says the Apostle, “unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea.” God’s design in bringing His people into trouble and raising all their sins at their heels, is to give them a thorough baptism into His service, consecrating them forever to Himself. I mean by baptism, this morning, not the rite, but what baptism *represents*. Baptism signifies dedication to God—initiation into God’s service. It is not when we are first converted that we so fully dedicate ourselves to

God, as afterwards, when some great Red Sea rolls before us. I would be delighted to see some of you get into trouble. Am I unkind to utter such a wish? Well I repeat it, I would, for I shall never get you into the church unless you do! You will never come forward and make a thorough dedication of yourselves to God till you have had a sharp trial. Rest assured of this, that sharp trials were no slight cause of the heroic devotion of the martyrs, confessors and missionaries, who so thoroughly consecrated themselves to their Master's service. The great purpose of our entire affliction is the promotion of an entire dedication to Christ in all our hearts! It is only in the font of sorrow that we are baptized with Christ's baptism. No holy chrism has efficacy to baptize. It is the Spirit who, alone, can dedicate us in the waters of the sea of tribulation. You are brought into these straits, young believer, that you may at such a time receive the baptism for God! Do not, I beseech you, let the time pass by, for there are some who neglect it, who, afterwards never perfectly know what it is to be "baptized unto Jesus in the cloud and in the sea." They say, "They will wait a little while," but the consequence is, they wait a very long while! They say they will do, tomorrow, what they ought to do today. Beware how you let slip the opportunity which God presents you, that you may devote yourself publicly to Him. The very first time after conversion, when we come into straits and difficulties, is intended that we should then be dedicated to Jesus and come out openly as the children of the living God!

Now, beloved, let these thoughts rest with you. You may think them unimportant but I am sure they are not. Believe me you ought, indeed, to acknowledge yourselves on the Lord's side. If God is God, serve Him! If Baal is God, serve him! There is nothing which I would more earnestly and ardently press upon you than the great duty of decision for Jesus Christ. How many of you have a faint and indistinct hope that when you die, you will be Christ's people? And yet you must confess that you are not decided for Christ! You think you are His, but you often neglect duty and frequently allow what you think a little sin to stain your conscience. You are not godly in worldly affairs. But, beseech you, put the truth of God and righteousness into one scale and put your own worldly gain into the other—and see which is the most important—and if you think that prudence dictates attention to this world instead of God, then remember, that is hellish prudence and comes of the devil! And, therefore, reject it! If you were Egyptians, I might tell you to serve another master. But since you are God's people, or profess to be, I charge home upon you. And I beg of you, if you make a profession, to be out-and-out with it! How we loathe those hot and cold people who are neither one thing nor the other!

You who hold with the hare and run with the hounds—you who are first one thing and then another—you who are half horse, half alligator and neither of them—you who are something between the two, who are neither Christians nor worldlings in your own opinion. We know which you are! I have often thought what a consistent religion the Roman Catholic would be for some of you go-between people. You are not exactly children of God, but you would not like to be called the children of the devil. Where should we put you, at last? It would be a very convenient thing to have a *purgatory* for you—to place you somewhere between the two! But as we have no such place, we do not wish to have any such characters and we believe there are none such. You are either servants of God, or servants of the devil! Don't stand between two opinions—but just say, once and for all—whom you will serve! If you choose the devil, choose him, love him, serve him and rejoice in your choice. If you choose hell, go there, rush madly there—it's a fearful dwelling place for eternity—an awful home forever! But if you choose God, I beseech you, be in downright earnest about it. The religion of the present day—what mockery it is to call it religion at all—I protest. I believe the common religion of this age will not carry half those who profess it to heaven. It is a religion which *they* might easily carry to heaven, for it is too light to burden them, but *it* is too fragile to carry them there! They have a godliness which has not eaten up their soul. I heard a minister say once to his people that, “it would be a long time before the zeal of God's house would eat them up.” Take the churches all round—what a slumbering brotherhood they are! There might almost be a controversy between the prince of this world and the prince of heaven to whom they belonged. But I beseech you, let there be a marked and decided difference between you and the world! Let your heart be steeped in godliness! Let your life be saturated with religion! Take care that, “whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, you do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by Him.” So shall God see His great design subserved of making you to be baptized unto Jesus, “in the cloud and in the sea.”

In concluding, there is one sad aspect of this picture which I wish you to regard. It is this. Some of you are journeying in an unconverted state to that brook from which there is no return. At death you will find a Red Sea in your way—the sea of death staring you in the face! When you come before it, you will find no bridge, no ships. You must wade that sea alone. And, mark you, if you are now living in an ungodly condition and are doing so when you die—as certainly as you are here—just when that great sea of death is rolling before you, all the Egyptian hosts of your

sins will harass you in the rear! All your sins will come bellowing after you. You will have your iniquities like wild winter wolves pursuing you, thirsty for blood and swift to slay! You will hear fiends howling in your ears. And when the raging flood of Jordan has made your bones shake and your marrow quiver, just then you will see the red eyes of your sins peering through the darkness of your despair and hear the howling of your former transgressions as they hound you to the pit of hell, seeking after your soul's blood! Ah, then, my hearer, you will have no cloudy pillar to give you light! You will have no pillar of darkness to confuse your foes. But you will have behind you all your sins—and before you that black sea of death which you are compelled to cross! But mark you those sins will swim that sea with you. They will not be like the Egyptians which were drowned. When you are wading through the sea, you will find your sins like hounds fixing on a stag, drinking your heart's blood. Yes, when you have landed in eternity, you will find there was not a single one drowned in the sea but that they are all alive—every sin grown into a giant, every lust brandishing a thousand arms, each arm bearing a thousand horrid fingers of flame—and each finger a claw of iron which shall tear your soul!

Oh, I warn you against these Egyptians of your sins, for unless the blood is sprinkled on your doorpost and on your lintel—and unless the destroying angel smites those sins for you, they will assuredly follow you across the sea! I think I see you there! You are just in the midst of Jordan. Poor soul! The river, itself, is work enough for a man to wade through it. For dying is not easy labor. The waters are rushing into his lips and gurgling in his throat like a whirlpool. How he shakes! White as the floods around him, he quivers like the very waves themselves! And, ah, just when in his fell despair, he shrieks—see the devils feed him with black fruits of hell? And when he quivers most, see there the scalding brimstone of Almighty God rained upon his body? Just when he is shrieking in death's torments, then is it that Satan takes the opportunity to howl in his face and show him his glaring eyes of fire, to terrify his poor soul worse than death, itself! Sinner! When you die, remember that you will have to die two deaths—one death which *we* shall see—another death which we only know of by the shrieks, groans and anguish which even we may hear on this side of the grave!

But what you will experience in the next world, I cannot picture to you, I cannot tell you. Those dim shapes of horror I cannot paint for you. Those fierce flames of misery I cannot now describe. That doleful *misery* of desolation and that awful lament of eternity, I cannot endure to hear! I

dare not lift the veil that conceals the dread scenes, which haunt the spirits of the ungodly departed!

Well, then, what shall you do to escape this death? What can you do to be saved? Why, sinner, in the first place, of yourself you can do nothing at all! But, in the second place, there is One—a man who can do all for you! He is the man, Christ Jesus. If you believe on Him, filthy as you are and wretched and outcast and vile, you shall never see the second death but shall have eternal life abiding in you! And when you die in this world, instead of black fiends to hound you through the river, you will have sweet angels playing over the stream, waiting to waft you unto Glory. You will feel bright spirits fanning your hot brow with their soft wings. You will hear songs, sweet as the music of Paradise, and when your troubles are the strongest, you will have a peace with God “which passes all understanding”; an “unspeakable joy and full of glory,” which shall enable you to “swallow up death in victory.” “He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be damned.” Poor, trembling, penitent sinner put your hand inside the hand of Christ. Now fall on His mercy. “Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart.” I beseech you for Christ’s sake, “be you reconciled to God.” And if you are penitents, may God give you faith that you may be believers!

As for the rest of you, remember, before you go, I have told you no fable, but the truth of God. You may go away and say, “There is no hell.” Well, suppose there is none—believers will be as well off as you are! But suppose there is—and there is for a *certainty*—suppose yourselves in it; you cannot, then, suppose yourselves out of it anymore. May God grant His blessing, for Jesus’ sake, turning many of you to righteousness. Amen.

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# **EFFECTUAL CALLING (IRRESISTIBLE GRACE) NO. 73**

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING,  
APRIL 6, 1856,  
BY THE REV C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for today must I abide at your house.”  
Luke 19:5.***

NOTWITHSTANDING our firm belief that you are, for the most part, well instructed in the doctrines of the everlasting gospel, we are continually reminded in our conversation with young converts how absolutely necessary it is to repeat our former lessons and repeatedly assert and prove over and over again those doctrines which lie at the basis of our holy religion. Our friends, therefore, who have many years ago been taught the great doctrine of effectual calling, will believe that while I preach very simply this morning, the sermon is intended for those who are young in the fear of the Lord—that they may better understand this great starting point of God in the heart—the effectual calling of men by the Holy Spirit. I shall use the case of Zaccheus as a great illustration of the doctrine of effectual calling. You remember the story. Zaccheus had a curiosity to see the wonderful man Jesus Christ, who was turning the world upside down and causing an immense excitement in the minds of men. We sometimes find fault with curiosity and say it is sinful to come to the house of God from that motive. I am not quite sure that we should hazard such an assertion. The motive is not sinful, though certainly it is not virtuous—yet it has often been proved that curiosity is one of the best allies of grace. Zaccheus, moved by this motive, desired to see Christ—but there were two obstacles in the way—first, there was such a crowd of people that he could not get near the Savior. Second, he was so exceedingly short in stature that there was no hope of his reaching over people’s heads to catch a glimpse of Him. What did he do? He did as the boys were doing—for the boys of old times were, no doubt, just like the boys of the present age—they were perched up in the branches of a tree to look at Jesus as He passed along! Elderly man though he is, Zaccheus jumps up and there he sits among the children! The boys are too much afraid of that stern old publican, whom their fathers dreaded, to push him down or cause him any inconvenience.

Look at him there—with what anxiety he is peeping down to see which is Christ—for the Savior had no pompous distinction. No one is walking before Him with a silver mace. He did not hold a golden staff in His hand—He had no pontifical dress. In fact, He was dressed just like those around Him! He had a coat like that of a common peasant, made of one piece from top to bottom. Zaccheus could scarcely distinguish Him. However, before he has caught a sight of Christ, Christ has fixed His eyes upon him and, standing under the tree, He looks up and says, “Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for today I must abide at your house.” Down comes Zaccheus! Christ goes to his house. Zaccheus becomes Christ’s follower, and enters into the kingdom of heaven!

**I.** Now, first, effectual calling is a very gracious truth of God. You may guess this from the fact that Zaccheus was a character whom we would suppose the last to be saved. He belonged to a bad city—Jericho—a city which had been cursed and no one would suspect that anyone would come out of Jericho to be saved! It was near Jericho that the man fell among thieves—we trust Zaccheus had no hand in it—but there are some who, while they are publicans, can be thieves, also. We might as well expect converts from St. Giles’s, or the lowest parts of London, from the worst and vilest dens of infamy, as from Jericho in those days! Ah, my brothers and sisters, it matters not where you come from—you may come from one of the dirtiest streets, one of the worst back slums in London—if effectual grace calls you, it is an effectual call which knows no distinction of place! Zaccheus also was of an exceedingly bad trade, and probably cheated the people in order to enrich himself. Indeed, when Christ went into his house, there was an universal murmur that He had gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner! But, my brothers and sisters, divine grace knows no distinction—it is no respecter of persons! God calls whom He wills and He called this worst of publicans, in the worst of cities, from the worst of trades! Besides, Zaccheus was one who was the least likely to be saved because he was rich. It is true, rich and poor are welcome—no one has the least excuse for despair because of his condition—yet it is a fact that, “not many great men” after the flesh, “not many mighty” are called, but, “God has chosen the poor of this world—rich in faith.” But even here, grace knows no distinction. The *rich* Zaccheus is called from the tree. Down he comes and he is saved. I have thought it one of the greatest instances of God’s condescension that He can look *down* on man. But I will tell you there was a greater condescension than that when Christ looked *up* to see Zaccheus! For God to look down on His creatures—that is mercy—but for Christ so to humble Himself that He has to look up to one of His own creatures—that becomes mercy, indeed! Ah, many of you have climbed up the tree of

your own good works and perched yourselves in the branches of your holy actions and are trusting in the free will of the poor creature, or resting in some worldly maxim. Nevertheless, Christ looks up even to proud sinners, and calls them down; “Come down,” He says, “today I must abide at your house.” Had Zaccheus been a humble-minded man, sitting by the wayside, or at the feet of Christ, we would then have admired Christ’s mercy; but here he is lifted up, and Christ looks up to him and bids him come down!

**II.** Next it was a *personal* call. There were boys in the tree as well as Zaccheus but there was no mistake about the person who was called. It was, “Zaccheus, make haste and come down.” There are other calls mentioned in Scripture. It is said, especially, “Many are called, but few are chosen.” Now that is not the effectual call which is intended by the apostle when he said, “Whom He called, them He also justified.” That is a *general* call which many men, yes, all men reject, unless there comes after it the personal, particular call, which makes us Christians. You will bear me witness that it was a personal call that brought you to the Savior. It was some sermon which led you to feel that you were, no doubt, the person intended. The text, perhaps, was, “You, God, see me.” And perhaps the minister laid particular stress on the word, “me,” so that you thought God’s eyes were fixed upon you. And before the sermon was concluded, you thought you saw God open the books to condemn you and your heart whispered, “Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? says the Lord.” You might have been perched in the window, or stood packed in the aisle—but you had a solemn conviction that the sermon was preached to you and not to other people! God does not call His people in shoals but in units. “Jesus said unto her, *Mary*, and she turned and said unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master.” Jesus sees Peter and John fishing by the lake, and He says to them, “Follow Me.” He sees Matthew sitting at the table at the receipt of custom, and He says unto him, “Arise and follow Me,” and Matthew did so. When the Holy Spirit comes home to a man, God’s arrow goes into his heart—it does not graze his helmet, or make some little mark upon his armor—it penetrates between the joints of the harness, entering the marrow of the soul. Have you felt, dear friends, that personal call? Do you remember when a voice said, “Arise, He calls you.” Can you look back to when you said, “My Lord, *my* God”—when you knew the Spirit was striving with you and you said, “Lord, I come to You, for I know that You call *me*”? *I* might call the whole of you throughout eternity but if *God* calls one, there will be more effect through His personal call of one, than my general call of multitudes!

**III.** Thirdly, it is a *hastening* call. “Zaccheus, *make haste.*” The sinner, when he is called by the ordinary ministry, replies, “Tomorrow.” He hears a telling sermon and he says, “I will turn to God, by-and-by.” The tears roll down his cheeks, but they are wiped away. Some goodness appears, but like the cloud of the morning it is dissipated by the sun of temptation. He says, “I solemnly vow from this time to be a reformed man. After I have once more indulged in my darling sin I will renounce my lusts and decide for God.” Ah, that is only a *minister’s* call and is good for nothing! Hell, they say, is paved with good intentions. These good intentions are begotten by general calls! The road to hell is laid all over with branches of the trees whereon men are sitting, for they often pull down branches from the trees, but they do not come down, themselves. The straw laid down before a sick man’s door causes the wheels to roll more noiselessly. So there are some who strew their path with promises of repentance and so go more easily and noiselessly down to the pit of hell! But God’s call is not a call for tomorrow. “*Today* if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts: as in the provocation, when your fathers tempted Me.” God’s grace always comes with dispatch—and if you are drawn *by God*, you will run after God and not be talking about delays! Tomorrow—it is not written in the almanac of time. Tomorrow—it is in Satan’s calendar and nowhere else! Tomorrow—it is a rock whitened by the bones of mariners who have been wrecked upon it. Tomorrow is the wrecker’s light gleaming on the shore, luring poor ships to destruction. Tomorrow—it is the idiot’s cup which he lies at the foot of the rainbow, but which none has ever found. Tomorrow—it is the floating island of Loch Lomond, which none has ever seen. Tomorrow—it is a dream. Tomorrow—it is a delusion. Tomorrow, yes, tomorrow you may lift up your eyes in hell, being in torment. Yonder clock says, “Today.” Your pulse whispers, “Today.” I hear my heart speak as it beats and it says, “Today.” Everything cries, “Today.” And the Holy Spirit is in union with these things and says, “*Today* if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” sinners, are you inclined now to seek the Savior? Are you breathing a prayer right now? Are you saying, “Now or never! I must be saved now”? If you are, then I hope it is an *effectual call*, for Christ, when He gives an effectual call, says, “Zaccheus, make haste.”

**IV.** Next, it is a *humbling* call. “Zaccheus, make haste and *come down.*” Many a time has a minister called men to repentance with a call which has made them proud, exalted them in their own esteem and led them to say, “I can turn to God when I like! I can do so without the influence of the Holy Spirit.” They have been called to *go up* and not to *come down*. God always humbles a sinner. Can I not remember when God told me to come down? One of the first steps I had to take was to go right down

from my good works. And oh, what a fall was that! Then I stood upon my own self-sufficiency and Christ said, "Come down! I have pulled you down from your good works and now I will pull you down from your self-sufficiency." Well, I had another fall and I felt sure I had gained the bottom, but Christ said, "Come down!" And He made me come down till I fell on some point at which I felt I was not savable. "Down, sir! Come down, yet." And down I came until I had to let go of every branch of the tree of my hopes in despair. Then I said, "I can do nothing. I am ruined." The waters were wrapped round my head and I was shut out from the light of day and thought myself a stranger from the commonwealth of Israel. "Come down lower, still, sir! You have too much pride to be saved." Then I was brought down to see my corruption, my wickedness, my filthiness. "Come down," says God, when He means to save! Now, proud sinners, it is of no use for you to be proud, to stick yourselves up in the trees—Christ will have you down. Oh, you that dwell with the eagle on the craggy rock, you shall come down from your elevation—you shall fall by grace, or you shall fall with a vengeance one day. He "has cast down the mighty from their seat and has exalted the humble and meek."

V. Next, it is an *affectionate* call. "Today I must abide at *your house*." You can easily conceive how the faces of the multitude change! They thought Christ to be the holiest and best of men and were ready to make Him a king! But He says, "Today I must abide at your house." There was one poor Jew who had been inside Zaccheus' house—he had "been on the carpet," as they say in country villages when they are taken before the justice—and he recollected what sort of a house it was. He remembered how he was taken in there and his conceptions of it were something like what a fly would have of a spider's den after he had once escaped! There was another who had been "relieved" of nearly all his property—the idea he had of walking in there was like walking into a den of lions! "What?" they said, "Is this holy man going into such a den as that, where we poor wretches have been robbed and ill-treated? It was bad enough for Christ to speak to him up in the tree, but the idea of going into his house!" They all murmured at His going to be "a guest with a man who was a sinner." Well, I know what some of His disciples thought—they thought it very imprudent—it might injure His Character and He might offend the people. They thought He might have gone to see this man at night, like Nicodemus, and give him an audience when nobody saw Him! To acknowledge such a man publicly was the most imprudent act He could commit! Why did Christ do as He did? Because He would give Zaccheus an *affectionate* call. "I will not come and stand at your threshold, or look in at your window, but I will come into your house—the same house where the cries of widows have come into your

ears and you have disregarded them. I will come into your parlor, where the weeping of the orphan has never moved your compassion. I will come there where you, like a ravenous lion have devoured your prey. I will come there, where you have blackened your house and made it infamous. I will come into the place where cries have risen to high heaven, wrung from the lips of those whom you have oppressed! I will come into your house and give you a blessing.”

Oh, what affection there was in that! Poor sinner, my Master is a very affectionate Master! He will come into your house. What kind of a house have you got? A house that you have made miserable with your drunkenness—a house you have defiled with your impurity—a house you have defiled with your cursing and swearing—a house where you are carrying on an illegal trade that you would be glad to get rid of? Christ says, “I will come into your house.” And I know some houses, now, that once were dens of sin where Christ comes every morning! Husband and wife, who once only could quarrel and fight, bend their knees together in prayer! Christ comes there at dinnertime, when the workman comes home for his meals. Some of my hearers can scarcely come for an hour to their meals but they must have word of prayer and reading of the Scriptures! Christ comes to them! Where the walls were plastered up with the lascivious songs and idle pictures, there is a Christian almanac in one place. There is a Bible on the chest of drawers—and though it is only one room they live in—if an angel should come in and God should say, “What have you seen in that house?” he would say, “I have seen good furniture, for there is a Bible there—here and there a religious book—the filthy pictures are pulled down and burned; there are no cards in the man’s cupboard, now. Christ has come into his house.” Oh, what a blessing that we have our household God as well as the Romans! Our God is a household God; He comes to live with His people! He loves the tents of Jacob. Now, poor rag-muffin sinner, you who live in the filthiest den in London—if such an one is here, Jesus says to you, “Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for today I must *abide at your house*.”

**VI.** Again, it was not only an affectionate call, but it was an *abiding call*. “Today I must *abide at your house*.” A *common call* is like this, “Today I shall walk into your house at one door and out at the other.” The common call which is given by the gospel to all men is a call which operates upon them for a time and then it is *all over*—but the saving call is an *abiding call*. When Christ speaks, He does not say, “Make haste, Zaccheus and come down, for I am just coming to look in.” No. He says, “I must abide at your house. I am coming to sit down to eat and drink with you. I am coming to have a meal with you. Today I must *abide at your house*.” “Ah,” says one, “you cannot tell how many times I have

been impressed, sir. I have often had a series of solemn convictions and I thought I was really saved—but it all died away—like a dream. When one awakes, all has vanished that he dreamed. So was it with me.” Ah, but poor soul, do not despair! Do you feel the strivings of almighty grace within your heart bidding you repent today? If you do, it will be an *abiding call*. If it is Jesus at work in your soul, He will come and tarry in your heart and consecrate you for His own forever! He says, “I will come and dwell with you, and that forever. I will come and say—

***Here I will make My settled rest,  
No more will go and come.  
No more a stranger or a guest,  
But Master of this home.***

“Oh,” you say, “that is what I want! I want an *abiding call*, something that will last. I do not want a religion that will wash out, but a fast-color religion.” Well, that is the kind of call Christ gives! His ministers cannot give it—but when Christ speaks, He speaks with power and says, “Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for today I must *abide at your house*.”

**VII.** There is one thing, however, I cannot forget, and that is that it was a *necessary call*. Just read it over again. “Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for today I *must* abide at your house.” It was not a thing that He might do, or might not do—it was a necessary call! The salvation of a sinner is as much a matter of necessity with God as the fulfillment of His covenant that the rain shall no more drown the world. The salvation of every blood-bought child of God is a necessary thing for three reasons—It is necessary because it is God’s *purpose*. It is necessary because it is Christ’s *purchase*, and it is necessary because it is God’s *promise*. It is necessary that the child of God should be saved. Some divines think it is very wrong to lay a stress on the word, “must,” especially in that passage where it is said, “He must go through Samaria.” “Why,” they say, “He must go through Samaria because there was no other way He could go and, therefore, He was forced to go that way.” Yes, Gentlemen, we reply, no doubt. But then there might have been another way. Providence made it so that He must go through Samaria and that Samaria should lie in the route He had chosen. “He *must* go through Samaria.” Providence directed man to build Samaria directly in the road and grace compelled the Savior to move in that direction. It was not, “Come down, Zaccheus, because I *may* abide at your house,” but, “I *must*.” The Savior felt a strong necessity. Just as much a necessity as there is that man should die. As strong a necessity as there is that the sun should give us light by day and the moon by night—just so much a necessity is there that every blood-bought child of God shall be saved! “Today I *must* abide at your house.” And oh, when the Lord comes to this—that He *must*—then He

*will!* What a thing it is with the poor sinner, then! At other times we ask, "Shall I let Him in at all? There is a stranger at the door. He is knocking now—He has knocked before—shall I let Him in?" But this time it is, "*I must* abide at your house." There was no knocking at the door, but smash went the door into atoms! And in He walked—"I must, I shall, I will—I care not for your protecting your vileness, your unbelief. I must, I will—I must abide at your house." "Ah," says one, "I do not believe God would ever make me to believe as you believe, or become a Christian at all." Ah, but if He shall but say, "Today I must abide at *your* house," there will be no resistance in you. There are some of you who would scorn the very idea of being a canting Methodist—"What, sir? Do you suppose I would ever turn into one of your religious people?" No, my friend, I don't *suppose* it—I *know* it for a certainty—if God says, "I must," there is no standing against it! Let Him say, "must," and it will be!

I will just tell you an anecdote proving this. "A father was about sending his son to college, but as he knew the influence to which he would be exposed, he was not without a deep and anxious solicitude for the spiritual and eternal welfare of his favorite child. Fearing lest the principles of Christian faith, which he had endeavored to instill into his mind, would be rudely assailed, but trusting in the efficacy of that word which is quick and powerful, he purchased, unknown to his son, an elegant copy of the Bible and deposited it at the bottom of his trunk. The young man entered upon his college career. The restraints of a pious education were soon broken off and he proceeded from speculation to doubts and from doubts to a denial of the reality of religion! After having become, in his own estimation, wiser than his father, he discovered one day, while rummaging his trunk, with great surprise and indignation, the sacred deposit. He took it out and while deliberating on the manner in which he would treat it, he determined that he would use it as waste paper on which to wipe his razor while shaving. Accordingly, every time he went to shave, he tore out a leaf or two of the holy book and thus used it till nearly half the volume was destroyed. But while he was committing this outrage upon the sacred book, a text now and then met his eye, and was carried like a barbed arrow to his heart! At length, he heard a sermon which discovered to him his own character, and his exposure to the wrath of God. It riveted upon his mind—the impression which he had received from the last torn leaf of the blessed, yet insulted volume. Had worlds been at his disposal, he would freely have given them all, could they have availed in enabling him to undo what he had done! At length he found forgiveness at the foot of the cross. The torn leaves of that sacred volume brought healing to his soul—for they led him to repose on the mercy of God—which is sufficient for the chief of

sinners! I tell you there is not a reprobate walking the streets and defiling the air with his blasphemies. There is not a creature abandoned so as to be well-nigh as bad as Satan, himself—if he is a child of life—who is not within the reach of mercy! And if God says, “Today I must abide at your house,” He assuredly will!

Do you feel, my dear hearer, just now, something in your mind which seems to say you have held out against the gospel a long while, but today you can hold out no longer? Do you feel that a strong hand has got hold of you and do you hear a voice saying, “Sinner, I must abide at your house; you have often scorned Me, you have often laughed at Me, you have often spit in the face of mercy, often blasphemed Me, but sinner, I must abide at your house! You banged the door yesterday in the missionary’s face; you burned the tract, you laughed at the minister, you have cursed God’s house, you have violated the Sabbath—but, sinner, I must abide at your house and I will”? “What? Lord,” you say, “abide at *my* house? Why it is covered all over with iniquity. Abide in *my* house? Why there is not a chair or a table but would cry out against me. Abide in *my* house? Why the joists and beams and flooring would all rise up and tell You that I am not worthy to kiss the hem of Your garment! What? Lord, abide at *my* house?” “Yes,” He says, “I *must*. There is a strong necessity, My powerful love compels Me, and whether you will let Me or not, I am determined to make you willing and you shall let Me in.” Does not this surprise you, poor trembler—you who thought that mercy’s day was gone and that the bell of your destruction had tolled your death-knell? Oh, does not this surprise you, that Christ not only asks you to come to Him, but invites Himself to your table and, what is more, when you would send Him away, kindly says, “I must—I will come in”? Only think of Christ going after a sinner, crying after a sinner, begging a sinner to let Him save him—and that is just what Jesus does to His chosen ones! The sinner runs away from Him, but Free grace pursues him and says, “Sinner, come to Christ.” And if our hearts are shut up, Christ puts His hand in at the door, and if we do not rise, but repulse Him coldly, He says, “I must, I will come in.” He weeps over us till His tears win us! He cries after us till His cries prevail—and at last, in His own well-determined hour, He enters into our heart and there He dwells. “I must abide at your house,” says Jesus.

**VIII.** And now, lastly, this call was an *effectual* one, for we see the fruits it brought forth; open was Zaccheus’ door; his table was spread; washed were his hands; unburdened was his conscience, and joyful was his soul. He said, “Here, Lord, the half of my goods I gladly give to the poor; I dare say I have robbed them of half my property, and now I restore it; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I

will restore it to him fourfold.” Away goes another portion of his property! Ah, Zaccheus, you will go to bed tonight a great deal poorer than when you got up this morning—but infinitely richer, too! Poor, very poor, in this world’s goods, compared with what you were when you first climbed that sycamore tree. But richer—infinity richer—in heavenly treasure! sinner, we shall know whether God calls you by this—if *He* calls, it will be an *effectual call*—not a call which you hear and then forget—but one which produces good works! If God has called you this morning, down will go that drunken cup, up will go your prayers! If God has called you this morning, there will not be *one* shutter down today in your shop, but *all and* you will have a notice stuck up, “This house is closed on the Sabbath, and will not again on that day be opened.” Tomorrow there will be such-and-such worldly amusement—but if God has called you, you will not go! And if you have robbed anybody, (and who knows but I may have a thief, here), if God calls you, there will be a restoration of what you have stolen—you will give up all that you have—so that you will follow God with all your heart! We do not believe a man to be converted unless he does renounce the error of his ways—unless, practically, he is brought to know that Christ Himself is Master of his conscience, and His law is his delight! “Zaccheus, make haste and come down; I must abide at your house.” And he made haste and came down and Jesus received him joyfully. “And Zaccheus stood and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Now, one or two lessons. *A lesson to the proud.* Come down, proud heart, come down! Mercy runs in valleys, but it goes not to the mountaintop. Come down, come down, lofty spirit! The lofty city—He lays it low even to the ground and then He builds it up. Again, *a lesson to the poor despairing soul*—I am glad to see you in God’s house this morning—it is a good sign. I care not what you came for. You heard there was a strange kind of man that preached here, perhaps. Never mind about that. You are all quite as strange as he is! It is necessary that there should be strange men to gather in other strange men. Now, I have a mass of people here. And if I might use a figure, I would compare you to a great heap of ashes, mingled with which are a few steel filings. Now, my sermon, if it is attended with divine grace, will be a sort of magnet—it will not attract any of the ashes—they will stay just where they are—but it will draw out the steel filings! I have got a Zaccheus there! There is a Mary up there! A John down there, a Sarah, or a William, or a Thomas

there—God’s chosen ones—they are steel filings in the congregation of ashes and my gospel, the gospel of the blessed God, like a great magnet, draws them out of the heap! There they come, there they come! Why? Because there was a magnetic power between the gospel and their hearts. Ah, poor sinner, come to Jesus, believe His love, trust His mercy. If you have a *desire* to come—if you are forcing your way through the ashes to get to Christ—then it is because Christ is calling you!

Oh, all of you who know yourselves to be sinners—every man, woman and child of you—yes, you little children (for God has given me some of you to be my wages), do you feel yourselves sinners? Then believe on Jesus and be saved! You have come here from curiosity, many of you. Oh, that you might be met with and saved! I am distressed for you, lest you should sink into hell. Oh, listen to Christ while He speaks to you! Christ says, “Come down.” This morning go home and humble yourselves in the sight of God. Go and confess your iniquities that you have sinned against Him. Go home and tell Him that you are a wretch, undone without His sovereign grace. Then look to Him, for rest assured He has first looked to you. You say, “sir, oh, I am willing enough to be saved, but I am afraid He is not willing.” Stop! Stop! No more of that! Do you know that is part blasphemy? Not quite all. If you were not ignorant, I would tell you that it was full blasphemy! You cannot look to Christ before He has looked to you. If you are willing to be saved, He gave you that will! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized and you shall be saved. I trust the Holy Spirit is calling you. Young man up there, young man in the window, make haste! Come down! Old man, sitting in these pews, come down! Merchant in yonder aisle, make haste! Matron and youth, not knowing Christ, oh, may He look at you! Old grandmother, hear the gracious call! And you, young lad, Christ may be looking at you—I trust He is—and saying to you, “Make haste and come down, for today I must abide at your house.”

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# **A WILLING PEOPLE AND AN IMMUTABLE LEADER NO. 74**

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 13, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: You have the dew of Your youth.”  
Psalm 110:3.***

NEVER has a verse in the Scripture puzzled me more than this to find out its meaning and its connection. In reading it over hastily, at first sight, it may appear very easy, but if you search into it very carefully, you will find you can with difficulty string the words together, or give them any intelligible meaning. I have taken down all the commentators I have in my possession—I find they all give a meaning to the words, but not a soul of them—not even Dr. Gill—gives a connected meaning to the whole sentence. After looking at the old translations and employing every means in my power to discover the meaning, I found myself as far off as when I began! Matthew Henry, one of the wisest commentators, and certainly the best for family reading, makes the passage read as if it were like this—“Your people shall come willingly in the day of Your power in the beauties of holiness. In the womb of the morning you have the dew of Your youth.” That is how he explains it, though he does not say that is the proper translation. He explains the last sentence, “You have the dew of Your youth” as meaning that in early life, from the womb of the morning, young people would give themselves to Jesus Christ. But it is no such thing! There is a colon after the word, “morning,” dividing the sentence. Besides, it does not say, the “people shall be willing. You have the dew of *their* youth,” as it would read if it were as the expositors understand it. But it says to Christ, “You have the dew of *Your* youth.” It was not until we had thoroughly looked at the connection of the verse, and tried to catch the scope of the Psalm, that we thought we had hit upon its meaning. But even now we shall leave it with your judgment to decide whether or not we have gained the mind of the Spirit, as we hope we have.

The Psalm is a kind of coronation Psalm. Christ is bid to take His throne. “Sit You at My right hand.” The scepter is put into His hand. “The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion.” And then the ques-

tion is asked, “Where are His people?” For a king would be no king without subjects! The highest title of kingship is but an empty one if there are no subjects to make up its fullness. Where, then, shall Christ find that which shall be the fullness of Him that fills all-in-all? The great anxiety we have is not whether Christ is king or not—we know He is. He is the Lord of creation and of providence. Our anxiety is about His subjects. Oftentimes do we ask, “O Lord, where shall we find Your subjects?” When we have preached to hard hearts and prophesied to dry bones, our unbelief, at times, says, “Where shall we find children for Christ? Where shall we find people who will constitute the subjects of His empire?” Our fears are all put to rest by this passage—“Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power, in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning.” And by the second promise, “You have the dew of Your youth.” These thoughts are placed here to allay the anxieties of God’s believing people and to let them see how Christ shall indeed be king, and never lack a multitude of subjects!

First, here is *a promise concerning His people*. And secondly, here is *a promise concerning Christ, Himself*—that He shall always be as strong, as fresh, as new and as mighty a Christ as ever!

**I.** First, we shall look at THE PROMISE MADE TO CHRIST’S PEOPLE. “Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning.” Here is a promise of time—“in the day of Your power.” Here is a promise of *people*—“Your people.” Here is a promise of *disposition*—“Your people shall be willing.” Here is a promise of *character*—“Your people shall be willing in the beauties of holiness.” And here is a *majestic figure* to show the manner in which they shall be brought forth—by a very bold metaphor, they are said to come out as mysteriously as the dew drops from the womb of the morning! We know not how, but they are produced by God. “Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power in the beauties of holiness.” In the womb of the morning they shall come.

**1.** First, here is a promise concerning *time*. Christ is not to gather in His people every day but on one special day, the day of *His* power. It is not the day when man feels himself to be the most mighty that souls are gathered—for alas—God’s servants sometimes preach until their self-complacency tells them they have been exceedingly eloquent and mighty. And, therefore, it seems sinners *must* be saved—but there is no promise that in the day of *our* power we shall ever see men gathered to Christ! There are times, too, when the people seem to have a great power of seeking after God and when they have the power of hearing. But there is no promise that just when an excitement reigns and when there appears to be power in the *creature*, that such a day shall be the day of God’s in-

gathering! It is “the day of *Your* power”—not of the minister’s power, nor of the hearers.’

The day of God’s power—when is it? We take it, it is *the day when God pours out His own power upon the minister*, so that God’s children are gathered in by his preaching.

There are times, beloved, when the ordained servant of the living God will have nothing to do in preaching but just to open his mouth and allow the words to flow. He will scarcely need stay to think, but the thoughts will be injected into his mind and while he preaches, he will feel there is a power accompanying his words! His hearers, too, will discern it. Some of them will feel as if they were sitting under a sledgehammer beating on their hearts. Others will feel as if the truth of God were stealing into their hearts and slaying all their unbelief in such a way that they could not resist the blessed power! It will often happen that God’s children will find an influence and an *irresistible might* going with the word of God. They have heard that minister before; they were delighted with him; they trusted that they had been edified and profited, but on *that* day there was a special striking home—every word fell on good soil—every blow hit the mark! There was no arrow shot which did not go into the center of the soul—there was not a syllable uttered which was not like the word of Jehovah, Himself, speaking either from Sinai, or Calvary! Have you ever known such times? Have you not felt them when you have been standing or sitting in the house of God? Ah, those are times when God, by the manifestation of Himself, is pleased to enlighten His children, to gather in His people and to make poor sinners willing! There is also a day of power *in every sinner’s heart*; for, alas, the general day of power which occurs to our congregation omits many—many over whom we have to weep—while hundreds shed tears of penitence, other hundreds sit stolid and unmoved! While some hearts leap for very joy, others are bound in the fetters of ignorance and are sleeping the sleep of death! While God is pouring out His Spirit till some hearts are full to the very brim, ready to burst, there are some dry, without a drop of the heavenly moisture! The day of God’s power is a day of personal power in our souls, like that day of Zaccheus when the Lord said, “Make haste and come down.” It is a day, not of argument of man, but a day of omnipotent power—God working in the heart! It is not a day of intellectual enlightenment, merely a day of instruction, but a day when God shall enter into the heart and, with a mighty hand, shall wrench the will and turn it as He would—shall make the judgment judge righteously, the imagination think as it ought, and shall guide the whole soul to Himself! Did you ever think what power that was which God exerts in every individual heart? There is no power like it! Should a man command the mighty waterfalls

to congeal and stand in heaps? If they should obey him, he would not have worked a miracle half as mighty as that which God works in the heart when He bids the floods of sin to cease flowing!

Could I command Etna with its flames and smoke to cease its boiling and should it at once be still, I had not worked a deed so mighty as when God speaks to a boiling spirit sending forth fire and smoke and bids it stop! The everlasting God exhibits more power in turning a sinner from the error of his ways, than in the creation of a world or the sustentation of the universe! In the day of God's power, God's people shall be willing! Beloved, we also look for *a day of power in the coming period of the reign of Jesus Christ*. I take it there is a time coming when the feeblest among us shall be as David; when David shall be as the angel of the Lord. The time is approaching when every poor ignorant minister shall preach with power and when every child of God shall be filled with the knowledge of God! We hope for a happy day when Christ shall come and shall cause the knowledge of the Lord to be spread so rapidly that it shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. We often cheer ourselves with this subject—if we labor in vain and spend our strength for nothing, now, it will not always be so. The day will come when the fresh wind of the Spirit will fill the sails of the church and she shall go swiftly along—when the feeble hands of the minister shall be as mighty as the hands of the boldest Christian warrior who ever wielded the sword of the Spirit! Yes, the day will come when every word of Christ shall be as ointment poured forth, spreading perfume over a sinful world—when we shall never preach a sermon without effect—when, as the rain comes down and the snow from heaven, it not only shall not return void but shall water the earth! And having already brought forth and budded, it shall bring forth fruit to the glory of God—that fruit, the destruction of idols and the casting down of all false religions. Happy day, that day of power! Christians! Why do you not pray for it? Why do you not ask that God would give His people might and that Christ may speedily come and find His people willing?

There is, however, another translation to these words. Calvin translates them, “at the time of the assembling of their army,” “*a jour die mon-tres*,” “in the day of the review.” You sometimes say, “Oh, if a great struggle were to occur, where would be found the men to fight for Christ?” We have heard timid believers say, “Oh, I am afraid if persecution should set in, we would find very few valiant for the truth of God—few ministers would boldly come forward to uphold the gospel of Christ.” No such thing, believer! Christ's people will be willing in the day of God's armies. God never had a battle to fight yet when He could say, “I have no soldiers in reserve.” God never had an arduous campaign in which His armies

were insufficient. Once the prophet said, (Zechariah 1:18-21), “Then I lifted up my eyes and saw and behold, four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, what are these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. And the Lord showed me four carpenters. Then said I, What come these to do? And he spoke, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head—but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.” God had enough men to cut off the horns and to build His house—there were four. And He had the right sort of men ready to do His work, for “carpenters” were ready. Whenever a struggle is approaching, God will find His men! Whenever a battle is to commence, God will find the men valiant for His truth. Never be afraid that God will not take care of His church. “Your people shall be willing in the day of God’s battle.” Are you undertaking some noble enterprise? Are you saying, “Here is a grand endeavor to evangelize the world—where shall we find people?” The answer is, “God’s people shall be willing in the day of His armies.”

Some Sunday school teachers are complaining that in their church, they cannot find enough to canvas the district. Why not? Because they have not enough of God’s people—but God’s people are willing in the day of His armies! We have complained that we cannot get ministers to evangelize. Why not? Because they are not thoroughly imbued with the Master’s Spirit, for His people would be willing in the day of God’s armies when they are needed. They always have willing hearts to be ready for the battle. They do not say, “I must consult flesh and blood.” No, there is the standard—up go God’s soldiers! There is the battle, out go their swords! They are ready for the fight at once! They are always ready in the day of God’s armies. Beloved, fear no struggle; dread no enterprise; neither think that the silver and the gold will be withheld from us—“The silver and the gold are Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills.” Think not, however grand your ideas, that you shall fail therein. God’s people will come forward willingly when He requires their aid. We firmly believe that truth of God. But we must wait for God’s day. We must pray for God’s day. We must hope for it. We must labor for it. And when it comes, God shall find His people willing, as they ought to be!

**2.** Next, we have here the promise of *a people*, “Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power.” Nobody else. Here is a promise that Christ shall always have a people. In the darkest ages, Christ has always had a church, and if darker times shall come, He will still have His church. Oh, Elijah, your unbelief is foolish. You say, “I, only I, am left alone and they seek my life.” No, Elijah, in those caves of the earth God

has His prophets, hidden by fifties. You too, poor unbelieving Christian, at times you say, “I, even I, am left.” Oh, if you had eyes to see, if you could travel a little, your heart would be glad to find that God does not lack a people! It cheers my heart to find that God has a family everywhere. We do not go anywhere but we find really earnest hearts—men full of prayer. I bless God that I can say concerning the church, wherever I have been, though they are not many, there are a few who sigh and groan over the sorrows of Israel. There are chosen bands in every church—thoroughly earnest men who are looking out for and are ready to receive their Master—who cry to God that He would send them times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Do not be too sad. God has a people and they are willing now! And when the day of God’s power shall come, there is no fear about the people. Religion may be at low ebb, but it was never at such low ebb that God’s ship was stranded. It may be ever so low, but the devil shall never be able to cross the river of Christ’s church dry shod. He shall always find abundance of water running in the channel thereof. God grant us grace to look out for His people, believing that there are some everywhere, for the promise is, “Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power.”

**3.** We next come to *disposition*. God’s people are a willing people. Adam Clarke says—“This verse has been woefully perverted; it has been supposed to point out the irresistible operation of the grace of God on the souls of the elect, thereby making them willing to receive Christ as their Savior.” This is a doctrine which he utterly discards. Well, my dear Adam Clarke, we are extremely obliged to you for your remark, but at the same time we think that the text has not been “woefully perverted.” We believe that the text has been very properly used to show that God *makes* men willing, for if we read our Bibles rightly, we understand that men by nature are *not* willing! There is a text you are extremely fond of which we do not think belongs to you, and which says, “You will not come unto Me that you might have life.” And there is another text we would like to put you and your brethren in mind of, “No man can come unto Me, except the Father which has sent Me, draw him.” If you would remember *that*, we think even though the text does not teach it, you might at least have some respect for the doctrine. But it says, God’s people *shall* be willing in the day of God’s power, and if we read it as plain English people, we look upon it as a promise that God will produce a people who shall be willing enough in the day of His power! And from the fact that no man is willing by nature, we infer from this text that there must be a work of His grace making men willing in the day of God’s power!

We do not know whether you think that fair logic. We think it is. We have been accused of having no logic, and we are not particularly sorry

about that, for we would rather have what men call dogmatism, than logic! It is Christ's to prove; it is ours to preach! We leave argument to Christ; for us we have only to affirm what we see in God's Word; God's people are to be a willing people. We can tell who are the children of God by the fact they are willing. I preach to many of you times without number. I tell you of hell; I bid you flee from it; I tell you of Christ—I bid you look to Him—but you are unwilling to do so; what do I conclude from that? Either that the day of God's power has not yet come, or that you are not God's people. When I preach with power, and the word is dispensed with unction, if I see you unmoved and unwilling to cast yourselves on Jesus Christ, what do I say? Why, I fear those are not God's people, for God's people are willing in the day of His power; willing to submit to sovereign grace; to give themselves up into the hands of the Mediator; to hang simply on His cross for salvation! I ask again what has made them willing? Must it not have been something in divine grace which has turned their will? If the will of man is purely free to do right or wrong, I ask you, my friends, to answer this—if it is so, why do you not turn to God this very moment without divine assistance? It is because you are *not* willing, and it needed a promise that God's people *would* be willing in the day of His power!

I think this word applies not only to their being willing to be saved but willing to work *after* they are saved. Did you ever know a minister who preached on the Sunday but who at the prayer meeting on the Monday night seemed as if he would much rather be at home? And if there was a lecture on Thursday, did not he, poor man, come up as if he were about to perform some enormously hard duty? What do you think of him? Why, you think he is not one of the people of God, else he would be willing! Some persons come to the house of God, but they come just as the slave would to his whipping place—they do not like it—and they are glad to get away again! But what do we say of God's people—

***“Up to her courts with joys unknown,  
The sacred tribes repair.”***

They are a willing people! There is a collection. The Church of God requires some assistance. One man doles out as small a trifle as ever he can, to keep up his respectability. You do not think he exhibits the spirit of a Christian because he is not willing. But Christ's people are willing! All that they do, they do willingly, for they are constrained by no compulsion but by grace, alone! I am sure we all can do a thing far better when we are willing than when we are forced. God loves His people's services because they do them voluntarily. Voluntarism is the essence of the gospel. Willing people are those whom God delights to have as His servants.

He would not have slaves to grace His throne, but true men, who, with gladness and joy, should be willing in the day of His power!

4. We shall scarcely have time for a discussion of the whole text, but we must briefly notice the *character* of these people as well as their dispositions. “Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power.” “They shall be willing in the beauties of holiness.” This is how they shall be clothed—not merely in boldness, but in the beauties of holiness, for holiness has its beauties, its gems, its pearls and what are these? They shall be clothed in the beauties of the holiness of imputed righteousness and of imparted grace! God’s people are, in themselves, a deformed people, hence their comeliness must be given them. The standard of beauty is saintship. If an angel should descend from heaven and carry up to God the most beautiful creature he could find, he would not cull earth’s roses. He would not gather her lilies. He would take up to heaven the fair character of a child of God! Where he found a self-denying hero, where he discovered an ardent disciple—the angel would take him up, exclaiming, “Great God, here is beauty! Take it, this is *Your* beauty.” We walk along and admire statues and such-like things and we say, “Here is beauty,” but the Christian has on him the true beauty—the beauties of holiness! Oh, you young, you proud, you ask for beauty—but do you know that all the beauties of this earth can do you no good, for you must die and wear a shroud?—

***“Time will rob you of your bloom,  
Death will drag you to the tomb.”***

But if you have the beauties of holiness, they shall increase and become fairer and fairer and among the fair angels, you, as fair as they, shall stand decked in your Savior’s righteousness! “Your people shall be willing” to come forward and they shall be the right sort of people. They will be a holy people, arrayed in, “the beauties of holiness.”

5. Now there is a bold metaphor here which we must explain in the last place. The text says, “Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power in the beauties of holiness.” Now you understand that—but what do the next words mean, “From the womb of the morning?” “Why, from the earliest periods of their lives,” say the commentators, “God’s people shall be willing.” No, it does not mean that! There is a bold and brilliant figure here. It is asked, where are they to come from? How are God’s people to be brought? What means are to be employed? How is it to be done? The simple answer is this—did you ever see the dewdrops glistening on the earth? And did you ever ask, “From where did these come? How came they here so infinite in number, so lavishly scattered everywhere, so pure and brilliant?” nature whispered the answer, “They came from the womb of the morning.” So God’s people will come forth as noise-

lessly, as mysteriously, as divinely as if they came “from the womb of the morning,” like the dewdrops. Philosophy has labored to discover the origin of dew and perhaps has guessed it. But to the Eastern, one of the greatest riddles was out of whose womb came the dew? Who is the mother of those pearly drops? Now, so will God’s people come *mysteriously*. It will be said by the bystander, “There was nothing in that man’s preaching. I thought I would hear an orator! This man has been made the means of salvation to thousands and I thought I would hear an eloquent man! But I have heard a great many preachers far more intelligent and intellectual than he—how were these souls converted?” Why, they have come from the “womb of the morning,” *mysteriously*. Again—the dew drops—who made them? Do kings and princes rise up and hold their scepters and bid the clouds shed tears, or frighten them to weeping by the beating of the drum? Do armies march to the battle to force the sky to give up its treasure and scatter its diamonds lavishly? No; God speaks; He whispers in the ears of nature, and it weeps for joy at the glad news that the morning is coming. God does it—there is no apparent agency employed, no thunder, no lightning—God has done it. That is how God’s people shall be saved! They come forth from the “womb of the morning” *divinely* called, *divinely* brought, *divinely* blessed, *divinely* numbered, *divinely* scattered over the entire surface of the globe—*divinely* refreshing to the world, they proceed from the “womb of the morning.”

You may have noticed in the morning what a *multitude* of dew drops there are and you may have inquired, “From where comes so great a multitude?” We answer the womb of nature is capable of ten thousand births at once. So, “from the womb of the morning” God’s children shall come. No struggle, no pang, no shriek, no agony is heard—all is secret. But they shall come fresh “from the womb of the morning.” The figure is so beautiful that words cannot explain it. You have only to stand early one morning when the sun is beginning to shoot his rays of light up to the sky and look at the fields all glistening with dew, and say, “Where did all these come from?” The answer is, they came “from the womb of the morning.” So when you find that multitudes are saved and you see them coming so mysteriously, so gently, so divinely and yet so numerously, you can only compare them to the dew of the morning! You say, “Where did they all come from?” And the answer is, they have come “from the womb of the morning.”

**II.** Now the second part of the text is the sweetest and we must have a little time upon it. There was a promise made to Christ concerning His people, and that sets our fears at rest concerning the Church. Now here is ANOTHER PROMISE MADE TO CHRIST—“You have the dew of Your youth.” Ah, believer, this is the great source of gospel success—that

Christ has the dew of His youth! Jesus Christ, *personally*, has the dew of His youth! Certain leaders in their young days have led their troops to battle and by the loudness of their voice and the strength of their bodies, they have inspired their men with courage. But the old warrior has his hair sown with gray. He begins to be decrepit and no longer can lead men to battle. It is not so with Jesus Christ! He has still the dew of His youth. The same Christ who led His troops to battle in His early youth, leads them now. The arm which smote the sinner with His word, smites now. It is as unpalsied as it was before. The eyes which looked upon His friends with gladness and upon His foes with a glance, stern and high—those same eyes are regarding us now, undimmed, like that of Moses. He has the dew of His youth! Oh, it delights us to think that Christ was “God over all, blessed forever,” in His youth, filled with almighty power—and He is just the same now! He is not an old Christ, a worn-out Christ, but our still Leader! He is as young as ever! The same dew, the same freshness is about Him. You hear it said of a minister, “In his younger days there was a deal of freshness about him, but he is getting old and begins to repeat himself.” It is never so with Christ! He always has the dew of His youth. He who “spoke as never Man spoke” once, when He shall come to speak again, will speak just as He did before! He has the dew of His youth personally.

So also *doctrinally*, Christ has the dew of His youth. Usually, when a religion starts, it is very rampant, but it afterwards decays. Look at the religion of Mohammed; for 100 years or more it threatened to subvert kingdoms and overturn the whole world; but where are the blades that flashed, then? Where are now the willing hands that smote down the foes of Mohammed? Why, his religion has become an old worn-out thing! No one cares about it. And the Turk, sitting on his divan, with his legs crossed, smoking his pipe, is the best image of the Mohammedan religion—old, infirm, exhausted. But the Christian religion—ah, it is as fresh as when it started from its cradle at Jerusalem! It is as hale, hearty and mighty, as when Paul preached it at Athens, or Peter at Jerusalem. It is not an old religion; not one particle of it has waxed old, though hundreds of years have passed away. How many religions have died since Christ’s began? How many have risen up, like mushrooms in a night? But is not Christ’s as new as it ever was? I ask you, you old gray-heads, you have known your Master in your youth and you thought His religion sweet and precious—do you find it useless now? Do you find, now, that Christ has not the dew of youth upon Him? No! You can say, “Sweet Jesus, the day I first touched Your hand, the day of my espousal, I thought You altogether lovely; and You are not like an earthly friend—you have not waxed old. You are as young as ever! Your brow has no furrows on it.

Your eyes are not dim. Your hair is still black as the raven, not white with age. You are still unmoved, unaltered, notwithstanding all the years that I have known You.” Well, beloved, do you see what encouragement this is to us in the propagation of our Master’s kingdom, that we are not preaching an old thing that is out of date, but a religion which has the dew of its youth upon it? The same religion which could save 3,000 at Pentecost, can save 3,000 now! I preach old doctrine but it is as new as when it first came from heaven’s mint! The image and the superscription is as clear and the metal is as bright and undimmed as ever! I have an old sword, but it is not a rusty one—though it has hacked and cut many a twig—yet it has not a single mark of weakness upon itself. It is as new as when it was first forged upon the anvil of wisdom. The gospel has the same Spirit attending it, now, that it had when it was a young gospel. As Peter stood up to preach, then, so may Peters now—and God shall give them the same unction! As Paul preached, then, so shall Pauls now! As Timothy upheld the Lord’s word, so may Timothys now, and the same Holy Spirit shall attend it!

I am afraid Christ’s people do not believe this sentence—that Christ has the dew of His youth. They have a notion that the times of great revivals are gone by. And the fathers, they ask, where are they? We are apt to cry, “The horses of Israel and the chariots thereof.” No one will ever wear Elijah’s mantle, again, they say. We shall never see great and wondrous deeds again. O foolish unbelief! Christ has still the dew of His youth! He has as much of the Holy Spirit, now, as He had at first, for He has it without measure! And though He has dispensed it unto thousands, He will still dispense it. But the question is asked—“How is it that people in these times begin to get tired of the gospel, if it has the dew of its youth?” Why, beloved, it is because the gospel does not come to them in the form of dew at all! Do we not frequently hear a gospel all dry and without marrow? Like a lot of bones out of which the marrow has been boiled? Very nice these bones are for your philosophical divines who like to study antiquities and discover to what unclean animal this or that bone belongs—but of no service at all to God’s children—for there is no food on the bones! We need a gospel covered with unction, full of savor. And when God’s people have that, they are never tired of it—they find dew, and freshness about it which are lasting.

Now, if Christ has the dew of His youth about Him, how earnestly ought those of us who are His ministers to proclaim His word! There is nothing like strong faith to make a man preach mightily. If I think I preach a tottering old gospel, I cannot proclaim it with zeal. But if I think I am preaching a strong stalwart gospel, whose frame has not been shaken and whose might is just as great as ever, how strongly ought I to

preach it? Ah, blessed be God, there are a few hearts as hot as ever, a few souls as firm in their Master's cause as ever were the hearts of the apostles! There are yet a few good men and true, who rally round the cross. Like David's men in the cave, Adullam, there are some mighties who rally round the standard. He is not left without His witnesses—He still has the dew of His youth and the day may come when those now hidden in darkness, shall, as dew before the sunshine, come out, glistening on every bush, adorning every tree, enlightening every village, cheering every pasture, making the little hills sing for joy! Go, Christian, and put this into the form of prayer! Pray to Christ that His people may be willing in the day of His power, and that He would always retain the dew of His youth—

***“Ride forth, sweet Prince, triumphantly,  
And bid the world obey.”***

Go on and prove Yourself to be the same as ever, the blessed God, “God over all, blessed forevermore.” Up, Christian, up! Fight for your young Monarch! Up with you, warriors! Let your swords flash from their scabbards! Fight for your King! Up! Up! For the old banner is a new banner, too! Christ is still fresh and still young. Let the enthusiasm of your youth gird you! Once again, start up, you aged Christians, and let your young days come again, for if Christ has the dew of His youth about Him, it behooves you to serve Him with youthful vigor! Up! Starting now from your sleep, give to Him a new youth, and strive to be as earnest and as zealous for His cause as if it were the first day you ever knew Him. Oh, may God make many sinners willing! May He bring many to His feet, for He has promised that they shall be willing in the day of His power!

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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 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 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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# GOSPEL MISSIONS

## NO. 76

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 27, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

**ON BEHALF OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.**

***“And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.”  
Acts 13:49.***

I SHALL not confine myself to the text. It being an old custom to take texts when we preach, I have taken one, but I shall address you, at large, upon a subject which I am sure will occupy your attention and has done for many days and years past—the subject of gospel missions. We feel persuaded that all of you are of one mind in this matter—that it is the absolute duty as well as the eminent privilege of the Church to proclaim the gospel to the world. We do not conceive that God will do His own work without instruments and, as He has always employed means in the work of the regeneration of this world, He will still continue to do the same. And so it becomes the church to do its utmost to spread the truth of God wherever it can reach the ear of man. We have not two opinions on that point. Our doctrines, although they are supposed to lead to apathy and sloth, have always proved themselves to be eminently practical. The fathers of the missions were all zealous lovers of the doctrines of the grace of God and we believe the great supporters of missionary enterprise, if it is to be successful, must always come from those who hold God’s truth firmly and boldly and yet have fire and zeal with it and desire to spread it everywhere! But there is a point on which we have great division of opinion and that is as to the reason why we have had so little success in our missionary labors. There may be some who say the success has been proportionate to the agency and that we could not have been more successful. I am far from being of their opinion and I do not think they, themselves, would express it on their knees before Almighty God! We have not been successful to the extent we might have expected, certainly not to an Apostolic extent, certainly with nothing like the success of Paul or Peter, or even of those eminent men who have preceded us in modern times who were able to evangelize whole countries, turning thousands to God. Now, what is the reason for this? Perhaps we may turn our eyes on high and think we find that reason in the sovereignty of God, which has withheld His Spirit and has not poured out His grace as aforetime. I shall be prepared to grant all men may agree on that point, for I believe in the ordination of everything by Almighty God. I believe in a present God in our defeats as well as in our successes; a God as well in the motionless air as in the careering tempest; a God of ebbs as well as a God of floods. But still we must look at *home* for the cause!

When Zion travails, she brings forth children—when Zion is in earnest, God is in earnest about His work. When Zion is prayerful, God blesses her. We must not, therefore, arbitrarily look for the cause of our failure in the will of God. We must also see what is the difference between ourselves and the men of Apostolic times and what it is that renders our success so trifling in comparison with the tremendous results of Apostolic preaching. I think I shall be able to show one or two reasons why our holy faith is not so prosperous as it was then. In the first place, we have not Apostolic men; in the second place, they do not set about their work in an Apostolic style; in the third place, we have not Apostolic churches to back them up; and in the fourth place, we have not the Apostolic influence of the Holy Spirit in the measure which they had it in ancient times.

**I. First, WE HAVE FEW APOSTOLIC MEN IN THESE TIMES.** I will not say we have none. Here and there we may have one or two, but unhappily their names are never heard! They do not start out before the world and are not noted as preachers of God's truth. We had a Williams, once, a true apostle, who went from island to island, not counting his life dear unto him. But Williams was called to his reward. We had a Knibb, who, too, led for his Master with seraphic earnestness and was not ashamed to call an oppressed slave his brother. But Knibb, too, has entered into his rest. We have one or two still remaining, precious and treasured names. We love them fervently and our prayers shall always rise to heaven on their behalf. We always say, in our prayers, "God bless such men as Moffat! God bless those who are earnestly toiling and successfully laboring!" But cast your eyes around and where can we find many such men? They are all good men. We find no fault with them. They are better than we—we, ourselves shrink into nothingness compared with them! But we must still say of them that they are less than their fathers. They differ from the mighty apostles in many respects, which we think even they would not be slow to acknowledge. I am not speaking of only missionaries, but of ministers, too, for I take it we have as much to mourn over in regard to the spread of the gospel in England as in foreign lands—and much to regret the lack of men filled with the Holy Spirit and with fire!

In the first place, we have not men with *Apostolic zeal*. Converted in a most singular way, by a direct interposition from heaven, Paul, from that time forward, became an earnest man. He had always been earnest in his sin and in his persecutions. But after he heard that voice from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" and had received the mighty office of an apostle and had been sent forth a chosen vessel to the Gentiles, you can scarcely conceive the deep, the awful earnestness which he manifested! Whether he ate, or drank, or whatever he did, he did all for the Glory of his God! He never wasted an hour. He was employing his time either in ministering with his own hands unto his necessities, or else lifting those hands in the Synagogue, on Mars-hill, or anywhere where he could command the attention of the multitude! His zeal was so

earnest and so burning that he could not (as we unfortunately do) restrain himself within a little sphere, but he preached the Word everywhere. It was not enough for him to have it handed down that he was the apostle of Pisidia, but he must go also to Pamphylia! It was not enough that he should be the great preacher of Pamphylia and Pisidia but he must also go to Attalia—and when he had preached throughout all Asia—he must take a ship to Greece and preach there, also! I believe Paul did not only once hear in his dream the men of Macedonia saying, “Come over and help us,” but every day and hour he heard the cry in his ears from multitudes of souls, “Paul, Paul, come over and help us.” He could not restrain himself from preaching! “Woe is unto me” he said, “if I preach not the gospel. God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Christ.” Oh, if you could have seen Paul preach, you would not have gone away as you do from some of us—with half a conviction that we do not mean what we say. His *eyes* preached a sermon without his lips and his lips preached it, not in a cold and frigid manner, but every word fell with an overwhelming power upon the hearts of his hearers! He preached with power because he was in downright earnest. You had a conviction, when you saw him, that he was a man who felt he had a work to do and must do it and could not contain himself unless he did it. He was the kind of preacher whom you would expect to see walk down the pulpit stairs straight into his coffin and then stand before his God, ready for his last account! Where are the men like that man? I confess I cannot claim that privilege and I seldom hear a solitary sermon which comes up to the mark in earnest, deep, passionate longing for the souls of men!

We have no eyes, now, like the eyes of the Savior, which could weep over Jerusalem. We have few voices like that earnest impassioned voice which seemed perpetually to cry, “Come unto Me and I will give you rest.” “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but you would not”; if ministers of the gospel were more hearty in their work of preaching—if, instead of giving lectures and devoting a large part of their time to literary and political pursuits, they would preach the Word of God and preach it as if they were pleading for their own lives—ah, then, my voice, we might expect great success! But we cannot expect it while we go about our work in a half-hearted way and have not that zeal, that earnestness, that deep purpose which characterized those men of old.

Then, again, I take it we have not men in our days who can preach like Paul—as to their faith. What did Paul do? He went to Philippi—did he know a soul there? Not one! He had his Master’s truth and he believed in the power of it. He was unattended and devoid of pomp, or show, or parade. He did not go to a pulpit with a soft cushion in it to address a respectable congregation—he walked through the streets and began to preach to the people! He went to Corinth, to Athens, alone, single-handed, to tell the people the gospel of the blessed God! Why? Because he had *faith* in the gospel and believed it would save souls and hurl down idols from their thrones! He had no doubt about the power of the gospel.

But nowadays, my brothers, we have not faith in the gospel we preach. How many there are who preach a gospel which they are afraid will not save souls and therefore they add little bits of their own to it in order, as they think, to win men to Christ? We have known men who believed Calvinistic doctrines, but who preached Calvinism in the morning, and Arminianism in the evening because they were afraid God's gospel would not convert sinners! So they manufactured one of their own. I hold that a man who does not believe God's gospel is able to save men's souls, does not believe it at all! If God's truth will not save men's souls, man's lies cannot! If God's truth will not turn men to repentance, I am sure there is nothing in this world that can! When we *believe* the gospel to be powerful, then we shall see it is powerful! If I walk into this pulpit and say, "I know what I preach is true," the world says I am an egotist. "The young man is dogmatic." Yes, and the young man means to be! He glories in it, he keeps it to himself as one of his peculiar titles, for he does most firmly believe what he preaches! God forbid that I should ever come tottering up the pulpit stairs to teach anything I was not quite sure of, something which I *hoped* might save sinners, but of which I was not exactly certain! When I have faith in my doctrines, those doctrines will prevail, for confidence is the winner of the palm. He who has courage enough to grasp the standard and hold it up will be sure enough to find followers! He who says, "I know," and asserts it boldly in his Master's name, without disputing, will not be long before he will find men who will listen to what he says and who will say, "This man speaks with authority and not as the Scribes and Pharisees." That is one reason why we do not succeed—we have not faith in the gospel!

We send educated men to India in order to confuse the learned Brahmins. Nonsense! Let the Brahmins say what they like—have we any business to dispute with them? "Oh, but they are so intellectual and so clever." What have we to do with that? We are not to seek to be clever in order to meet them. Leave the men of the world to combat their metaphysical errors. We have merely to say, "This is truth—he that believes it shall be saved and he that denies it shall be damned." We have no right to come down from the high ground of divine authoritative testimony. And until we maintain that ground and come out as we ought to do—girded with the belt of divinity—preaching not what *may* be true, but asserting that which God has most certainly revealed—we shall not see success! We need a deeper faith in our gospel! We need to be quite sure of what we preach. Brothers, I take it we have not the faith of our fathers. I feel myself a poor driveling thing in point of faith. Why, I thought, sometimes, I could believe anything. But now a little difficulty comes before me. I am timid and I fear. It is when I preach with unbelief in my heart that I preach unsuccessfully. But when I preach with faith and can say, "I know my God has said that in the same hour He will give me what I shall preach and, therefore, careless of man's esteem, I preach what I believe to be true," then it is that God rewards faith and crowns it with His own crown!

Again—we have not enough *self-denial*. And that is one reason why we do not prosper. Far be it from me to say anything against the self-denial of those worthy brothers who have left their country to cross the stormy deep and preach the Word. We hold them to be men who are to be had in honor. But still I ask, where is the self-denial of the apostles, nowadays? I think one of the greatest disgraces that ever was cast upon the church in these days was that last miss in Ireland. Men went over to Ireland, but like men who have valor's better part, brave bold men, they came back again, which is about all we can say of the matter. Why do they not go there again? Why, they say, the Irish "hooted" them! Now, don't you think you see Paul taking a microscope out of his pocket and looking at the little man who should say to him, "I shall not go there to preach because the Irish hooted me"? "What?" he says, "is this a preacher?—What a small edition of a minister he must be, to be sure!" "Oh, but they threw stones at us! You have no idea how badly they treated us!" Just tell that to the apostle Paul. I am sure you would be ashamed to do so. "Oh, but in some places the police interfered and said that we should only create a riot." What would Paul have said to that? The police interfering? I did not know that we had any right to care about governments. Our business is to preach the Word of God and if we must be put in the stocks there let us lie! There would come no hurt of it at last. "Oh, but they might have killed some of us." That is just it. Where is that zeal which counted not its life dear so that it might win Christ? I believe that the killing of a few of our ministers would have prospered Christianity! However we might mourn over it and none more than myself, I say the murder of a dozen of them would have been no greater ground for grief than the slaughter of our men by hundreds in a successful fight for hearths and homes! I would count my own blood most profitably shed in so holy a struggle! How did the gospel prosper aforesaid? Were there not some who laid down their lives for it? And did not others walk to victory over their slain bodies and must it not be so now? If we are to fall back because we are afraid of being killed, heaven knows when the gospel is to spread over the world—we do not. What have other missionaries done? Have they not braved death in its direst forms and preached the Word amid countless dangers? My brothers, we say again, we find no fault, for we, ourselves, might err in the same manner. But we are sure we are, therein, not like Paul. He went to a place where they stoned him with stones and dragged him out as dead. Did he say, "Now for the future I will not go where they will ill-treat me?" No, for he says, "Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, thrice I suffered shipwreck." I am sure we have not the self-denial of the apostles. We are mere carpet-knights and Hyde-Park warriors. When I go to my own house and think how comfortable and happy I am, I say to myself, "How little I do for my Master! I am ashamed that I cannot deny myself for His truth and go everywhere preaching His Word." I look with pity upon people who say, "Do not preach so often. You will kill yourself." O my God! What would Paul have said to such a thing as that? "Take care of your

constitution, you are rash, you are enthusiastic.” When I compare myself with one of those men of old, I say, “Oh, that men should be found calling themselves Christians, who seek to stop our work of faith and labor of love for the sake of a little consideration about the ‘constitution,’ which gets all the stronger for preaching God’s Word.”

But I hear someone whispering, “You ought to make a little allowance.” My dear friend, I make all allowances. I am not finding fault with those brothers, they are a good sort of people. We are “all honorable men.” But I will only say that in comparison with Paul, we are less than nothing and vanity! We are little insignificant Lilliputian creatures who can hardly be seen in comparison with those gigantic men of old!

One of my hearers may, perhaps, hint that this is not the sole cause and he observes, “I think you ought to make excuse, for ministers now cannot work miracles.” Well, I have considered that, too, and certainly it is a drawback. But I take it not a very great one. For if it had been, God would not have allowed it to end. He gave that gift to the Church in its infancy, but now it needs it no longer. We make a mistake in attributing too much to miracles. What was one of them? Wherever the apostles went, they could speak the language of the people. Well, in the time it would have taken Paul to walk from here to Hindustan, we could learn Hindustani! Now we go over in a very little time by the means of travel now provided—so that is no great gain here. Then again, in order to make the gospel known among the people, it was necessary that miracles should be worked so that everyone might talk about it. But now there is a printing press to aid us. What I say today, within six months will be read across the Alleghenies. And so with other ministers—what they say and what they do can soon be printed off and distributed everywhere! So we have facilities for making ourselves known which are not much behind the power of miracles. Again, we have a great advantage over the apostles. Wherever they went, they were persecuted and sometimes put to death. Now, although occasionally we hear of the massacre of a missionary, the occurrence is rare enough. The slaughter of an Englishman anywhere would provoke a fleet of men-of-war to visit the offense with chastisement! The world respects an Englishman wherever he goes—he has the stamp of the great Caesar upon him—he is the true cosmopolitan person—the citizen of the world. That could not be said of the poor despised Jews. There might be some respect paid to Paul, for he was a Roman citizen, but there would be none paid to the rest. We cannot be put to death, now, without a noise being made. The murder of two or three ministers in Ireland would provoke a tumult through the country. The government would have to interpose. The orderly of the land would be up in arms and then we might preach with an armed police force around us—and so go through the land, provoking the priests, startling anti-christ and driving superstition to its dens forever!

**II.** In the second place, WE DO NOT GO ABOUT OUR WORK IN AN APOSTOLIC STYLE. How is that? Why, in the first place, there is a general complaint that there is *not enough* preaching by ministers and mis-

sionaries. They sit down interpreting, establishing schools and doing this, that, and the other. We have nothing to find fault with in this but that is not the labor to which they should devote themselves. Their office is *preaching*—and if they preached more, they might hope for more success. The missionary Chamberlain preached once at a certain place and years afterwards disciples were found there from that one sermon. Williams preached wherever he went, and God blessed him. Moffat preached wherever he went and his labors were rewarded. Now we have our churches, our printing presses, about which a great deal of money is spent. This is doing good, but it is not doing the most good! We are not using the means which God has ordained and we cannot, therefore, expect to prosper. Some say there is too much preaching nowadays in England. Well, it is the tendency of the times to decry preaching, but it is “the foolishness of preaching” which is to change the world! It is not for men to say, “If you preached less, you might study more.” Study is required well enough if you have a settled church but the apostles needed no study. I apprehend that they stood up and delivered out the simple cardinal truths of religion, not taking one text, but going through the whole catalog of the truth of God. So I think in itinerant evangelical labors, we are not bound to dwell on one subject, for then we need to study. But we shall find it profitable to deal out the whole truth wherever we go. Thus we should always find words to hand and truths of God always ready to teach the people.

In the next place, I conceive that a great mistake has been made in not *affirming the divinity of our mission* and standing fast by the truth, as being a revelation not to be *proved* by men but to be *believed*—always holding out this—“He who believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned.” I am often grieved when I read of our missionaries holding disputes with the Brahmins. And it is sometimes said that the missionary has beaten the Brahmin because he kept his temper—and so the gospel had gained great honor by the dispute. I take it that the gospel was *lowered* by the controversy! I think the missionary should say, “I am come to tell you something which the One God of heaven and earth has said and I tell you, before I announce it, that if you believe it you shall be saved and if not, you shall be damned. I am come to tell you that Jesus Christ, the Son of God became flesh, to die for poor unworthy man. That through His mediation, death and suffering, the people of God might be delivered. Now, if you will listen to me, you shall hear the Word of God—if you do not, I shake the dust off my feet against you and go somewhere else.” Look at the history of every impostor—it shows us that the claim of authority insures a degree of progress. How did Mohammed come to have so strong a religion in his time? He was all alone, and he went into the marketplace and said, “I have received a revelation from heaven.” It was a lie, but he persuaded men to believe it. He said, “I have a revelation from heaven.” People looked at his face, they saw that he looked upon them earnestly, as believing what he said, and some five or six of them joined him. Did he *prove* what he said? Not he.

“You must,” he said, “believe what I say, or there is no Paradise for you.” There is a power in that kind of thing and wherever he went his statement was believed—not on the ground of reasoning, but on *his* authority—which he declared to be from Allah! And in a century after he first proclaimed his lies, a thousand sabers had flashed from a thousand sheaths, and his word had been proclaimed through Africa, Turkey, Asia, and even in Spain! The man *claimed* authority—he *claimed* divinity, therefore he had power.

Take again the increase of Mormonism. What has been its strength? Simply this—the assertion of power from heaven; that claim is made, and the people believe it. And now they have missionaries in almost every country of the habitable globe, and the book of Mormon is translated into many languages. Though there never could be a delusion more transparent, or a counterfeit less skillful and more lying upon the very surface, yet this simple pretension to power has been the means of carrying power with it! Now, my brothers, we *have* power, we *are* God’s ministers, we preach *God’s* truth. The great Judge of heaven and earth has told us the truth and what have we to do to *dispute* with worms of the dust? Why should we tremble and fear them? Let us stand out and say, “We are the servants of the living God. We tell you what God has told us and we warn you, if you reject our testimony, it shall be better for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.” If the people cast that away, we have done our work. *We have nothing to do with making men believe. Ours is to testify of Christ everywhere, to preach and to proclaim the gospel to all men!*

But there is one passage in the Bible which seems to militate against what I have said if the common translation is true—the passage which says that Paul, “disputed in the school of one Tyrannus.” But this is better rendered in English, he, “dialoged in the school of one Tyrannus.” Albert Barnes says that “disputed is not a happy translation,” for there is no such idea conveyed by the word. Jesus, when He preached, “dialoged.” When the man came and said to Him, “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He “dialoged” with him. When another said unto Him, “Speak, Lord, unto my brother, that he divide with me the inheritance,” Christ did not dispute with him; He “dialoged.” His usual style was to address the people and but rarely to dispute with men. We might give up all the books that have been written in defense of Christianity if we would but preach Christ. If instead of *defending* the outposts, we were to say, “God will take care of them,” and were at once to make a sortie on the enemy, then by God’s Holy Spirit we should carry everything before us. O, Church of God! Believe yourself invincible and you are invincible! But stay to tremble and fear and you are undone. Lift up your head and say, “I am God’s daughter, I am Christ’s bride.” Do not stop to prove it, but *affirm* it. March through the land and kings and princes shall bow down before you, because you have taken your ancient prowess and assumed your ancient glory!

I have one more remark to make here with regard to the style in which we go to work. I fear that we have not enough of the divine method of *itinerancy*. Paul was a great itinerant—he preached in one place, and there were 12 converted there. He made a church at once. He did not stop till he had five hundred. But when he had twelve, he went off to another place. A holy woman takes him in—she has a son and daughter. They are saved and baptized—there is another church. Then he goes on. Wherever he goes, the people believe and are baptized. Wherever he meets a family who believe, he or his companion baptizes the entire house, and go about their way, still forming churches and appointing elders over them! We, nowadays, go and settle in a place, make a station of it and work around it by little and little and think that is the way to succeed. No, no! Ravage a continent! Attempt great things and great things shall be done. But they say if you just pass over a place, it will be forgotten like the summer shower which moistens all but satisfies none. Yes, but you do not know how many of God's elect may be there! You have no business to stop in one place straight on. God's elect are everywhere. I proclaim if I could not itinerate this country of England, I could not bear to preach! If I preached *here* always, many of you would become gospel hardened. I love to go ranging here, there and everywhere! *My* highest ambition is this—that I may be found going through the entire land, as well as holding my headquarters in one position. I do hold that itinerancy is God's great plan. There should be fixed ministers and pastors, but those who are like apostles should itinerate far more than they do!

**III.** But I have a third thing to say which will strike home to some of us—that is that WE HAVE NOT APOSTOLIC CHURCHES. Oh, had you seen an Apostolic Church—what a different thing it would appear to one of our churches! As different, I had almost said, as light from darkness. As different as the shallow bed of the brook that is dried by summer is from the mighty rolling river, always full, always deep and clear and always rushing into the sea! Now, where is our *prayerfulness* compared with theirs? I trust that we know something of the power of prayer, here, but I do not think we pray like they did. “They broke bread from house to house and did eat their meat with singleness of heart, giving glory to God.” There was not a member of the Church, as a rule, who was half-hearted. They gave their souls wholly to God. And when Ananias and Sapphira divided the price, they were struck with death for their sin. Oh, if we prayed as deeply and as earnestly as they did, we would have as much success! Any measure of success we may have had here has been entirely owing under God to your prayers! And wherever I have gone, I have boasted that I have a praying people. Let other ministers have as prayerful a people. Let missionaries have as many prayers from the Church, and all things being equal, God will bless them and there will be greater prosperity than ever!

We have not the Apostolic mode of *liberality*. In the Apostles' days they gave all their substance. It was not *demand*ed of them, then, and it is not now! No one thinks of asking such a thing—still we have run to the other

extreme—many give nothing at all! Men who have thousands and tens of thousands are so eternally considerate of their families, albeit they are provided for, that they give nothing more than the servant girl who sits next to them. It is a common saying, that members of Christian Churches do not give in proportion to their wealth. We give because it is genteel and respectable. A great many of us give, I hope, because we love the cause of God. But many of us say, “There is a poor bricklayer working hard all the week, and only earning just enough to keep his wife and family—he will give a shilling. Now I have so many pounds a week—I am a rich man—what shall I give? Why I will give half-a-crown.” Another says, “I will give ten shillings this morning.” Now, if they measured their wealth in comparison with his, they would see that he gives all he has left above his maintenance, while they give comparatively nothing. My brothers and sisters, we are not half-Christians—that is the reason why we have not half success! We are Christianized, but I question whether we are thoroughly so. The Spirit of God has not entered into us to give us that life and fire and soul which they had in those ancient times.

**IV.** But lastly, as the result of the other things which have gone before and perhaps partly as the cause of them, too, WE HAVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THAT MEASURE WHICH ATTENDED THE APOSTLES. I see no reason whatever, why, this morning, if God willed it, I should not stand up and preach a sermon which should be the means of converting every soul in the place! I see no reason why I should not, tomorrow, preach a sermon which should be the means of the salvation of all who heard it, if God the Spirit were poured out! The Word is able to convert, just as extensively as God the Spirit pleases to apply it. And I can see no reason why, if converts come in by ones and twos, now, there should not be a time when hundreds and thousands shall come to God! The same sermon which God blesses to ten, if He pleased, He could bless to a hundred! I know not but that in the latter days, when Christ shall come and shall begin to take the kingdom to Himself, every minister of God shall be as successful as Peter on the day of Pentecost. I am sure the Holy Spirit is able to make the word successful, and the reason why we do not prosper is that we have not the Holy Spirit attending us with might and energy as they had then. My brothers, if we had the Holy Spirit upon our ministry, it would signify very little about our talent. Men might be poor and uneducated, their words might be broken and ungrammatical, there might be no polished periods of Hall, or glorious thunders of Chalmers. But if there were the might of the Spirit attending them, the humblest evangelists would be more successful than the most pompous of divines, or the most eloquent of preachers! It is extraordinary *grace*, not talent, that wins the day—extraordinary *spiritual* power, not extraordinary mental power! Mental power may fill a chapel, but spiritual power fills the Church! Mental power may gather a congregation, but spiritual power will save souls! We need spiritual power. Oh, we know some before whom we shrink into nothing as to talent, but who have no spiritual power. And when they speak they have not the Holy Spirit with them. But we know

others—simple-hearted, worthy men who speak their country dialect and who stand up to preach in their country place—and the Spirit of God clothes every word with power! Hearts are broken, souls are saved and sinners, by God's grace, are born-again! Spirit of the living God, we need *You*. You are the life, the soul. You are the source of Your people's success. Without You they can do nothing. With You they can do everything!

Thus I have tried to show you what I conceive to be the causes of our partial success. And now permit me, with all earnestness, to plead with you on behalf of Christ and Christ's Holy Gospel, that you would stir yourselves up to renewed efforts for the spread of His truth! That you would strive to more earnest prayers that His kingdom may come and His will be done on earth even as it is in heaven! Ah, my friends, could I show you the tens of thousands of spirits who are now walking in outer darkness; could I take you to the gloomy chamber of hell, and show you myriads upon myriads of heathen souls in unutterable torture, not having heard the word, but being justly condemned for their sins—then I think you could ask yourselves, "Did I do anything to save these unhappy myriads? They have been damned and can I say I am clear of their blood?" Oh, God of mercy, if these garments are clear of my fellow creatures' blood, I shall have eternal reason to bless You in heaven! Oh, Church of Christ! You have great reason to ask yourself whether you are quite clean in this matter. You say, too often, you sons of God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" You are too much like Cain! You do not ask yourselves whether God will require your fellow-creatures' blood at your hands. Oh, there is a truth of God which says, "If the watchman warns them not, they shall perish, but their blood will He require at the watchman's hands." Ah, there ought to be more of us who are preaching to the heathen and yet, perhaps, we are indolent and doing little or nothing. There are many of you—yes, *all of you*—who ought to be doing far more than you are for evangelical purposes and the spread of Christ's gospel. Oh, put this question to your hearts—"Shall I be able to say to the damned spirit if he meets me in hell, 'Sinner, I did all I could for you'?" I am afraid some will have to say, "No, I did not! It is true I might have done more. I might have labored more, even though I might have been unsuccessful, but I did not do it."

Ah, my dear friends, I believe there is great reason for some of us to suspect whether we believe our religion at all. An infidel once met a Christian and said, "I know you do not believe your religion." "Why?" asked the Christian. "Because," said the other, "for years you have passed me on my way to my house of business. You believe, do you not, there is a hell into which men's spirits are cast?" "Yes, I do," said the Christian. "And you believe that unless I believe in Christ, I must be sent there?" "Yes." "You do *not*, I am sure, because if you did, you would be a most inhuman wretch to pass me, day by day, and never tell me about it or warn me of it." I do hold that there are some Christians who are verily guilty in this matter! God will forgive them—the blood of Christ can even wash that out—but they are guilty! Did you ever think of the tremendous

value of a single soul? My hearers, if there were but one man in Siberia unsaved and all the world were saved besides, if God should move our minds, it would be worthwhile for all the people in England to go after that one soul! Did you ever think of the value of a soul? Ah, you have not heard the howls and yells of hell! You have not heard the mighty songs and hosannas of the glorified—you have no notion of what eternity is—or else you would know the value of a soul! You who have been broken by conviction, humbled by the Spirit and led to cry for mercy through the covenant Jesus—you know something of what a soul's value is, but many of my hearers do not. Could we preach carelessly, could we pray coldly, if we knew what a precious thing it is about which we are concerned? No, surely we should be doubly in earnest that God would please to save sinners! I am sure the present state of affairs cannot go on long—we are doing next to nothing. Christianity is at a low ebb. People think it will never be much better—that it is impossible to do wonders in these days. Are we in a worse condition than the Roman Catholic nations were when one man, a Luther, preached? Then God can find a Luther now! We are not in a much worse state than when Whitefield began to preach and yet God can find His Whitefields now! It is a delusion to suppose that we cannot succeed as they did. God helping us we will! God helping us by His Spirit, we will see greater things than this! At any rate, we will never let God's Church rest if we do not see it prosper. But we will enter our earnest hearty protest against the coldness and the lethargy of the times—and as long as this, our tongue, shall move in our mouth—we will protest against the laxity and false doctrine so rampant throughout the Churches.

And then that happy double reformation—a reformation in doctrine and Spirit, will be brought about together! Then God knows but what we shall say, “Who are these that fly as a cloud and as the doves to their windows,” and before long the shout of Christ shall be heard! He, Himself, shall descend from heaven, and we shall hear it said and sung, “Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! The Lord God Omnipotent reigns!”

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

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# DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY

## NO. 77

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 4, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with My own?”  
Matthew 20:15.***

THE householder says, “Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?” and even so does the God of heaven and earth ask this question of you this morning, “Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with My own?” There is no attribute of God more comforting to His children than the doctrine of divine sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe troubles, they believe that sovereignty has ordained their afflictions, that sovereignty overrules them and that sovereignty will sanctify them all! There is nothing for which the children of God ought more earnestly to contend than the dominion of their Master over all Creation—the Kingship of God over all the works of His own hands—the Throne of God and His right to sit upon that Throne! On the other hand, there is no doctrine more hated by worldlings, no truth of God of which they have made such a football, as the great, stupendous, but yet most certain doctrine of the sovereignty of the Infinite Jehovah. Men will allow God to be everywhere except on His Throne! They will allow Him to be in His workshop to fashion worlds and to make stars. They will allow Him to be in His almonry to dispense his alms and bestow His bounties. They will allow Him to sustain the earth and bear up the pillars thereof, or light the lamps of heaven, or rule the waves of the ever-moving ocean. But when God ascends His Throne, His creatures then gnash their teeth—and when we proclaim an *enthroned* God and His right to do as He wills with His own, to dispose of His creatures as He thinks well, without consulting them in the matter—then it is that we are hissed and cursed. And then it is that men turn a deaf ear to us, for God on His Throne is not the God they love! They love Him anywhere better than they do when He sits with His scepter in His hand and His crown upon His head! But it is God upon the Throne that we love to preach. It is God upon His Throne whom we trust. It is God upon His Throne of whom we have been singing this morning. And it is God upon His Throne of whom we shall speak in this discourse! I shall dwell only, however, upon one portion of God’s sovereignty and that is God’s sovereignty in

the distribution of His gifts. In this respect I believe He has a right to do as He wills with His own and that He exercises that right.

We must assume, before we commence our discourse, one thing certain, namely, that all blessings are *gifts* and that we have no claim to them by our own merit. This I think every considerate mind will grant. And this being admitted, we shall endeavor to show that He has a right, seeing they are His own, to do what He wills with them—to withhold them wholly if He pleases—to distribute them all if He chooses—to give to some and not to others—to give to none or to give to all, just as seems good in His sight. “Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with My own?”

We shall divide God’s gifts into five classes. First, we shall have *Temporal* gifts. Second, *saving* gifts. Third, *honorable* gifts. Fourth, *useful* gifts and fifth, *comfortable* gifts. Of all these we shall say, “Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with *My* own?”

**I.** In the first place then, we notice TEMPORAL GIFTS. It is an indisputable fact that God has not, in temporal matters, given to every man alike. He has not distributed to all His creatures the same amount of happiness or the same standing in Creation. There is a difference. Mark what a difference there is in men personally (for we shall consider men chiefly)—one is born like Saul, a head and shoulders taller than the rest—another shall live all his life a Zaccheus—a man short of stature. One has a muscular frame and a share of beauty—another is weak and far from having anything styled comeliness. How many do we find whose eyes have never rejoiced in the sunlight, whose ears have never listened to the charms of music and whose lips have never been moved to sounds intelligible or harmonious? Walk through the earth and you will find men superior to yourself in vigor, health and fashion! And others who are your inferiors in the very same respects. Some here are preferred far above their fellows in their outward appearance and some sink low in the scale and have nothing about them that can make them glory in the flesh. Why has God given to one man, beauty, and to another, none—to one all his senses and to another but a portion? Why, in some, has He quickened the sense of apprehension, while others are obliged to bear about them a dull and stubborn body? We reply, let men say what they will, that no answer can be given except this, “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.” The old Pharisee asked, “Did this man sin or his parents, that he was born blind?” We know that there was neither sin in parents nor child, that *he* was born blind, or that others have suffered similar distresses, but that God has done as it has pleased Him in the distribution of His earthly benefits! And thus He has said to the world, “Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with My own?”

Mark, also, in the distribution of *mental gifts*, what a difference exists. All men are not like Socrates. There are but few Platos. We can discover but here and there a Bacon. We shall but every now and then converse with a Sir Isaac Newton. Some have stupendous intellects wherewith they can unravel secrets—fathom the depths of oceans—measure mountains—dissect the sunbeams and weigh the stars! Others have but shallow minds. You may educate and educate but can never make them great. You cannot improve what is not there! They have not genius and you cannot impart it. Anybody may see that there is an inherent difference in men from their very birth. Some, with a little education, surpass those who have been elaborately trained. There are two boys educated, it may be, in the same school, by the same master—and they shall apply themselves to their studies with the same diligence—yet one shall far outstrip his fellow. Why is this? Because God has asserted His sovereignty over the intellect as well as the body! God has not made us all alike but diversified His “gifts.” One man is as eloquent as Whitefield. Another stammers if he but speaks three words of his mother tongue! What makes these various differences between man and man? We answer, we must refer it all to the sovereignty of God, who does as He wills with His own!

Note, again, the differences of *men’s conditions in this world*. Mighty minds are, from time to time, discovered in men whose limbs are wearing the chains of slavery and whose backs are laid bare to the whip—they have black skins, but are in mind vastly superior to their brutal masters. So, too, in England. We find wise men often poor, and rich men not seldom ignorant and vain. One comes into the world to be arrayed at once in the imperial purple—another shall never wear anything but the humble garb of a peasant. One has a palace to dwell in and a bed of down for his repose, while another finds but a hard resting place and shall never have a more sumptuous covering than the thatch of his own cottage. If we ask the reason for this, the reply still is, “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.” So in other ways you will observe, in passing through life, how sovereignty displays itself. To one man God gives a long life and uniform health so that he scarcely knows what it is to have a day’s sickness. While another totters through the world and finds a grave at almost every step, feeling a thousand deaths in fearing one! One man, even in extreme old age, like Moses, has his eyes undimmed. And though his hair is gray, he stands as firmly on his feet as when a young man in his father’s house. What, again we ask, is this difference? And the only adequate answer is, it is the effect of Jehovah’s sovereignty. You find, too, that some men are cut off in the prime of their life—the very midst of their days—while others live beyond their threescore years and ten. One

departs before he has reached the first stage of existence and another has his life lengthened out until it becomes quite a burden. We must, I conceive, necessarily trace the cause of all these differences in life to the fact of God's sovereignty! He is Ruler and King and shall He not do as He wills with His own?

We pass from this point—but before we do so we must stop to improve it just a moment. O you who are gifted with a noble frame, a comely body—boast not yourself therein, for your gifts come from God! O glory not, for if you glory, you become uncomely in a moment! The flowers boast not of their beauty, nor do the birds sing of their plumage. Be not vain, you daughters of beauty! Be not exalted, you sons of comeliness! And O you men of might and intellect, remember that all you have is bestowed by a sovereign Lord. He created. He can destroy! There are not many steps between the mightiest intellect and the helpless idiot—deep thought verges on insanity! Your brain may, at any moment, be smitten and you may be doomed henceforth to live a madman. Boast not yourself of all that you know, for even the little knowledge you have has been given you. Therefore, I say, exalt not yourself above measure, but use for God what God has given you, for it is a royal gift and you should not lay it aside! But if the sovereign Lord has given you one talent and no more, lay it not up in a napkin, but use it well. And then it may be that He will give you more. Bless God that you have more than others and thank Him, also, that He has given you less than others, for you have less to carry on your shoulders. And the lighter your burden the less cause will you have to groan as you travel on towards the better land. Bless God, then, if you possess less than your fellows and see His goodness in withholding as well as in giving!

**II.** So far, most men probably have kept up with us. But when we come to the second point, SAVING GIFTS, there will be a large number who will go from us because they cannot receive our doctrine. When we apply this truth regarding the divine sovereignty to man's *salvation*, then we find men standing up to defend their poor fellow creatures whom they conceive to be injured by God's Predestination! But I have never heard of men standing up for the devil—and yet if any of God's creatures have a right to complain of His dealings—it is *the fallen angels*. For their sin they were hurled from heaven *at once* and we read not that any message of mercy was ever sent to them! Once cast out, their doom was sealed—while men were reprieved, redemption sent into their world—and a large number of them chosen to eternal life! Why not quarrel with sovereignty in the one case as well as the other? We say that God has elected a people out of the human race and His right to do this is denied. But I ask, why not equally dispute the fact that God has chosen men and not fallen

angels, or His justice in such a choice? If salvation is a matter of right, surely the angels had as much claim to mercy as men! Were they not seated in more than equal dignity? Did they sin more? We think not. Adam's sin was so willful and complete that we cannot suppose a greater sin than that which he committed! Would not the angels who were thrust out of heaven have been of greater service to their Maker if restored than we can ever be? Had we been the judges in this matter, we might have given deliverance to angels but not to men! Admire then, divine sovereignty. And love that decree whereas the angels were broken into shivers but God has raised an elect number of the race of men to set them among princes, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord!

Note again—the divine sovereignty in that *God chose the Israelite race and left the Gentiles for years in darkness*. Why was Israel instructed and saved, while Syria was left to perish in idolatry? Was the one race purer in its origin and better in its character than the other? Did not the Israelites take unto themselves false gods a thousand times and provoke the true God to anger and loathing? Why then, should they be favored above their fellows? Why did the sun of heaven shine upon them, while all around the nations were left in darkness and were sinking into hell by myriads? Why? The only answer that can be given is this—that God is a sovereign—and “will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy and whom He wills, He hardens.”

So now, why is it that God has *sent His word to us while a multitude of people are still without His word*? Why do we each come up to God's tabernacle, Sabbath after Sabbath, privileged to listen to the voice of the minister of Jesus, while other nations have not been visited thereby? Could not God have caused His light to shine in the darkness there, as well as here? Could not He, if He had pleased, have sent forth messengers swift as the light to proclaim His gospel over the whole earth? He could have done it if He wanted. Since we know that He has not done it, we bow in meekness, confessing His right to do as He wills with His own!

But let me drive the doctrine home once more. Behold how God displays His sovereignty in this fact—out of the same congregation, those who hear the same minister and listen to the same truth—one is taken and the other left. Why is it that one of my hearers shall sit in yonder pew and her sister by her side, and yet the effect of the preaching shall be different upon each? They have been nursed on the same knee, rocked in the same cradle, educated under the same auspices. They hear the same minister, with the same attention—why is it that the one shall be saved and the other left? Far be it for us to weave any excuse for the man who is damned—we know of none—but also, far be it for us to take glory from God. We assert that GOD makes the difference—that the

saved sister will not have to thank herself, but her God. There shall even be two men given to drunkenness. Some word of God spoken shall pierce one of them through, but the other shall sit unmoved, although they shall, in all respects, be equally the same both in constitution and education. What is the reason? You will reply, perhaps, because the one accepts and the other rejects the message of the gospel. But must you not come back to the question, who made the one accept it and who made the other reject it? I *dare* you to say that the man made himself to differ. You *must* admit in your conscience that it is God, alone, to whom this power belongs! But those who dislike this doctrine are, nevertheless, up in arms against us and they say, “How can God justly make such a difference between the members of His family? Suppose a father should have a certain number of children and he should give to one all his favors and consign the others to misery—should we not say that he was a very unkind and cruel father?” I answer you the cases are not the same. You have *not a father* to deal with, but *a Judge*. You say all men are God’s children. I demand of you to prove that! I never read it in my Bible. I dare not say, “Our Father which are in heaven,” till I am regenerated! I cannot rejoice in the fatherhood of God towards me till I know that I am one with Him and a joint-heir with Christ! I dare not claim the fatherhood of God as an unregenerated man! It is not father and child—for the child has a claim upon its father—but it is King and subject! And not even so high a relation as that—for there is a claim between subject and King. A creature—a sinful creature, can have no claim upon God—for that would be to make salvation of works and not of grace!

If men can merit salvation, then to save them is only the payment of a debt and God gives them nothing more than He ought to give them. But we assert that grace must be distinguishing if it is grace at all. O, but some say is it not written that, “*He gives to every man a measure of grace to profit withal*”? If you like to repeat that wonderful quotation so often hurled at my head, you are very welcome, for it is *no quotation from Scripture*, unless it is *an Arminian edition!* The only passage at all like it refers to the *spiritual* gifts of the saints and the saints, only. But I say, granted your supposition, that a measure of grace is given to every man to profit withal, yet He has given to some a measure of particular grace to make that profit. For what do you mean by grace, which I put out, to profit? I can understand a man’s improvement in the use of *grease*, but grace improved and made use of by the power of man, I cannot comprehend! Grace is not a thing which I use—grace is something which *uses* me! But people talk of divine grace, sometimes, as if it were something they could use—and not as an influence having power over them! Grace is something not which I improve, but which improves me, employs me, works

on me! And let people talk as they will about universal grace, it is all nonsense—there is no such thing, nor can there be! They may talk correctly of universal *blessings*, because we see that the natural gifts of God are scattered everywhere, more or less, and men may receive or reject them. It is not so, however, with divine grace. Men cannot take the grace of God and employ it in turning themselves from darkness to light. The light does not come to the darkness and say, use me. But the light comes and drives the darkness away. Life does not come to the dead man and say, use me and be restored to life. No, it comes with a power of its own and restores to life. The spiritual influence does not come to the dry bones and say, use this power and clothe yourselves with flesh. But it comes and clothes them with flesh and the work is done. Grace is a thing which comes and exercises an influence on us—

***“The sovereign will of God, alone,  
Creates us heirs of grace!  
Born in the image of His Son,  
A new-created race!”***

And we say to all of you who gnash your teeth at this doctrine, whether you know it or not, you have a vast deal of enmity towards God in your hearts—for until you can be brought to know this doctrine, there is something which you have not yet discovered which makes you opposed to the idea of God absolute, God unbounded, God unfettered, God unchanging and God having a free will, which you are so fond of proving that the creature possesses! I am persuaded that the sovereignty of God must be held by us if we would be in a healthy state of mind. “Salvation is of the Lord alone.” Then give all the glory to His holy name, to whom all glory belongs!

**III.** We now come, in the third place, to notice the differences which God often makes in His Church in HONORABLE GIFTS. There is a difference made between God’s own children—when they are His children. Note what I mean—one has the honorable gift of *knowledge*, another knows but little. I meet, every now and then, with a dear Christian brother with whom I could talk for a month and learn something from him every day. He has had deep experience—he has seen into the deep things of God—his whole life has been a perpetual study wherever he has been. He seems to have gathered thoughts, not merely from books, but from men, from God, from his own heart! He knows all the intricacies and windings of Christian experience—he understands the height, the depths, the lengths and the breadths of the love of Christ which passes knowledge. He has gained a grand idea, an intimate knowledge of the system of grace and can vindicate the dealings of the Lord with His people!

Then you meet with another who has passed through many troubles, but he has no deep acquaintance with Christian experience. He never learned a single secret by all his troubles. He just floundered out of one trouble into another, but never stopped to pick up any of the jewels that lay in the mire—never tried to discover the precious jewels that lay in his afflictions. He knows very little more of the heights and depths of the Savior's love than when he first came into the world. You may converse with such a man as long as you like, but you will get nothing from him. If you ask why is it, I answer, there is a sovereignty of God in giving knowledge to some and not to others! I was walking, the other day, with an aged Christian who told me how he had profited by my ministry. There is nothing that humbles me like that thought of yon old man deriving experience in the things of God, receiving instruction in the ways of the Lord from a mere babe in grace. But I expect that when I am an old man, if I should live to be such, that some babe in grace will instruct me! God sometimes shuts the mouth of the old man and opens the mouth of the child. Why should we be a teacher to hundreds who are, in some respects, far more able to teach us? The only answer we can find is in the divine sovereignty—and we must bow before it—for has He not a right to do as He wills with His own? Instead of being envious of those who have the gift of knowledge, we should seek to gain the same, if possible. Instead of sitting down and murmuring that we have not more knowledge, we should remember that the foot cannot say to the head, nor the head to the foot, I have no need of you, for God has given us talents as it has pleased Him.

Note, again, when speaking of honorable gifts. Not only knowledge, but *office* is an honorable gift. There is nothing more honorable to a man than the office of a deacon or a minister. We magnify our office, though we would not magnify ourselves. We hold there is nothing can dignify a man more than being appointed to an office in a Christian Church. I would rather be a deacon of a church than Lord Mayor of London! A minister of Christ is, in my estimation, an infinitely higher honor than the world can bestow. My pulpit is to me more desirable than a throne—and my congregation is an empire more than large enough; an empire before which the empires of the earth dwindle into nothing in everlasting importance! Why does God give to one man a special call by the Holy Spirit to be a minister and pass by another? There is another man more gifted, perhaps, but we dare not put him in a pulpit because he has not had a special call. So with the deaconship; the man whom some would, perhaps, think most suitable for the office is passed by and another chosen. There is a manifestation of God's sovereignty in the appointment to office—in putting David on a throne, in making Moses the leader of the

children of Israel through the wilderness, in choosing Daniel to stand among princes, in electing Paul to be the minister to the Gentiles and Peter to be the Apostle of the Circumcision. And you who have not the gift of honorable office must learn the great truth contained in the question of the Master, "Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with My own?"

There is another honorable gift, the gift of *utterance*. Eloquence has more power over men than all else besides. If a man would have power over the multitude, he must seek to touch their hearts and chain their ears. There are some men who are like vessels full of knowledge to the brim but have no means of giving it forth to the world. They are rich in all gems of learning, but know not how to set them in the golden ring of eloquence. They can collect the choicest of flowers but know not how to tie them up in a sweet garland to present them to the admirer's eyes. How is this? We say again, the sovereignty of God is here displayed in the distribution of honorable gifts. Learn here, O Christian, if you have gifts, to cast the honor of them at the Savior's feet and if you possess them not, learn not to murmur! Remember that God is equally as kind when He keeps back as when He distributes His favors. If any among you is exalted, let him not be puffed up. If any is lowly, let him not be despised. For God gives to every vessel his measure of grace. Serve Him after your measure and adore the King of heaven who does as He pleases!

**IV.** We notice in the fourth place, the gift of USEFULNESS. I have often done wrong in finding fault with brother ministers for not being useful. I have said you might have been as useful as I have been had you been in earnest. But surely there are others even more earnest and more efficient—others laboring as constantly, but with far less effect. And, therefore, let me retract my accusation and in lieu, thereof, assert that the gift of usefulness is the result of God's sovereignty! It is not in man to be useful, but in God to make him useful! We may labor ourselves with all our might but God, alone, can make us useful. We can put every stitch of canvas on when the wind blows, but we cannot make the wind blow.

The sovereignty of God is also seen in the diversity of ministerial gifts. You go to one minister and are fed with plenty of good food—another has not enough to feed a mouse! He has plenty of reproof but no food for the child of God. Another can comfort the child of God but he cannot reprove a backslider. He has not strength of mind enough to give those earnest home strokes which are sometimes needed. And what is the reason? God's sovereignty. One can wield the sledge hammer but could not heal a broken heart. If he were to attempt it, you would be reminded of an elephant trying to thread a needle. Such a man can reprove, but he cannot apply oil and wine to a bruised conscience. Why? Because God has not

given to him the gift. There is another one who always preaches experimental divinity. And very rarely touches upon doctrine. Another is all doctrine, and cannot preach much about Jesus Christ and Him Crucified. Why? God has not given him the gift of doctrine. Another always preaches Jesus—blessed Jesus—men of the Hawker school—and many say, “Oh, they do not give us enough *experience*. They do not go into the deep experience of the corruption which vexes the children of God.” And we do not blame them for this. You will notice that out of the same man, he will at one time flow streams of living water, while at another time he will be as dry as possible. On one Sabbath you go away refreshed by the preaching and the next you get no good. There is divine sovereignty in all this and we must learn to recognize and admire it! I was preaching on one occasion last week to a large crowd of people and in one part of the sermon the people were very much affected. I felt that the power of God was there—one poor creature absolutely shrieked out because of the wrath of God against sin. At another time the same words might have been uttered and there might have been the same desire in the minister’s heart and yet no effect produced. We must trace, I say, divine sovereignty in all such cases! We ought to recognize God’s hand in everything. But I verily believe the present is the most godless generation that ever trod this earth! In our fathers’ days there was hardly a shower, but they declared that God caused it to fall. And they had prayers for rain, prayers for sunshine and prayers for harvest. As well when a haystack was on fire, as when a famine desolated the land—our forefathers said the Lord has done it! But now our philosophers try to *explain* everything and trace all phenomena to second causes. But brothers and sisters, let it be ours to ascribe the origin and direction of all things to the Lord and the Lord alone!

**V.** Lastly, COMFORTABLE GIFTS are of God. O, what comfortable gifts do some of us enjoy in the ordinances of God’s house, and in a ministry that is profitable. But how many Churches have not a ministry of that kind? And why, then, have we? Because God has made a difference. Some here have strong faith and can laugh at impossibilities. We can sing a song in all ill weathers—in the tempest as well as in the calm. But there is another with little faith who is in danger of tumbling down over every straw! We trace eminent faith entirely to God. One is born with a melancholy temperament and he sees a tempest brewing even in the calm. While another is cheerful and sees a silver lining to every cloud, however black, and he is a happy man! And why is that? Comfortable gifts come from God. And then observe that we ourselves differ at times. For a season we may have blessed communion with heaven and are permitted to look within the veil. But perhaps those delightful enjoyments

disappear. But do we murmur on that account? May He not do as He wills with His own? May He not take back what He has given? The comforts we possess were His before they were ours—

**“And should You take them all away,  
Yet would I not repine,  
Before they were possessed by me  
They were entirely Thine.”**

There is no joy of the Spirit—there is no exceedingly blessed hope—no strong faith—no burning desire—no close fellowship with Christ which is not *the gift of God* and which we must not trace to Him! When I am in darkness and suffer disappointment, I will look up and say He gives songs in the night. And when I am made to rejoice, I will say my mountain shall stand fast forever. The Lord is a sovereign Jehovah. And, therefore, prostrate at His feet I lie and if I perish, I will perish there.

But let me say, brothers and sisters, that so far from this doctrine of divine sovereignty making you to sit down in sloth, I hope in God it will have a tendency to humble you and so to lead you to say, “I am unworthy of the least of all Your mercies. I feel that You have a right to do with me as You will. If You crush me, a helpless worm, You will not be dishonored. And I have no right to ask You to have compassion upon me, save this, that I need Your mercy. Lord, if You will, You are able to pardon and You never gave grace to one that needed it more. Because I am empty, fill me with the Bread of heaven. Because I am naked, clothe me with Your robe. Because I am dead, give me life.” If you press that plea with all your soul and all your mind, though Jehovah is a sovereign, He will stretch out His scepter and save and you shall live to worship Him in the beauty of holiness, loving and adoring His gracious sovereignty! “He who believes,” is the declaration of Scripture, “and is baptized, shall be saved. But he that believes not shall be damned.” He that believes in Christ, *alone*, and is baptized with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, shall be saved, but he who rejects Christ and believes not in Him, shall be damned!

That is the sovereign decree and proclamation of heaven—bow to it, acknowledge it, obey it, and God bless you.

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# THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST'S PEOPLE

## NO. 78

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 22, 1855,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”  
John 17:16.***

CHRIST'S prayer was for a special people. He declared that He did not offer a universal intercession. “I pray for *them*,” He said. “I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me, for they are Yours.” In reading this beautiful prayer through, only one question arises to our minds—Who are the people that are described as, “them,” or as, “they”? Who are these favored individuals who share a Savior's prayers, are recognized by a Savior's love, have their names written on the stones of His precious breastplate, and have their character and their circumstances mentioned by the lips of the high priest before the throne on high? The answer to that question is supplied by the words of our text. The people for whom Christ prays are an unearthly people. They are a people somewhat above the world, distinguished altogether from it. “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”

I shall treat my text, first of all, *doctrinally*; secondly, *experimentally*; and thirdly, *practically*.

**I.** First, we shall take our text and look at it DOCTRINALLY. The doctrine of it is that God's people are a people who are not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world. It is not so much that they are not of the world as that they are, “not of the world, *even as Christ was not of the world.*” This is an important distinction, for there are to be found certain people who are not of the world and yet they are not Christians. Among them I would mention sentimentalists—people who are always crying and groaning in affected sentimental ways. Their spirits are so refined, their characters are so delicate, that they could not attend to ordinary business. They would think it rather degrading to their spiritual nature to attend to anything connected with the world. They live much in the air of romances and novels. They love to read things that fetch tears from their eyes. They would like to continually live in a cottage near a forest, or to inhabit some quiet cave where they could read, “Zimmerman on Solitude,” forever! For they feel that they are “not of the world.” The fact is, there is something too flimsy about them to stand the wear and tear of

this wicked world! They are so pre-eminently good that they cannot bear to do as we poor human creatures do. I have heard of one young lady who thought herself so spiritually-minded that she could not work. A very wise minister said to her, "That is quite correct! You are so spiritually-minded that you cannot work—very well, you are so spiritually-minded that you shall not eat unless you do." That brought her back from her great spiritual-mindedness! There is a stupid sentimentalism that certain persons nurse themselves into. They read a parcel of books that intoxicate their brains and then fancy that they have a lofty destiny. These people are "not of the world," truly. But the world does not need them and the world would not miss them, much, if they were clean gone forever!

There is such a thing as being "not of the world," from high order of sentimentalism and yet not being a Christian after all, for it is not so much being, "not of the world," as being, "not of the world, *even as Christ was not of the world.*" There are others, too, like your monks and those other mad individuals of the Catholic church, who are not of the world. They are so awfully good that they could not live with us sinful creatures at all! They must be distinguished from us altogether. They must not wear, of course, a boot that would at all approach to a worldly shoe—they must have a sole of leather strapped on with two or three thongs, like the far-famed, "Father" Ignatius! They could not be expected to wear worldly coats and waistcoats, but they must have peculiar garbs, cut in certain fashions, like the Passionists. They must wear particular dresses, particular garments, particular habits, and we know that some men are "not of the world" by the peculiar mouthing they give to all their words—the sort of sweet, savory, buttery flavor they give to the English language because they think themselves so eminently sanctified that they fancy it would be wrong to indulge in anything in which ordinary mortals indulge. Such persons are, however, reminded that their being, "not of the world," has nothing to do with it! It is not being, "not of the world," so much as being "not of the world, *even as Christ was not of the world.*"

This is the distinguishing mark—being different from the world in those respects in which Christ was different. Not making ourselves singular in unimportant points, as those poor creatures do, but being different from the world in those respects in which the Son of God and the Son of man, Jesus Christ, our glorious Exemplar, was distinguished from the rest of mankind! And I think this will burst out in great clearness and beauty to us if we consider that Christ was not of the world in nature, that He was not of the world again, in office, and above all, that He was not of the world in His character.

1. First, *Christ was not of the world in nature*. What was there about Christ that was worldly? In one point of view His nature was divine. And as divine, it was perfect, pure, unsullied, spotless! He could not descend to things of earthliness and sin. In another sense He was human. And His human nature, which was born of the Virgin Mary, was begotten of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, was so pure that in it rested nothing that was worldly. He was not like we ordinary men. We are all born with worldliness in our hearts. Solomon well says, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child." It is not only there, but it is *bound up in it*—it is tied up in his heart and is difficult to remove! And so it is with each of us—when we were children, earthliness and carnality were bound up in our nature. But Christ was not so. His nature was not a worldly one. It was essentially different from that of everyone else, although He sat down and talked with them. Mark the difference! He stood side by side with a Pharisee. But everyone could see He was not of the Pharisee's world. He sat by a Samaritan woman and though He conversed with her very freely, who is it that fails to see that He was not of that Samaritan woman's world—not a sinner like she was? He mingled with the Publicans; no, He sat down at the Publican's feast and ate with Publicans and sinners. But you could see by the holy actions and the peculiar gestures He there carried with Him, that he was not of the Publicans' world, though He mixed with them. There was something so different in His nature that you could not have found an individual in the entire world whom you could have set beside Him and said, "There! He is of that man's world." No, not even John, though he leaned on His bosom and partook very much of his Lord's Spirit, was exactly of that world to which Jesus belonged. For even he once, in his Boanergean spirit, said words to this effect, "Let us call down fire from heaven on the heads of those who oppose You"—a thing that Christ could not endure for a moment and, thereby, proved that He was something even beyond John's world.

Well, beloved, in some sense, the Christian is not of the world even in his nature. I do not mean in his corrupt and fallen nature, but in his *new* nature. There is something in a Christian that is utterly and entirely distinct from that of anybody else. Many persons think that the difference between a Christian and a worldling consists in this—one goes to chapel twice on the Sabbath, another does not go but once, or perhaps not at all. One of them takes the sacrament, the other does not. One pays attention to holy things, the other pays very little attention to them. But, ah, beloved, that does not make a Christian! The distinction between a Christian and a worldling is not merely external, but *internal*. The difference is one of *nature* and not of act!

A Christian is as essentially different from a worldling as a dove is from a raven, or a lamb from a lion. He is not of the world even in his nature. You could not make him a worldling if you were able to do to him what you liked. You might cause him to fall into some temporary sin, but you could not make him a worldling. You might cause him to backslide, but you could not make him a sinner, as he used to be. He is not of the world by his nature. He is a twice-born man! In his veins run the blood of the royal family of the universe. He is a nobleman. He is a heaven-born child. His freedom is not merely a bought one—he has his liberty by his new-born nature. He is begotten again unto a lively hope. He is not of the world by his nature—he is essentially and entirely different from the world! There are persons now in this chapel who are more totally distinct from one another than you can even conceive. I have some here who are intelligent and some who are ignorant. Some who are rich and some who are poor. But I do not allude to *those* distinctions—they all melt away into nothing in that great distinction—dead or alive, spiritual or carnal, Christian or worldling! And, oh, if you are God's people, then you are not of the world in your nature, for you are “not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world.”

**2.** Again—you are not of the world in your office. Christ's office had nothing to do with worldly things. “Are you a king, then?” Yes. I am a king, but My kingdom is not of this world. “Are you a priest?” Yes. I am a priest. But My priesthood is not the priesthood which I shall soon lay aside, or which shall be discontinued as that of others has been. “Are you a teacher?” Yes. But My doctrines are not the doctrines of morality, doctrines that concern earthly dealings simply between man and man. My doctrine comes down from heaven. So Jesus Christ, we say, is “not of the world.” He had no office that could be termed a worldly one and He had no aim which was in the least worldly. He did not seek His own applause, His own fame, His own honor. His very office was not of the world! And, O believer! What is *your* office? Have you none at all? Why, man, you are a priest unto the Lord your God! Your office is to offer a sacrifice of prayer and praise each day. Ask a Christian what he is. Say to him—“What is your official standing? What are you by office?” Well, if he answers you properly, he will not say, “I am a draper, or druggist,” or anything of that sort. No. He will say, “I am a priest unto my God. The office unto which I am called is to be the salt of the earth. I am a city set on a hill, a light that cannot be hid. That is my office. My office is not a worldly one.” Whether yours is the office of the minister, or the deacon, or the church member, you are not of this world in your office, even as Christ was not of the world—your occupation is not a worldly one!

**3.** Again, *you are not of the world in your character.* That is the chief point in which Christ was not of the world. And now, brothers and sisters, I shall have to turn somewhat from doctrine to practice before I get to this part of the subject rightly. I must reprove many of the Lord's people that they do not sufficiently manifest that they are not of the world in character, even as Christ was not of the world. Oh, how many of you there are who will assemble around the table at the supper of your Lord, who do not live like your Savior! How many of you there are who join our church and walk with us and yet are not worthy of your high calling and profession! Mark you, the churches all around and let your eyes run with tears when you remember that of many of their members it cannot be said, "*You are not of the world,*" for they *are* of the world! O, my hearers, I fear many of you are worldly, carnal and covetous. And yet you join the churches and stand well with God's people by a hypocritical profession! O you whitewashed sepulchers! You would deceive even the very elect! You make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but your inward part is wickedness. O that a thundering voice might speak this to your ears!—"Those whom Christ loves are not of the world," but you are of the world—therefore you cannot be His, even though you profess to be! For those who love Him are not such as you. Look at Jesus' character—how different from every other man's—pure, perfect, spotless! Even such should be the life of the believer. I plead not for the possibility of sinless conduct in Christians, but I must hold that divine grace makes men to differ and that God's people will be very different from other kinds of people! A servant of God will be a God's-man everywhere. As a chemist, he could not indulge in any tricks that such men might play with their drugs. As a grocer—if indeed it is not a phantom that such things are done—he could not mix sloe leaves with tea or red lead in the pepper. If he practiced any other kind of business, he could not, for a moment, condescend to the little petty shifts called, "methods of business." To him it is nothing what is called, "business"—it is what is called God's Law—he feels that he is not of the world; consequently, he goes against its fashions and its maxims!

A singular story is told of a certain Quaker. One day he was bathing in the Thames, and a waterman called out to him, "Ha! There goes the Quaker." "How do you know I'm a Quaker?" "Because you swim against the stream; it is the way the Quakers always do." That is the way Christians always ought to do—to swim against the stream! The Lord's people should not go along with the rest in their worldliness. Their characters should be visibly different. You should be such men and women that your fellows can recognize you without any difficulty and say, "Such a

person is a Christian." Ah, beloved, it would puzzle the angel Gabriel, himself, to tell whether some of you are Christians or not, if he were sent down to the world to pick out the righteous from the wicked! None but God could do it, for in these days of worldly religion they are so much alike. It was an ill day for the world when the sons of God and the daughters of men were mingled together—and it is an ill day, now, when Christians and worldlings are so mixed that you cannot tell the difference between them! God save us from a day of fire that may devour us in consequence! But O beloved! The Christian will be always different from the world. This is a great doctrine and it will be found as true in ages to come as in the centuries which are past. Looking back into history we read this lesson—"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." We see them driven to the catacombs of Rome. We see them hunted about like partridges. And wherever in history you find God's servants, you can recognize them by their distinct, unvarying character—they were not of the world, but were a people scarred and peeled. A people entirely distinct from the nations! And if in this age there are no different people—if there are none to be found who differ from other people—there are no Christians—for Christians will always be different from the world! They are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. This is the doctrine.

**II.** Now for treating this text EXPERIMENTALLY.

Do we, dearly beloved, feel this truth of God? Has it ever been laid to our souls so that we can *feel* it is ours? "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Have we ever felt that we are not of the world? Perhaps there is a believer sitting in a pew tonight who says, "Well, sir, I can't say that I feel as if I were not of the world, for I have just come from my shop and worldliness is still hanging about me." Another says, "I have been in trouble and my mind is very much harassed—I can't feel that I am different from the world. I am afraid that I am of the world." But beloved, we must not judge ourselves rashly, because just at this moment we discern not the spot of God's children. Let me tell you there are always certain testing moments when you can tell of what kind of stuff a man is made. Two men are walking. Part of the way their road lies side by side. How do you tell which man is going to the right and which to the left? Why, when they come to the turning point. Now, tonight is not a turning point.

Let me tell you one or two turning points, when every Christian will feel that he is not of the world. One is, when he gets into very *deep trouble*. I do believe and proclaim that we never feel so unearthly as when we get plunged down into trouble. Ah, when some creature comfort has been

swept away, when some precious blessing has withered in our sight, like the fair lily, snapped at the stalk—when some mercy has been withered, like Jonah's gourd in the night—then it is that the Christian feels, "I am not of the world." His cloak is torn from him and the cold wind whistles almost through him. And then he says, "I am a stranger in the world, as all my fathers were. Lord, You have been my dwelling place in all generations." You have had at times deep sorrows. Thank God for them! They are testing moments. When the furnace is hot, it is then that the gold is tried best. Have you felt at such a time that you were not of the world? Or, have you rather sat down and said, "Oh, I do not deserve this trouble"? Did you break under it? Did you bow down before it and let it crush you while you cursed your Maker? Or did your spirit, even under its load, still lift itself unto Him, like a man all dislocated on the battlefield, whose limbs are cut away, but who still lifts himself up as best he can and looks over the field to see if there is a friend approaching? Did you do so? Or did you lie down in desperation and despair? If you did that, I think you are no Christian. But if there was a rising up, it was a testing moment and it proved that you were "not of the world," because you could master affliction—because you could tread it under foot and say—

***"When all created streams are dry,  
His goodness is the same!  
With this I am well satisfied,  
And glory in His name."***

But another testing moment is *prosperity*. Oh, there have been some of God's people who have been more tried by prosperity than by adversity! Of the two trials, the trial of adversity is less severe to the spiritual man than that of prosperity. "As the fining pot for silver, so is a man to his praise." It is a terrible thing to be prosperous. You had need to pray to God not only to help you in your troubles, but to help you in your blessings. Mr. Whitefield once had a petition to put up for a young man who had—stop, you will think it was for a young man who had lost his father or his property. No!—"The prayers of the congregation are desired for a young man who has become heir to an immense fortune and who feels he has need of much divine grace to keep him humble in the midst of riches." That is the kind of prayer that ought to be put up! Prosperity is a hard thing to bear. Now, perhaps you have become almost intoxicated with worldly delights, even as a Christian. Everything goes well with you. You have loved and you are loved. Your affairs are prosperous. Your heart rejoices, your eyes sparkle. You tread the earth with a happy soul and a joyous countenance. You are a happy man, for you have found that even in worldly things, "godliness with contentment is great gain." Did you ever feel—

**“These can never satisfy.  
Give me Christ, or else I die”?**

Did you feel that these comforts were nothing but the leaves of the tree and not the fruit and that you could not live upon mere leaves? Did you feel they were, after all, nothing but husks? Or did you not sit down and say, “Now, soul, take your ease. You have goods laid up for many years. Eat, drink and be merry”? If you did imitate the rich fool, then you were of the world! But if your spirit went up above your prosperity so that you still lived near to God, then you proved that you were a child of God, for you were not of the world. These are testing points—both prosperity and adversity.

Again—you may test yourselves in this way *in solitude and in company*. In solitude you may tell whether you are not of the world. I sit down, throw the window up, look out on the stars and think of them as the eye of God looking down upon me! And oh, does it not seem glorious, at times, to consider the heavens when we can say, “Ah, beyond those stars is my house not made with hands—those stars are milestones on the road to Glory and I shall soon tread the glittering way, or be carried by seraphs far beyond them and be there!” Have you felt in solitude that you are not of the world? And so again in company? Ah, beloved, believe me, company is one of the best tests for a Christian. You are invited to an evening party. Sundry amusements are provided which are not considered exactly sinful, but which certainly cannot come under the name of pious amusements. You sit there with the rest. There is a deal of idle chat going on. You would be thought puritanical to protest against it. Have you not come away—and, notwithstanding all has been very pleasant and friends have been very agreeable—have you not been inclined to say, “Ah, that does not do for me. I would rather be in a Prayer Meeting. I would rather be in an old broken down cow-lodge with six old women, so long as I could be with the people of God, than in fine rooms with all the dainties and delicacies that could be provided without the company of Jesus. By God’s grace I will seek to shun all these places as much as possible.” That is a good test. You will prove in this way that you are not of the world. And you may do so in a great many other ways which I have no time to mention. Have you felt this experimentally, so that you can say, “I know that I am not of the world. I see it. I experience it.” Don’t just talk of doctrine. Give me doctrine ground into *experience*. Doctrine is good. But experience is better! Experimental doctrine is the true doctrine which comforts and which edifies.

**IV.** And now, lastly, we must briefly apply this in PRACTICE. “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” And, first, allow me, man

or woman, to apply this to you. *You who are of the world*, whose maxims, whose habits, whose behavior, whose feelings, whose *everything* is worldly and carnal, listen to this. Perhaps you make some profession of religion. Hear me, then. Your boasting of religion is empty as a phantom and shall pass away when the sun rises, as the ghosts sleep in their grave at the crowing of the cock. You have some pleasure in that professional religion of yours wherewith you are arrayed; which you carry about you as a cloak, and use as a stalking horse to your business—and a net to catch the honor in the world. And yet you are worldly, like other men. Then I tell you if there is no distinction between yourself and the worldly, the doom of the worldly shall be your doom! If you were marked and watched, your next door tradesman would act as you do and you act as he does. There is no distinction between you and the world. Hear me, then. It is God's solemn truth—you are none of His! If you are like the rest of the world, you are of the world. You are a goat and with goats you shall be cursed, for the sheep can always be distinguished from the goats by their appearance. O you worldly men of the world! You carnal professors, you who crowd our churches and fill our places of worship—this is God's truth—let me say it solemnly. If I should say it as I ought, it would be weeping tears of blood. You are, with all your profession, “in the gall of bitterness.” With all your boastings, you are “in bonds of iniquity,” for you act as others, and you shall go where others go, and it shall be done with you as with more notorious heirs of hell!

There is an old story which was once told of a Dissenting minister. The old custom was that a minister might stop at an inn and not pay anything for his bed or his board. And when he went to preach, from place to place he was charged nothing for the conveyance in which he rode. But on one occasion, a certain minister stopped at an inn and went to bed. The landlord listened and heard no prayer—so when the preacher came down in the morning, he was presented his bill. “Oh, I am not going to pay that, for I am a minister.” “Ah,” said the landlord, “you went to bed last night like a sinner, and you shall pay this morning like a sinner! I will not let you go.” Now, it strikes me that this will be the case with some of you when you come to God's bar. Though you pretended to be a Christian, you acted like a sinner and you shall fare like a sinner, too. Your actions were unrighteous. They were far from God, and you shall have a portion with those whose character was the same as yours. “Be not deceived.” It is easy to be so. “God is not mocked,” though we often are, both minister and people. “God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.”

And now we want to apply this to many *true children of God* who are here. By way of caution I say, my brother and sister Christian, you are not of the world. I am not going to speak harshly to you because you are my brother or sister and in speaking to you I speak to myself, also, for I am as guilty as you are. Brothers and sisters, have we not often been too much like the world? Do we not, sometimes, in our conversation talk too much like the world? Come, let me ask myself—are there not too many idle words that I say? Yes, that there are. And do I not sometimes give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme because I am not so different from the world as I ought to be? Come, brother. Come sister. Let us confess our sins together. Have we not been too worldly? Ah, we have. Oh, let this solemn thought cross our minds—suppose that after all we should not be His! For it is written, “You are not of the world.” O God, if we are not right, make us so! Where we are a little right, make us still more right! And where we are wrong, amend us!

Allow me to tell a story to you. I told it when I was preaching last Tuesday morning, but it is worth telling again. There is a great evil in many of us being too light and frothy in our conversation. A very strange thing once happened. A minister had been preaching in a country village very earnestly and fervently. In the midst of his congregation there was a young man who was deeply impressed with a sense of sin under the sermon. He therefore sought the minister as he went out, in hopes of walking home with him. They walked till they came to a friend's house. On the road, the minister had talked about anything except the subject on which he had preached, though he preached very earnestly and even with tears in his eye. The young man thought within himself, “Oh, I wish I could unburden my heart and speak to him. But I cannot. He does not say anything, now, about what he spoke of in the pulpit.” When they were at supper that evening, the conversation was very far from what it should be and the minister indulged in all kinds of jokes and light sayings. The young man had gone into the house with eyes filled with tears, feeling like a sinner should feel. But as soon as he got outside after the conversation, he stamped his foot and said, “It is a lie from beginning to end! That man has preached like an angel, and now he has talked like a devil.” Some years after, the young man was taken ill and sent for this same minister. The minister did not know him. “Do you remember preaching at such-and-such a village?” asked the young man. “I do.” “Your text was very deeply laid to my heart.” “Thank God for that,” said the minister. “Do not be so quick about thanking God,” said the young man. “Do you know what you talked of that evening afterwards, when I went to supper with you? *Sir I shall be damned!* And I will charge *you* be-

fore God's throne with being the author of my damnation! On that night I did feel my sin. But you were the means of scattering all my impressions." That is a solemn thought, brothers and sisters, and teaches us how we should curb our tongues, especially those who are so light-hearted, after solemn services and earnest preaching—that we should not betray levity. Oh, let us take heed that we are not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world!

And Christian, lastly, by way of practice, let me comfort you with this. You are not of the world for your home is in heaven. Be content to be here a little while, for you are not of the world and you shall go up to your own bright inheritance, by-and-by. A man in traveling goes into an inn. It is rather uncomfortable, "Well," says he, "I shall not have to stay here many nights. I have only to sleep here tonight. I shall be at home in the morning, so I don't care much about one night's lodging being a little uncomfortable." So, Christian, this world is never a very comfortable one—but remember you are not of the world! This world is like an inn. You are only lodging here a little while. Put up with a little inconvenience because you are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. And by-and-by, up yonder, you shall be gathered into your Father's house and there you will find that there is a new heaven and a new earth provided for those who are "not of the world."

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# THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS

## NO. 79

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 11, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Hold fast the form of sound words which you have heard from me,  
in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”  
2 Timothy 1:13.***

MY incessant anxiety for you, dearly beloved in the faith of Jesus Christ, is that I may be able, in the first place, to teach you what God’s truth is. And then, trusting that I have, to the best of my ability, taught you what I believe to be God’s most holy gospel, my next anxiety is that you should “hold fast the form of sound words.” So that whatever may occur in the future—should death snatch away your pastor, or should anything occur which might put you in perilous circumstances—my desire is that even if you were tempted to embrace any system of heresy, you might, everyone of you, stand as firm and as unmoved as rocks! And you would be as strong as mountains abiding in the faith which was once delivered unto the saints whereof you have heard and which we have proclaimed to you. If the gospel is worth your hearing—and if it *is* the true gospel, it *is* worth your hearing—our anxiety is that you should be so established in the faith that you may, “hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering, for He is faithful who has promised.”

The Apostle most earnestly admonished Timothy to, “hold fast the form of sound words which he had heard from him in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.” I do not suppose that by this, it is intended that Paul ever wrote for Timothy, a list of doctrines. Or that he gave him a small abstract of divinity, to which he desired him to subscribe his name, as the articles of the church over which he was made a pastor. If so, doubtless that document would have been preserved and enrolled in the canons of Scripture as one of the writings of an inspired man! I can scarcely think such a creed would have been lost, while other creeds have been preserved and handed down to us. I conceive that what the Apostle meant was this—“Timothy, when I have preached to you, you have heard certain grand outlines of the truth of God. You have heard from me the great system of faith in Jesus Christ. In my writings and public speaking you have heard me continually insist upon a certain pattern or form of faith. Now I bid you, my dearly beloved son in the gospel, Hold fast the form of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”

This morning I shall first attempt to tell you what I conceive to be a, “*form of sound words,*” which we are to hold fast. In the second place, I

shall endeavor to urge upon you *the strong necessity of holding fast that form*. In the third place, I shall *warn you of some dangers to which you will be exposed, tempting you to give up the form of sound words*. Then, in the last place I shall mention *the two great holdfasts, faith and love in Christ Jesus*, which are the great means of “holding fast the form of sound words.”

I. What is a, “FORM OF SOUND WORDS”? Ten thousand persons will quarrel upon this. One will say, “MY creed is a form of sound words.” Another will declare that his creed, also, is sound if not Infallible! We will not, therefore, enter into all the minute details which distinguish creeds from each other, but just simply say that no system can be a form of sound words unless it is *perfectly Scriptural*. We receive no doctrines as the doctrines of men—whatever authority comes to us which is not the authority of the Holy Spirit and inspired by God, is no authority at all to us! We laugh to scorn all the dogmatism of men. We care for nothing they assert, however strongly they declare it, or however eloquently they plead for it. We utterly reject and discard it! We hold it a sin to “take for doctrines the commandments of men.” We give no heed to the traditions that are handed down to us. If our opponent cannot quote text or verse for anything he advances, we hold no argument with him! Scripture is the only weapon we can acknowledge.

But since it is said that texts may be found to prove almost everything, we must remark that a form of sound words must be one that *exalts God and puts down man*. We dare not, for a moment, think that any doctrine is sound that does not put the crown upon the head of Jesus and does not exalt the Almighty. If we see a doctrine which exalts the creature, we do not care one fig about what arguments may be brought to support it! We know that it is a lie—unless it lays the creature in the very dust of abasement and exalts the Creator. If it does not do this, it is nothing but a rotten doctrine of pride. It may dazzle us with the brilliant malaria rising from its marshes, but it can never shed a true and healthful light into the soul. It is a rotten doctrine, not fit to be built on the gospel, unless it exalts Jehovah Jesus, Jehovah, the Father, and Jehovah the Holy Spirit!

We think, also, that we may judge of the soundness of doctrine *by its tendency*. We can never think a doctrine sound when we see plainly upon its very surface that it has a tendency to create sin in men. Unless it is a doctrine according to godliness, we cannot conceive it to be a doctrine of God! Unless the believer of it, earnestly and truthfully believing it, does give himself to virtue—unless that doctrine has in itself a natural tendency to promote in him a love to the right—we are at first sight, suspicious of it. And if we find on examination that it is a licentious doctrine—it may have all the glitter and the glare of novelty, but we cast it away as not being the doctrine of Christianity, because it does not promote holiness in the soul.

We shall, perhaps, be asked what we *do* regard as a form of sound words and what those doctrines are which are Scriptural, which at the same time are healthful to the spirit and exalting to God. We answer, we believe a form of sound words must embrace, first of all, the doctrine of *God's being and nature*. We must have the Trinity in Unity and the Unity in Trinity. Any doctrine which has not the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as equal persons in one undivided essence, we cast aside as being unsound. We are sure that such doctrines must be derogatory to God's glory. And if they are so, it is enough for us. If any man despises Father, Son or Holy Spirit, we despise him and despise his teachings and cannot even say to him, "I wish you God speed."

Now we hold that a form of sound words must *look upon man aright as well as upon God aright*. It must teach that man is utterly fallen, that he is sinful, and for his sin, condemned. It must teach that man in himself is altogether hopeless of salvation. If it exalts man by giving him a character which is not a true one and clothing him with a spurious robe of righteousness, woven by his fingers, we reject and utterly discard it!

And next, we think that a doctrine that is sound *must have right views of salvation* as being of the Lord, *alone*. Unless we find in it everlasting, unchanging love, working out a salvation for a people "who were not a people," but were made a people by special divine grace—unless we find discriminating love, others may say what they will—we cannot consider such a creed to be a form of sound words unless we discern redeeming mercy openly and boldly taught! Unless we see final perseverance and all those great and glorious truths which are the very bulwarks of our religion, others may embrace the doctrine as being a form of sound words, but we cannot and we dare not! We love the old system of our forefathers. We love the old truths of Scripture, not because they are old, but because we cannot consider anything to be truth which does not hold the Scriptural view of salvation. I think Paul, himself, in this very chapter, gives us a form of sound words where he speaks of "God who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

I need not stop, this morning, to prove to you that which I have briefly hinted at as a form of sound words because you believe it and believe it firmly. I am not about to urge you to receive it, because I know you have already received it! But what I have to say is, "Hold fast," I beseech you, "the form of sound words which you have heard from me in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus."

**II.** Now let me show you THE NECESSITY OF HOLDING FAST THIS FORM OF SOUND WORDS, AND KEEPING IT FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, FOR THE CHURCH'S SAKE, FOR THE WORLD'S SAKE.

1. First, *for your own sake* hold it fast, for thereby you will receive ten thousand blessings. You will receive the blessing of peace in your con-

science. I proclaim, before God, that if at any time I ever doubt one of the great things I receive from God, instantly there comes an aching void which the world can never fill and which I can never get filled until I receive that doctrine, again, and believe it with all my heart! When at any time I am cast down and dejected, I always find comfort in reading books which are strong on the doctrines of the faith of the gospel. If I turn to some of them that treat of God's eternal love, revealed to His chosen people in the person of Christ—and if I remember some of the exceedingly great and precious promises made to the elect in their covenant head—my faith at once becomes strong and my soul, with sublime wings, mounts upwards towards its God! You cannot tell, beloved, if you have never tasted, how sweet is the peace which the doctrines of grace will give to the soul! There is nothing like them. They are—

**“A sovereign balm for every wound,  
A cordial for our fears.”**

They are God's sweet lullaby, wherewith He sings His children to sleep, even in storms. They are God's sheet anchors which are cast out into the sea to hold our little vessels fast in the midst of tempests. There is a “peace of God which passes all understanding,” which accrues to a man who is a strong Believer. But you know the tendency of the day is to give up old land marks and to adopt new ones—and to avow anything rather than the old-fashioned divinity! Well, my dear friends, if any of you like to try new doctrines, I warn you that if you are the children of God, you will soon be sick enough of those new-fangled notions, those newly invented doctrines which are continually taught! You may, for the first week, be pleased enough with their novelty. You may wonder at their transcendental spirituality, or something else which entices you on—but you will not have lived on them long before you will say—“Alas! Alas! I have taken in my hands the apples of Sodom! They were fair to look upon, but they are ashes in my mouth.” If you would be peaceful, keep fast to the truth, hold fast the form of sound words—so shall, “your peace be like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.”

“Hold fast the form of sound words,” again, let me say, *because it will tend very much to your growth.* He who holds fast the truth will grow faster than he who is continually shifting from doctrine to doctrine. What a mighty number of spiritual weathercocks we have in this world right now! We have men who in the morning hear a Calvinistic preacher and say, “Oh, it is delightful.” In the evening they hear an Arminian and they say, “Oh, it is just as good. And no doubt they are both true, though one contradicts the other!” The glorious charity of the present day is such that it believes lies to be as good as the truth of God—and lies and His truth have met together and kissed each other! And he that teaches the truth of God is called a bigot—and the truth of God has ceased to be honorable in the world! Ah, beloved, we know better than to profess such unlimited but false charity! The truth is, we know how to “hold fast the form of sound words,” which was given to us, because in this way we

grow! Changeable people cannot grow much. If you have a tree in your garden and plant it in one place today, and tomorrow place it somewhere else, how much bigger will it be in six months? It will very likely be dead! Or if it does not die, it will not be very much grown. It will be marvelously stunted. So it is with some of you—you plant yourselves here. Then you are persuaded that you are not quite right and you go and plant yourself somewhere else. Why, there are men who are “anythingarians”—who go dodging about from one denomination to another—and cannot tell what they are! Our opinion is of these people that they believe nothing and are good for nothing—and anybody may have them who likes. We do not consider men to be worth much unless they have settled principles and “hold fast the form of sound words.” You cannot grow unless you hold it fast. How could I know any more of my faith, in ten years’ time, if I allowed it to take ten forms in ten years? I would know but a little in each and know nothing thoroughly of one. But he that has one faith and knows it to be the faith of God and holds it fast—how strong he becomes in his faith! Each wind or tempest does but confirm him, as the fierce winds root the oaks and make them strong, standing firmly in their places; but if I shift and change, I am none the better, but rather the worse. For your own peace, then, and for your growth, “hold fast the form of sound words.”

But, my beloved, I would beseech you to hold it fast for your own sakes *from a remembrance of the great evils which will follow the contrary course*. If you do not “hold fast the form of sound words,” listen to me while I tell you what will happen to you!

In the first place, *every deviation from the truth is a sin*. It is not simply a sin for me to do a wrong act, but it is a sin for me to believe a wrong doctrine. Lately our ministers have absolved us all from obeying God in our judgments. They have told us, point blank, many of them, in their drawing rooms and some of them in the pulpit, that we shall never be asked in the day of judgment what we believed! We have been told that for our acts we shall be responsible but for our faith we shall be irresponsible, or something very much like it. They have told us plainly that the God who made us, although He has authority over our hands, our foes, our eyes and our lips, has but little authority over our judgments! They have told us that if we make ever such blunders in divinity, they are not sins as long as we can live right lives. But is that true? No! The whole man is bound to serve God. And if God gives me a judgment, I am bound to employ that judgment in His service. And if that judgment receives an untruth, it has received stolen goods and I have sinned as much as if I put forth my hand to take my neighbor’s goods! There may be degrees in the sin. If it is a sin of ignorance, it is, nevertheless, a sin—but it is not so heinous as a sin of negligence, which I fear it is with many. I tell you, beloved, if, for instance, baptism is not by immersion, I commit a sin every time I practice it! And if it is by immersion, my broth-

er commits a sin who does not practice it! If election is true, I am committing a sin if I do not believe it. And if final perseverance is true, I am committing a sin before Almighty God if I do not receive it. And if it is not true, then I sin in embracing what is not Scriptural! Error in doctrine is as much a sin as error in practice. In everything, we are bound to serve our God with all our might—exercising those powers of judging and believing which He has given us. I warn you, Christians, not to think it is a little thing to hold faith with a feeble hand—it is a sin every time you do anything which makes you waver in the faith of Jesus Christ! Remember, too, that error in doctrine is not only a sin but a sin which has a great tendency to increase. When a man, once in his life, believes a wrong thing, it is marvelous how quickly he believes another wrong thing! Once open the door to a false doctrine—Satan says it is but a little one—yes, but he only puts the little one in like the small end of the wedge—and he means to drive in a larger one! And he will say it is only a little more and a little more and a little more. The most damnable heretics who ever perverted the faith of God, erred by littles and littles! Those who have gone the widest from truth of God have only gone so by degrees. Whence came the Church of Rome; that mass of abominations? Why, from gradual departures! It did not become abominable at first. It was not the “mother of harlots” all at once. But it first did deck itself in some ornaments, then in others, and, by-and-by, it went on to commit its fornications with the kings of the earth! It fell little by little—and in the same way it separated itself from God’s truth. For centuries it was a church of Christ and it is difficult to say, in looking at history, when was the exact point in which it ceased to be numbered with Christian churches. Take care, Christians, if you commit one error, you cannot tell how many more you will commit!

“Hold fast the form of sound words,” *because error in doctrine almost inevitably leads to error in practice*. When a man *believes* wrongly, he will soon *act* wrongly. Faith has a great influence on our conduct. As a man’s faith is, so is he. If you begin to imbibe erroneous doctrines, they soon have an effect on your practice. Keep fast to the bulwarks of your fathers’ faith. If you do not, the enemy will make sad havoc with you. “Hold fast the form of sound words which was delivered unto you.”

**2.** And now, *for the good of the Church, itself*, I want you all to “hold fast the form of sound words.” Would you wish to see the church prosperous? Would you wish to see it peaceful? Then “hold fast the form of sound words.” What is the cause of divisions, schisms, quarrels and bickering among us? It is not the fault of the truth of God! It is the fault of man’s errors! There would have been peace in the church—entire and perpetual peace—if there had been purity. Going down to Sheerness on Friday, I was told by someone on board that during the late gale, several of the ships there had their anchors rent up and had gone dashing against the other ships and had done considerable damage. Now, if their anchors had held fast and firm, no damage would have been done. Ask

me the cause of the damage which has been done to our churches by the different denominations and I tell you, it is because all their anchors did not hold fast. If they had held fast by God's truth, there would have been no disputing. Disputing comes from errors. If there are any ill feelings, you must not trace it to the truth of God—you must trace it to man's errors. If the Church had always kept firm to the faith and had always been united to the great doctrines of the truth, there would have been no disputes. Keep firm to your belief and you will prevent discord in the church!

Keep to your faith, I say again, for the church's sake, *for so you will promote strength in the church*. I saw lying between Chatham and Sheerness, a number of ships that I supposed to be old hulks. And I thought how stupid Government was to let them remain there and not chop them up for firewood, or something else. But someone said to me, those ships can soon be fitted for service. They look old, now, but they only need a little paint and when the Admiralty requires them, they will be commissioned and made fit for use. So we have heard some people say, "There are those old doctrines—what good are they?" Wait. There is not a doctrine in God's Bible that has not its use! Those ships that you may think are not needed, will be useful, by-and-by. So it is with the doctrines of the Bible. Do not say, "Break up those old doctrines, you can do without them." No, we need them and we must have them! Some people say, "Why do you preach against Arminians? We have not much to fear from them, now." But I like to practice my men so they'll be ready when the time comes for action! We are not going to burn our ships! They will be needed, by-and-by, and when we sail out of harbor, the men will say, "Whence came these old ships?" "Why," we will reply, "they are just the doctrines you thought good for nothing. Now we bring them out and we will make good use of them!" Nowadays we are having new and marvelous hymn books, full of perfect nonsense. And we are having new theories and new systems. And they say, "Why be so stringent? Our Christian brethren may believe what they like on those points just now." But as certain as there is a church in this land, they will need our old ships to fight their battles! They may do very well in times of peace, but they will not do in the time of war! They will then need our broadside to support the faith of the gospel, though now they laugh at us. For the strength of the church, my brothers and sisters, I bid you, "hold fast the form of sound words."

"Well," says one "I think we ought to hold the truth of God firmly, but I do not see the necessity for holding *the form* of it. I think we might cut and trim a little and then our doctrines would be received better." Suppose, my friends, we should have some valuable egg and someone should say, "Well, now, the shell is good for nothing—there will never be a bird produced by the shell, certainly—why not break the shell?" I would simply smile in his face and say, "My dear friend, I need the shell to take care

of what is inside. I know the vital principle is the most important, but I need the shell to take care of the vital principle.” You say, “Hold fast the principle, but do not be so severe about the form. You are an old Puritan and want to be too strict in religion—let us just alter a few things and make it a little palatable.” My dear friends, do not break the shell. You are doing far more damage than you think. We willingly admit the form is but little, but when men attack the *form*, what is their objective? They do not *hate* the *form*. They hate the *substance*! Keep the substance, then, and keep the form, too. Not only hold the same doctrines but hold them in the *same shape*—just as angular, rough and rugged as they were, for if you do not, it is difficult to change the form and to keep fast the substance. “Hold fast *the form* of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Jesus Christ.”

**3.** Again, I say, “hold fast the form of sound words,” *for the world’s sake*. Pardon me when I say that, speaking after the manner of men, I believe that the progress of the gospel has been awfully impeded by the errors of its preachers. I never wonder when I see a Jew, an unbeliever in Christianity—for this reason—that the Jew very seldom sees Christianity in its beauty. For hundreds of years, what has the Jew thought Christianity to be? Why, pure idolatry! He has seen the Catholic bow down to blocks of wood and stone; he has seen him prostrating himself before the Virgin Mary and all saints. And the Jew has said, “Ah, this is my watchword—‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord, your God, is our Lord.’ I could not be a Christian, for to worship one God is the essential part of my religion.” So, too, the heathens, I believe, have seen a false system of Christianity. They have said, “What? Is that your Christianity?” And they did not receive it. But I believe that when the gospel is purged from all the rudiments of men and all the chaff and dust have been winnowed from it—and it is presented in all its naked simplicity—it will be sure to win the day! And I say again, speaking as a man, the gospel might have made ten thousand fold greater progress if it had been preached in all its simplicity, instead of that diluted or rather distorted form in which it is commonly proclaimed. If you would see sinners saved, if you would see God’s elect gathered in, “Hold fast the form of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”

**III.** And now, very briefly, in the third place, LET ME WARN YOU OF TWO DANGERS.

One is that you will be very much tempted to give up the form of sound words that you hold *on account of the opposition you will meet with*. I do not prophesy that you will have corporeal persecution, though I know there are some poor creatures here, who have to endure that from ungodly husbands and such like. But you will, all of you, in some measure, if you hold the truth of God, meet with the persecution of the tongue. You will be laughed at—your doctrine will be held up to ridicule—exhibited in a grotesque manner. You will be caricatured in all that

you believe and you will be sometimes tempted to say, “No, I do not believe that,” though all the while you do. Or if you do not positively say it, you will at times be led to turn a little because of the laughter you cannot stand and the scoff of the worldly-wise is rather too hard for you. Oh, my beloved, let me warn you against being thus drawn aside! “Hold fast the form of sound words” in the midst of all ridicule.

But the greatest obstacle you will have is a sort of slight and cunning trying to pervert you to the belief that your doctrine is the same one which is just the very opposite! The enemy will try to persuade you that something he holds is quite harmless, though opposed to what you hold. And he will say, “You do not want to be broaching these things. They will bring forth controversy—there is a way of squaring your sentiments with mine.” And you know we all like to be thought so charitable! The greatest pride in the world, now, is to be thought charitable in sentiment. Some of us would run a hundred miles rather than be called a bigot or an Antinomian. I beseech you, be not drawn aside by those who are so ready to subvert your faith! They do not by openly attacking it, but insidiously undermine every doctrine, saying this does not really matter and that does not matter, while all the while they are trying to pull down every castle and fortress wherewith God has guarded His truth and His Church!

**IV.** And now, in the last place, I am to tell you of the GREAT HOLD-FASTS WHEREBY YOU ARE TO HOLD FAST THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.

If I might be allowed to mention one or two before coming to those in the text, I would say, in the first place, if you want to hold fast the truth, *seek to get an understanding of it*. A man cannot hold a thing fast unless he has a good understanding of it. I never want you to have the faith of the coal miner who was asked what he believed. He said he believed what the Church believed. “Well, but what does the church believe?” He said the Church believed what he believed and he believed what the Church believed and so it went all the way round. We do not want you to have that faith! It may be a very pernicious faith, a very obstinate faith—but it is a very foolish faith! We want you to understand things, to get a true knowledge of them. The reason why men forsake the truth of God for error is that they have not really understood the truth. In nine cases out of ten, they have not embraced it with enlightened minds. Let me exhort you parents as much as lies in you to give your children sound instruction in the great doctrines of the gospel of Christ. I believe that what Irving once said is a great truth. He said, “In these modern times you boast and glory and you think yourselves to be in a high and noble condition because you have your Sunday schools and British schools and all kinds of schools for teaching youth. I tell you,” he said, “that philanthropic and great as these are, they are the ensigns of your disgrace. They show that your land is not a land where parents teach their children at home! They

show you there is a lack of parental instruction—and though they are blessed things, these Sunday schools—they are indications of something wrong. For if we all taught our children, there would be no need of strangers to say to our children, ‘Know the Lord.’”

I trust you will never give up that excellent Puritan habit of catechizing your children at home. Any father or mother, who entirely gives up a child to the teaching of another, has made a mistake. There is no teacher who wishes to absolve a parent from what he ought to do himself! He is an assistant; he was never intended to be a *substitute*. Teach your children, parents! Bring out your old catechisms, again, for they are, after all, blessed means of instruction and the next generation shall outstrip those who have gone before it. The reason why many of you are weak in the faith is this you did not receive instruction in your youth in the great things of the gospel of Christ. If you had, you would have been so grounded, settled and firm in the faith, that nothing could by any means have moved you. I beseech you, then, understand God’s truth and then you will be more likely to hold fast by it!

But then, Christian brothers and sisters, above all things, if you would hold fast the truth, *pray yourselves right into it*. The way to get a doctrine is to pray till you get it. An old divine says, “I have lost many things I learned in the house of God, but I never lost anything I ever learned in the closet.” That which a man learns on his knees, with his Bible open, he will never forget. Well, have you ever bowed your knees and said, “Open You my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your law”? If you have *seen* that wondrous thing, you will never forget it. He that prays himself into God’s truth will never be gotten out of it by the very devil, himself, though he were to put on the garb of an angel of light! Pray yourselves into the truth.

But the two great holdfasts are here given—*faith and love*. If you would hold the truth of God fast, put your faith in Jesus Christ and have an ardent love towards Him. Believe the truth. Do not *pretend* to believe it, but believe it thoroughly. And he who does believe it and fixes his faith, first in Christ, and in all Christ says, will not be likely to let it go. Why, we do not believe religion, most of us! We pretend to believe it, but we do not believe it with all our heart and all our soul, with all our might and all our strength—not with that, “faith which is in Christ Jesus.” For if we did, come storms, come trials, like Luther of old, we would not flinch because of persecution, but stand fast in the evil day, having our faith fixed upon a rock!

And then the second holdfast is *love*. Love Christ and love Christ’s truth because it is Christ’s truth, for Christ’s sake. And if you love Christ’s truth, you will not let it go. It is very hard to turn a man away from the truth he loves. “Oh,” says one, “I cannot argue with you about it, but I cannot give it up—I love it and cannot live without it. It is a part of me, woven into my very nature. And though my opponent says that

bread is not bread and I cannot prove that it is, yet I know I go and eat it. It is wonderfully like it to me and it takes away my hunger. He says that stream is not a pure stream. I cannot prove that it is, but I go and drink of it and find it the river of the water of life to my soul. And he tells me that my gospel is not a true one—well, it comforts me, it sustains me in my trials, it helps me to conquer sin and to keep down my evil passions and brings me near to God. And if my gospel is not a true one, I wonder what sort of thing a true one is—mine is wonderfully like it and I cannot suppose that a true gospel would produce better effects!” That is the best thing to do—to *believe* the Word—to have so full a belief in it that the enemy cannot pull you away. He may try to do it, but you will say—

**“Amidst temptations sharp and long,  
My soul to the same refuge flies!  
Faith is my anchor, firm and strong,  
When tempests blow or billows rise.”**

Hold on then, Christian, to “faith and love which are in Christ Jesus”—two blessed holdfasts wherewith we grasp the truth.

And now, brothers and sisters, I pray that my Master will enable you to see the importance of what I have uttered. Perhaps you may not think it so important, now, especially those of you who are young. But there are some here, the fathers of this church, who will tell you that the older they grow and the longer they live, the more they find the truth of God to be valuable. They may, perhaps, in their youth have had a little radicalism in them with regard to God’s truth, but they are conservative in their views of it now! They feel it to be worth conserving. It would be well for us if, with regard to the truth, we began to be conservative as soon as we believed it and held it fast and never let it go. I think the chief fault of the present day is that in seeking to be charitable, we do not hold the truth firmly enough. I met, some time ago, with the case of an eminent minister in the gospel, a brother whom I respect and esteem, who preached a sermon from the text, “Prove all things.” A young man was there who was professedly a believer in Christianity. But such was the style in which the subject was handled, that after hearing that sermon, he went home and bought some infidel works. The consequence is that he has become entirely apostate even from virtue, itself, and has forsaken everything that he once held to be true! I say, send your anchor right down, young Christian—and whatever may come against you, still hold on by that truth. And you may yet, even then, “prove all things.” But while you are doing it, remember to “hold fast that which is good.” Do not “prove all things” by giving up that which is good to do it!

Now such of you as know not the Lord, if you are ever saved, let me tell you that the most likely place for you to meet with salvation is under a pure gospel ministry. Therefore there is a lesson for you. Attend where the gospel is preached.

Again—the most likely way for you ever to receive God’s grace is to believe God’s truths. Never kick against God’s doctrines, but receive them!

And I have one thing to say to you this morning, if in your heart, poor sinner, you can say, "I believe God's gospel to be a glorious gospel." You are not far from something else. If you can say, "I submit to all its demands, I believe God just if He destroys me, and if He saves me, it will only be because of His sovereign mercy," then, sinner, there are good hopes for you! You have proceeded some way on the road to heaven. If you can but do one thing more and say, "Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him." And if you can come to the cross of Christ and say, "Jesus, I love Your gospel and I love Your truth. If I perish, I will perish believing all Your truth, I will perish clasping Your cross. If I die, I will die proclaiming that You are a just and gracious God and still, in my poor way, holding fast the form of sound words," I tell you, poor soul, God will never damn you! If you do believe in Jesus Christ and hold fast His words, He will look upon you in Love. He will say, "Poor soul, though he does not know that these truths are his, yet he thinks them precious. Though he dares not hope that they belong to him, yet he will fight for them. Though he does not know that he is really a soldier of the cross, chosen of Me before time began, yet see how valiantly he strives for Me." And the Lord will say, "Poor soul, you love the things that you think are not your own—I will make you rejoice in them as your own, by My grace. You love election, though you think you are not elect—that is evidence that you are Mine." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized, and you shall be saved."

And now my brothers and sisters, stand fast, I beseech you. If my tears, if my bended knees, if my cries, yes, if my blood could prevail with you to lay to heart what I have said, this morning, here should be tears, and cries, and blood too—if I could but make you all hold fast in these evil, perilous times! Hold fast and with the tenacity of the dying hand of the sinking mariner—"Hold fast," I beseech you, "the form of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus."

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# **GOD ALONE THE SALVATION OF HIS PEOPLE NO. 80**

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 18, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“He only is my rock and my salvation.”  
Psalm 62:2.***

HOW noble a title. So sublime, suggestive and overpowering. “MY ROCK.” It is a figure so divine, that to God, alone, shall it ever be applied. Look on yon rocks and wonder at their antiquity, for from their summits a thousand ages look down upon us. When this gigantic city was as yet unfounded, they were gray with age. When our humanity had not yet breathed the air, ‘tis said that these were ancient things. They are the children of departed ages. With awe we look upon these aged rocks for they are among nature’s first-born. You discover embedded in them the remnants of unknown worlds, of which, the wise may *guess*, but which, nevertheless, they must fail to *know* unless God, Himself, should teach them what has been before them. You regard the rock with reverence, for you remember what stories it might tell if it had a voice, of how through igneous and aqueous agency it has been tortured into the shape it now assumes. Even so is our God pre-eminently ancient. His head and His hair are white like wool, as white as snow, for He is “the ancient of days,” and we are always taught in Scripture to remember that He is “without beginning of years.” Long before creation was begotten, “from everlasting to everlasting,” He was God!

“My rock!” What a history the rock might give you of the storms to which it has been exposed. Of the tempests which have raged in the ocean at its base and of the thunders which have disturbed the skies above its head—while it, itself, has stood unscathed by tempests and unmoved by the buffeting of storms. So with our God! How firm has He stood—how steadfast has He been—though the nations have reviled Him and “the kings of the earth have taken counsel together!” By merely standing still, He has broken the ranks of the enemy without even stretching forth His hand! With motionless grandeur like a rock, He has broken the waves and scattered the armies of His enemies, driving them back in confusion. Look at the rock, again—see how firm and unmoved it stands! It does not stray from place to place but it abides fast forever. Other things have changed, islands have been drowned beneath the sea and continents have been shaken, but see, the rock stands as steadfast

as if it were the very foundation of the whole world and could not move till the wreck of creation, or the loosening of the bands of nature. So with God—how faithful He is in His promises! How unalterable in His decrees! How unswerving! How unchanging!

The rock is immutable; nothing has been worn from it. Yon old granite peak has gleamed in the sun, or worn the white veil of winter snow—it has sometimes worshipped God with bare uncovered head and at other times the clouds furnished it with veiling wings, that like a cherub, it might adore its Maker. But yet it, itself, has stood unchanged. The frosts of winter have not destroyed it, nor have the heats of summer melted it. It is the same with God. Lo, He is my rock! He is the same and His kingdom shall have no end. Unchangeable He is in His being, firm in His own sufficiency. He keeps Himself Immutably the same. And “therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.” The ten thousand uses of the rock, moreover, are full of ideas as to what God is. You see the fortress standing on a high rock, up which the clouds, themselves, can scarcely climb and up whose precipices the assault cannot be carried. The armed cannot travel, for the besieged laugh at them from their eminence. So is our God a sure defense and we shall not be moved if He has “set our feet upon a rock and established our goings.” Many a giant rock is a source of admiration from its elevation—on its summit we can see the world spread out below, like some small map. We mark the river or broadly spreading stream as if they were a vein of silver inlaid in emerald! We discover the nations beneath our feet, “like drops in a bucket,” and the islands are “very little things” in the distance, while the sea, itself, seems but a basin of water, held in the hand of a mighty giant. The mighty God is such a rock! We stand on Him and look down on the world, counting it to be a little thing. We have climbed to Pisgah’s top, from the summit of which we can race across this world of storms and troubles to the bright land of spirits—that world unknown to ear or eye, but which God’s truth is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. This mighty rock is our refuge and our high observatory from which we see the unseen and have the evidence of things which as yet we have not enjoyed. I need not, however, stop to tell you all about a rock—we might preach for a week upon it—but we give you that for your meditation during the week. “*He is my rock.*” How glorious a thought! How safe am I and how secure—and how may I rejoice in the fact that when I wade through Jordan’s stream, He will be my rock! I shall not walk upon a slippery foundation, but I shall tread on Him who cannot betray my feet. And I may sing, when I am dying, “He is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”

We now leave the thought of the rock and proceed to the subject of our discourse, which is this—that God, alone, is the salvation of His people—

**“He ONLY is my rock and my salvation.”**

We shall notice, first, *the great doctrine, that God only is our salvation.* Secondly, *the great experience, to know and to learn that, "He only is my rock and my salvation."* And, thirdly, *the great duty, which you may guess is to give all the glory, and all the honor, and place all our faith on Him "who only is our rock and our salvation."*

I. The first thing is THE GREAT DOCTRINE—that God “only is our rock and our salvation.” If anyone should ask us what we would choose for our motto, as preachers of the gospel, we think we would reply, “God only is our salvation.” The late lamented Mr. Denham has put at the foot of his portrait a most admirable text, “salvation is of the Lord.” Now that is just an epitome of Calvinism—it is the sum and the substance of it. If anyone should ask you what you mean by a Calvinist, you may reply, “He is one who says, *salvation is of the Lord.*” I cannot find in Scripture any other doctrine than this. It is the essence of the Bible. “He only is my rock and my salvation.” Tell me anything that departs from this and it will be a heresy. Tell me a heresy and I shall find its essence here—that it has departed from this great, this fundamental, this rocky truth of God—“God is my rock and my salvation.” What is the heresy of Rome but the addition of something to the perfect merits of Jesus Christ—the bringing in of the works of the flesh to assist in our justification? And what is that heresy of Arminianism but the secret addition of something to the complete work of the Redeemer? You will find that every heresy, if brought to the touchstone, will discover itself here—it departs from this—“He only is my rock and my salvation.”

Let us now explain this doctrine fully. By the term, “salvation,” I understand not simply regeneration and conversion, but something more. I do not reckon that is, “salvation,” which regenerates me and then puts me in such a position that I may fall out of the covenant and be lost! I cannot call that a, “bridge,” which only goes half-way over the stream. I cannot call that, “salvation,” which does not carry me all the way to heaven, wash me perfectly clean and put me among the glorified who sing constant hosannas around the throne! By, “salvation,” then, if I may divide it into parts, I understand deliverance, preservation continually through life, sustenance and the gathering up of the whole in the perfecting of the saints in the person of Jesus Christ at last.

1. By, salvation, I understand *deliverance* from the house of bondage, wherein by nature I am born and being brought out into the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free, together with a putting “on a rock and establishing my goings.” This I understand to be wholly of God. And I think I am right in that conclusion because I find in Scripture that man is dead. And how can a dead man assist in his own resurrection? I find that man is utterly depraved and hates the divine change. How can a man, then, work that change which he hates? I find man to be ignorant of what it is to be born-again and, like Nicodemus, asking the foolish

question, “How can a man enter again into his mother’s womb and be born?” I cannot conceive that a man can do that which he does not understand—and if he does not know what it is to be born-again, he cannot make himself to be born-again! No, I believe man to be utterly powerless in the first work of his salvation. He cannot break his chains, for though they are not chains of iron, they are chains of his own flesh and blood. He must first break his own heart before he can break the fetters that bind him. And how shall man break his own heart? What hammer is that which I can use upon my own soul to break it, or what fire can I kindle which can dissolve it? No, deliverance is of God alone! The doctrine is affirmed continually in Scripture. And he who does not believe it, does not receive God’s truth. Deliverance is of God, alone—“salvation is of the Lord.”

**2.** And if we are delivered and made alive in Christ, *preservation* is still of the Lord, alone. If I am prayerful, God makes me prayerful—if I have graces, God gives me graces. If I have fruits, God gives me fruits. If I hold on in a consistent life, God holds me on in a consistent life. I do nothing whatever towards my own preservation except what God Himself first does in me! Whatever I have—all my goodness is of the Lord, alone! But when I sin, *that* is my own; but wherein I act rightly, that is of God, wholly and completely! If I have repulsed an enemy, His strength nerved my arm. Did I strike a foe to the ground? God’s strength sharpened my sword, and gave me courage to strike the blow! Do I preach His word? It is not I, but divine grace that is in me. Do I live to God a holy life? It is not I, but Christ who lives in me. Am I sanctified? I did not sanctify myself—God’s Holy Spirit sanctifies me! Am I weaned from the world? I am weaned by God’s chastisements. Do I grow in knowledge? The great Instructor teaches me! I find in God all I need, and I find in myself, nothing. “He only is my rock and my salvation.”

**3.** And again—*sustenance* also is absolutely requisite. We need sustenance in providence for our bodies and sustenance in grace for our souls. Providential mercies are wholly from the Lord. It is true the rain falls from heaven and waters the earth, and “makes it bring forth and bud that there may be seed for the sower and bread for the eater.” But out of whose hand comes the rain and from whose fingers do the dew drops distil? It is true, the sun shines and makes the plants grow and bud and bring forth the blossom and its heat ripens the fruit upon the tree. But who gives the sun its light and who scatters the genial heat from it? It is true, I work and toil, this brow sweats. These hands are weary. I cast myself upon my bed and there I rest, but I do not ascribe my preservation to my own might. Who makes these sinews strong? Who makes these lungs like iron and who makes these nerves of steel? “God only is the rock of my salvation.” He only is the salvation of my body and the salvation of my soul! Do I feed on the word? That word would be no

food for me unless the Lord made it food for my soul and helped me to feed upon it. Do I live on the manna which comes down from heaven? What is that manna, but Jesus Christ, Himself incarnate, whose body and whose blood I eat and drink? Am I continually receiving fresh increase of might? Where do I gather my might? My salvation is of Him—without Him I can do nothing! As a branch cannot bring forth fruit unless it abides in the vine, no more can I, unless I abide in Him!

4. Then if we gather the three thoughts in one. The *perfection* we shall soon have when we shall stand yonder, near God's throne, will be wholly of the Lord! That bright crown which shall sparkle on our brow like a constellation of brilliant stars shall have been fashioned only by our God! I go to a land, but it is a land which the plow of earth has never turned up—though it is greener than earth's best pastures. And though it is richer than all her harvests ever saw, I go to a building of more gorgeous architecture than man has built! It is not of mortal architecture. It is "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." All I shall know in heaven will be given by the Lord. And I shall say when, at last I appear before Him—

***"Grace all the work shall crown  
Through everlasting days!  
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,  
And well deserves the praise."***

II. And now, beloved, we come to THE GREAT EXPERIENCE. The greatest of all experiences, I take it, is to know that, "He only is our rock and our salvation." We have been insisting upon a doctrine. But doctrine is nothing unless proved in our experience. Most of God's doctrines are only to be learned by practice—by taking them out into the world and letting them bear the wear and tear of life. If I ask any Christian in this place whether this doctrine is true, if he has had any deep experience, he will reply, "True I say, that it is. Not one word in God's Bible is truer than that, for indeed salvation is of God alone." "He only is my rock and my salvation." But, beloved, it is very hard to have such an experimental knowledge of the doctrine that we never depart from it. It is very hard to believe that "salvation is of the Lord." There are times when we put our confidence in something other than God—and we sin by linking hand-in-hand with God something besides Him! Let me now dwell a little upon the experience which will bring us to know that salvation is of God alone.

The true Christian will confess that salvation is of God alone *effectively*, that is, that "He works in him to will and to do of His own pleasure." Looking back on my past life, I can see that the dawning of it all was of God—of God effectively. I took no torch with which to light the sun, but the sun gave me light. I did not commence my spiritual life—no, I rather kicked and struggled against the things of the Spirit. When He drew me, for a time I did not run after Him. There was a natural hatred in my soul

for everything holy and good. Wooings were lost upon me—warnings were cast to the wind—thunders were despised. And as for the whispers of His love, they were rejected as being less than nothing and vanity! But sure I am, I can say, now, speaking on behalf of myself and of all who know the Lord, “He only is my salvation and your salvation, too.” It was He who turned your heart and brought you down on your knees. You can say in very deed, then—

***“Grace taught my soul to pray,  
Grace made my eyes overflow.”***

And coming to this moment, you can say—

***“’Tis grace has kept me to this day,  
And will not let me go.”***

I remember when I was coming to the Lord. I thought I was doing it all myself and though I sought the Lord earnestly, I had no idea the Lord was seeking me. I do not think the young convert is at first aware of this. One day when I was sitting in the house of God I was not thinking much about the man’s sermon for I did not believe it. The thought struck me, “*How did you come to be a Christian?*” I sought the Lord. “*But how did you come to seek the Lord?*” The thought flashed across my mind in a moment—I would not have sought Him unless there had been some previous influence in my mind to make me seek Him! I am sure you will not be many weeks a Christian, certainly not many months, before you will say, “I ascribe my change wholly to God.” I desire to make this my constant confession. I know there are some who preach one gospel in the morning and another at night—who preach a good sound gospel in the morning because they are preaching to saints—but preach lies in the evening because they are preaching to sinners. But there is no necessity to preach truth at one time and lies at another—“The word of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” There is no need to put anything else in it, in order to bring sinners to the Savior! But, my brothers and sisters, you must confess that “salvation is of the Lord.” When you turn back to the past, you must say, “My Lord, whatever I have, You gave it to me. Have I the wings of faith? I was a wingless creature once. Have I the eyes of faith? I was a blind creature once. I was dead till You made me alive, blind, till You opened my eyes. My heart was a loathsome dunghill but You put pearls there, if pearls there are, for pearls are not the product of dunghills—You have given me all I have.”

And so, if you look at the present, if your experience is that of a child of God, you will trace all to Him; not only all you have had in the past, but all you have now! Here you are, sitting in your pew this morning. I just want you to review where you stand. Beloved, do you think you would be where you are now if it were not for divine grace? Only think what a strong temptation you had yesterday. They did “consult to cast you down from your excellence.” Perhaps you were served like I am,

sometimes. The devil sometimes seems to drag me right to the edge of a precipice of sin by a kind of enchantment, making me forget the danger by the sweetness which surrounds it. And just when he would push me down, I see the yawning gulf beneath me and some strong hand put out and I hear a Voice, saying, "I will preserve him from going down into the pit. I have found a ransom." Do you not feel that before this sun goes down you will be damned if grace does not keep you? Have you anything good in your heart that grace did not give you? If I thought I had a grace that did not come from God, I would trample it beneath my feet, as not being a godly virtue! I would guess it to be but a counterfeit, for it could not be right if it did not come from the mint of glory! It may look ever so much like the right thing, but it is certainly bad unless it came from God! Christian, can you say, of all things past and present, "He only is my rock and my salvation"?

And now look forward to the future. Brothers and sisters, think how many enemies you have, how many rivers you have to cross, how many mountains to climb, how many dragons to fight, how many lions' teeth to escape, how many fires to pass through, how many floods to wade. What do you think? Can your salvation be of anything except of God? Oh, if I had not that everlasting arm to lean upon, I would cry, "Death! Hurl me anywhere; anywhere out of the world." If I had not that one hope, that one trust, bury me ten thousand fathoms deep beneath the ground where my being might be forgotten! Oh, put me far away, for I am miserable if I have not God to help me all through my journey. Are you strong enough to fight with one of your enemies without your God? I think not. A little silly maid may cast a Peter down and cast you down, too, if God does not keep you! I beseech you remember this. I hope you know it by experience in the past but try to remember it in the future—wherever you go, "salvation is of the Lord." Do not get to looking at your heart—do not get to examining to see whether you have anything to recommend you—just remember, "Salvation is of the Lord." "He only is my rock and my salvation."

Effectively, it all comes of God and, I am sure we must add, *meritoriously*. We have experienced that salvation is wholly of Him. What merits have I? If I were to scrape together all I ever had and then come to you and beg all you have got, I should not collect the value of a farthing among you all! We have heard of some Catholic, who said that there was a balance struck in his favor between his good works and his bad ones, and therefore he felt he deserved heaven. But there is nothing of the sort here! I have seen many people, many kinds of Christians and many odd Christians, but I never yet met with one who said he had any merits of his own when he came to close quarters. We have heard of perfect men, and we have heard of men perfectly foolish—and we have thought the characters perfectly alike! Have we any merits of our own? I am sure we

have not if we have been taught of God! Once we thought we had; but there came a man called Conviction into our house one night, and took away our glorying. Ah, we are still vile! I don't know whether Cowper said quite right, when he said—

***“Since the dear hour that brought me to Your foot  
And cut up all my follies by the root  
I never trusted in an arm but Thine—  
Nor hoped but in Your righteousness divine!”***

I think he made a mistake, for most Christians get to trusting in self at times, but we are forced to acknowledge that “salvation is of the Lord,” if we consider it meritoriously.

My dear friends, have you experienced this in your own hearts? Can you say, “Amen,” to that, as it goes round? Can you say, “I know that God is my helper?” I dare say you can, most of you; but you will not say it as well as you will by-and-by, if God teaches you. We *believe* it when we commence the Christian life, we *know* it afterwards. And the longer we live, the more we find it to be the truth—“Cursed is he that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm, but blessed is he who trusts in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is.” In fact, the crown of Christian experience is to be delivered from all trust in self or man and to be brought to rely wholly and simply on Jesus Christ! I say, Christian, your highest and noblest experience is not to be groaning about your corruption, is not to be crying about your wanderings, but is to say—

***“With all my sin and care and woe,  
His Spirit will not let me go!”***

“Lord, I believe, help You my unbelief.” I like what Luther says, “I would run into Christ's arms if He had a drawn sword in His hands.” That is called venturesome believing, but as an old divine says, there is no such thing as venturesome believing—we cannot venture on Christ—it is no venture at all, there is no chance involved in the least degree. It is a holy and heavenly experience when we can go to Christ, amid the storm and say, “Oh, Jesus, I believe I am covered by Your blood,” when we can feel ourselves to be all over rags and yet can say, “Lord, I believe that through Christ Jesus, ragged though I am, I am fully absolved.” A saint's faith is little faith when he believes as a saint—but a sinner's faith is true faith when he believes as a sinner. The faith, not of a sinless being but the faith of a sinful creature—that is the faith which delights God! Go, then, Christian! Ask that this may be your experience, to learn each day, “He only is my rock and my salvation.”

**III.** And now, in the third place, we speak of THE GREAT DUTY. We have had the great experience, now we must have the great duty.

The great duty is—if God only is our rock and we know it, are we not bound to put all our trust in God, to give all our love to God, to set all our hope *upon* God, to spend all our life *for* God and to devote our whole being to God? If God is all I have, surely all I have shall be God's! If God,

alone, is my hope, surely I will put all my hope upon God. If the love of God is alone that which saves, surely He shall have my love alone! Come, let me talk to you, Christian, for a little while. I need to warn you not to have two Gods, two Christs, two friends, two husbands, two great fathers. Do not have two fountains, two rivers, two suns, or two heavens, but have only one! I need to bid you, now, as God has put all salvation in Himself, to bring all yourself to God. Come, let me talk to you!

In the first place, Christian, *never join anything with Christ*. Would you stitch your old rags into the new garment He gives? Would you put new wine into old bottles? Would you put Christ and self together? You might as well yoke an elephant and an ant! They could never plow together. What? Would you put an archangel in the same harness with a worm and hope that they would drag you through the sky! *How inconsistent!* How foolish! What? Yourself and Christ? Surely, Christ would smile—No, Christ would *weep* to think of such a thing! Christ and man together? CHRIST AND COMPANY? No, it never shall be—He will have nothing of the sort! He must be all. Note how inconsistent it would be to put anything else with Him. And note, again, *how wrong* it would be. Christ will never bear to have anything else placed with Him. He calls them adulterers and fornicators who love anything else but He. He will have your whole heart to trust in Him, your whole soul to love Him and your whole life to honor Him! He will not come into your house till you put all the keys at His feet! He will not come till you give Him attic, parlor, drawing-room, and cellar too. He will make you sing—

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

Mark you, Christian; it is a sin to keep anything from God!

Remember, *Christ is very grieved* if you do it. Assuredly you do not desire to grieve Him who shed His blood for you? Surely there is not one child of God here who would like to vex his blessed elder brother? There cannot be one soul redeemed by blood who would like to see those sweet blessed eyes of our best beloved bedewed with tears. I know you will not grieve your Lord, will you? But I tell you, you will vex His noble spirit if you love anything but He. He is so fond of you that He is jealous of your love. It is said, concerning His Father, that He is “a jealous God” and He is a jealous Christ you have to deal with! Therefore, put not your trust in chariots, stay not yourselves in horses, but say, “He only is my rock and my salvation.”

I beg you, mark, also, one reason why you should not look at anything else—and that is if you look at anything else, you *cannot see Christ as well*. “Oh,” you say, “I can see Christ in His mercies.” But you cannot see Him as well, there, as if you viewed His person! No man can look at two

objects at the same time and see both distinctly. You may afford a wink for the world and a wink for Christ. But you cannot give Christ a whole look and a whole eye and the world half an eye, too! I beseech you, brothers and sisters, do not try it. If you look on the world, it will be a speck in your eye. If you trust in anything but Christ, between two stools you will come to the ground and a fearful fall you will have. Therefore, Christian, look only on Him. "He only is my rock and my salvation."

Mark you, again, Christian, I would bid you never put anything else with Christ, for as sure as ever you do, *you will have the whip for it*. There never was a child of God who harbored one of the Lord's traitors in his heart but he always had a charge laid against him. God has sent out a search warrant against all of us—and do you know what He has told His officers to search for? He has told them to search for all our lovers, all our treasures and all our helpers. God cares less about our sins, as sins, than He does about our sins, or even our virtues, as usurpers of His throne! I tell you, there is nothing in the world you set your heart upon that shall not be hung upon a gallows higher than Haman's! If you love anything but Christ, He will make you regret it. If you love your house better than Christ, He will make it a prison for you. If you love your child better than Christ, He will make it an adder in your breast to sting you. If you love your daily provisions better than Christ, He will make your drink bitter and your food like gravel in your mouth. Till you come to live wholly on Him, there is nothing which you have which He cannot turn into a rod if you love it better than He!

And, mark once again—if you look at anything except God, *you will soon fall into sin*. There was never a man who kept his eyes on anything but Christ who did not go wrong. If the mariner will steer by the polestar, he shall go to the north. But if he steers sometimes by the polestar and sometimes by another constellation, he knows not where he shall go. If you do not keep your eyes wholly on Christ you will soon be wrong. If you ever do give up the secret of your strength, namely, your trust in Christ—if you ever dally with the Delilah of the world and love yourself more than Christ—the Philistines will be upon you and shear your locks and take you out to grind at the mill! And you will surely grind till your God gives you deliverance by means of your hair growing once more and bringing you to trust wholly in the Savior. Keep your eyes, then, fixed on Jesus, for if you turn away from Him, how ill will you fare! I bid you, Christian, beware of your graces. Beware of your virtues. Beware of your experience, beware of your prayers. Beware of your hope. Beware of your humility. There is not one of your graces which may not damn you if they are left alone to themselves. Old Brooks says when a woman has a husband and that husband gives her some choice rings, she puts them on her fingers. And if she should be so foolish as to love the rings better than her husband—if she should care only for the jewels, and forget him

who gave them—how angry would the husband be and how foolish she would be, herself! Christian! I warn you, beware, even, of your graces, for they may prove more dangerous to you than your sins! I warn you of everything in this world. For everything has this tendency, especially a high estate. If we have a comfortable maintenance, we are most likely not to look so much to God. Ah, Christian, with an independent fortune, take care of your money, beware of your gold and silver. It will curse you if it comes between you and your God. Always keep your eyes out to the cloud and not to the rain—to the river and not to the ship that floats on its bosom. Look you not to the sunbeam, but to the sun. Trace your mercies to God and say perpetually, “He only is my rock and my salvation.”

Lastly, I bid you once more to keep your eyes wholly on God, and on nothing in yourself, *because what are you now and what were you ever, but a poor damned sinner if you were out of Christ?* I had been preaching, the other day, all the former part of the sermon as a minister. Presently I thought I was a poor sinner and then how differently I began to speak! The best sermons I ever preach are those I preach not in my ministerial capacity, but as a *poor sinner preaching to sinners*. I find there is nothing like a minister remembering that he is nothing but a poor sinner, after all. It is said of the peacock that although he has fine feathers, he is ashamed of his black feet—I am sure that we ought to be ashamed of ours. However bright our feathers may appear at times, we ought to think of what we would be if divine grace did not help us. Oh, Christian, keep your eyes on Christ, for out of Him you are no better than the damned in hell! There is not a demon in the pit of hell but might put you to the blush if you are out of Christ. Oh that you would be humble! Remember what an evil heart you have within you, even when grace is there. You have grace—God loves you, but remember, you still have a foul cancer in your heart! God has removed much of your sin, but the corruption still remains. We feel that though the old man is somewhat choked and the fire somewhat dampened by the sweet waters of the Holy Spirit’s influence, yet it would blaze up worse than before if God did not keep it under control! Let us not glory in ourselves, then. The slave need not be proud of his descent—he has the brand upon his hand. Out with pride! Away with it! Let us rest wholly and solely upon Jesus Christ!

Now, just one word to the ungodly—you who do not know Christ. You have heard what I have told you, that salvation is of Christ, alone. Is not that a good doctrine for you? For you have not got anything, have you? You are a poor, lost, ruined sinner. Hear this, then, sinner—you have nothing and you do not need anything, for Christ has all. “Oh,” you say, “I am a bond slave.” Ah, but He has got the redemption. “No,” you say, “I am black with sin.” Yes, but He has got the bath that can wash you white. You say, “I am leprous!” Yes, but the good Physician can take your leprosy away. You say, “I am condemned.” Yes, but He has got the ac-

quittal warrant signed and sealed, if you believe in Him. You say, “But I am dead!” Yes, but Christ has life, and He can give you life! You need nothing of your own—nothing to rely on but Christ; and if there is a man, woman, or child here who is prepared to say solemnly after me, with his or her heart, “I take Christ to be my Savior, with no powers and no merits of my own to trust in. I see my sins, but I see that Christ is higher than my sins; I see my guilt, but I believe that Christ is mightier than my guilt”—I say, if any of you can say that, you may go away and rejoice, for you are heirs of the kingdom of heaven!

I must tell you a singular story which was related at our church meeting, because there may be some very poor people here who may understand the way of salvation by it. One of the friends had been to see a person who was about to join the church, and he said to him, “Can you tell me what you would say to a poor sinner who came to ask you the way of salvation?” “Well,” he said, “I do not know—I think I can hardly tell you, but it so happened that a case of this sort did occur yesterday. A poor woman came into my shop, and I told her the way, but it was in such a homely manner that I don’t like to repeat it.” “Oh, tell me! I should like to hear it.” “Well, she is a poor woman who is always pawning her things, and by-and-by, she redeems them again. I did not know how to tell her better than this. I said to her—‘Look here, your soul is in pawn to the devil; Christ has paid the redemption money; you take faith for your ticket, and so you will get your soul out of pawn.’”

Now, that was the most simple, but the most excellent way of imparting knowledge of salvation to this woman! It is true our souls were pawned to Almighty vengeance. We were poor, and could not pay the redemption money; but Christ came and paid it all, and faith is the ticket which we use to get our souls out of pawn. We need not take a single penny with us; we have only to say, “Here, Lord, I believe in Jesus Christ. I have brought no money to pay for my soul, for here is the ticket; the money has been paid long ago. This is written in Your word—‘The blood of Christ cleans from all sin.’” If you take that ticket you will get your soul out of pawn; and you will then say, “I’m forgiven, I’m forgiven, I’m a miracle of grace.” May God bless you, my friends, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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# THE GOD OF THE AGED

## NOS. 81-82

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 25, 1855,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

**THE SUBSTANCE OF WHICH WAS ALSO DELIVERED AT STAMBOURNE,  
ESSEX, ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE JUBILEE  
OF HIS GRANDFATHER,  
THE REV. JAMES SPURGEON, TUESDAY, MAY 27, 1856.**

***“Even to your old age I am He; and even to gray hairs will I carry you. I have Made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.”  
Isaiah 46:4.***

THOSE will be peculiar circumstances under which I shall stand up to address the people next Tuesday—circumstances which perhaps seldom occur—possibly may never have occurred before! It might have been more in order that the aged minister should, himself, address the people, but nevertheless, as it is his own choice, so it must be. And I shall draw my consolation from the third verse, where it is declared, that though God is the God of the close of our life, yet He is also the God of its beginning. He carries us from the very womb, therefore the child may trust in God as well as the gray head; and He who gives special blessings to the gray hairs does also crown the head of the young with His perpetual favor, if they are His children—

***“Even to your old age I am He;  
And even to gray hairs will I carry you.”***

Will you allow me to expound *the doctrine of this text*, and then to show you how *it is carried out, especially in the time of old age?*

**I. THE DOCTRINE OF THE TEXT**, I hold to be, *the constancy of God’s promise—its perpetuity and its unchangeable nature*. God declares that He is not simply the God of the young saint; that He is not simply the God of the middle-aged saint—but that He is the God of the saints in all their ages from the cradle to the tomb! “Even to old age I am He,” or, as Lowth beautifully and more properly translates it, “Even to old age I am the same, and even to gray hairs will I carry you.”

The doctrine then is twofold—that God *Himself is the same*, whatever may be our age. And that *God’s dealings towards us*, both in providence and in grace, His carryings and His delivering *are alike unchanged*.

As to the first part of the doctrine, that God Himself is unchanged when we come to old age, surely I have no need to prove that. Abundant testimonies of Scripture declare God to be an immutable being, upon whose brow there is no furrow of old age and whose strength is not enfeebled by the lapse of ages. But if we need proof, we might look even abroad on nature and we would, from nature, guess that God would not change during the short period of our mortal life. Seems it unto me a hard thing that God should be the same for 70 years, when I find things in nature that have retained the same impress and image for many more years? Behold the sun! The sun that led our fathers to their daily labor, lights us still! And the moon by night is unchanged—the same satellite, glittering with the light of her master, the sun. Are not the rocks the same? And are there not many ancient trees which remain well near the same for multitudes of years and outlive centuries? Is not the earth, for the most part, the same? Have the stars lost their light? Do not the clouds still pour their rain upon the earth? Does not the ocean still beat with its one great pulse of ebb and flow? Do not the winds still howl, or breathe in gentle gales upon the earth? Does not the sun still shine? Do not plants grow as heretofore? Has the harvest changed? Has God forgotten His covenant of day and night? Has He yet brought another flood upon the earth? Does it not still stand in the water and out of the water? Surely, then, if changing nature, made to pass away in a few more years and to be “dissolved with fervent heat,” remains the same through the cycles of 70 years, may we not believe that God, who is greater than nature—the Creator of all worlds—would still remain the same God, through so brief a period? Does not that suffice?

Then we have another proof. Had we a new God, we would not have the Scriptures—had God changed, then we would need a new Bible. But the Bible which the infant reads is the Bible of the gray head! The Bible which I carried with me to my Sunday school, I shall sit in my bed to read when, gray-headed, all strength shall fail save that which is divine! The promise which cheered me in the young morning of life, when first I consecrated myself to God, shall cheer me when my eyes are dim with age and when the sunlight of heaven lights them up and I see bright visions of far-off worlds, where I hope to dwell forever. The Word of God is still the same—there is not one promise removed. The doctrines are the same. The truths are the same. All God’s declarations remain unchanged forever. And I argue, from the very fact that God’s Book is not affected by years, that God, Himself, must be immutable and that His years do not change Him. Look at our worship—is not that the same? Oh, gray heads! Well can you remember how you were carried to God’s house in your

childhood! And you heard the same hymns that you hear now. Have they lost their savor? Have they lost their music? At times, when prayer is offered, you remember that your ancient pastor prayed the same petition 50 years ago. But the petition is as good as ever. It is still unchanged. It is the same praise, the same prayer, the same expounding, the same preaching. All our worship is the same. And with many, it is the same house of God where first they were dedicated to God in baptism. Surely, my brothers and sisters, if God had changed, we would have been obliged to make a new form of worship—if God had not been immutable, we would have needed to have sacrificed our sacred service to some new method. But since we find ourselves bowing like our fathers, with the same prayers and chanting the same psalms, we rightly believe that God Himself must be immutable.

But we have better proofs than this that God is still unchanged. We learn this, too, *from the sweet experience of all the saints*. They testify that the God of their youth is the God of their later years. They proclaim that Christ “has the dew of His youth.” When they first saw Him, as the bright and glorious Immanuel, they thought Him “altogether lovely.” And when they see Him, now, they see not one beauty faded and not one glory departed—He is the same Jesus! When they first rested themselves on Him, they thought His shoulders strong enough to carry them. And they find those shoulders still as mighty as ever. They thought at first His heart did melt with love and that His heart was beating high with mercy—and they find it still the same. God is unchanged and, therefore, they “are not consumed.” They put their trust in Him because they have not yet marked a single alteration in Him. His character, His essence, His being and His deeds are all the same! And, moreover, to crown all, we cannot suppose a God, if we cannot suppose an immutable God. A God who changed would be no God! We could not grasp the idea of Deity if we once allowed our minds to take in the thought of mutability. From all these things, then, we conclude that, “even from old age He is the same and that even to gray hairs He will carry us.”

The other side of the doctrine is this—not only that God is the same in His nature—but that He is *the same in His dealings*. He will carry us the same; He will deliver us the same; He will bear us the same as He used to do. And here, also, we need scarcely to prove to you that God’s dealings towards His children are the same—especially when I remind you that God’s promises are made not to ages, but to people, to persons and to men and women! It has been recently declared by some ministers that certain ages are more likely to be converted than other ages. We have heard persons state that should a man outlive 30 years of life, if he hears

the gospel, he is not at all likely to be saved. But we believe a more palpable, bare-faced lie was never uttered in the pulpit, for we have, ourselves, known multitudes who have been saved at forty, fifty, sixty, seventy and even bordering on the grave at eighty! We find some promises in the Bible made to some particular conditions. But the main, the great, the grand promises are made to sinners as sinners! They are made to the elect, to the chosen ones, irrespective of their age or condition. We hold that the man who is old can be justified in the same way as the man who is young! That the robe of Christ is broad enough to cover the strong full-grown man as well as the little child! We believe the blood of Christ avails to wash out 70 years, as well as 70 days of sin. That “with God there is no respect of persons,” that all ages are alike to Him, and that “whoever comes to Christ, He will in nowise cast out.” And we are sure that all the good things of the Bible are as good at one time as at another; the perfect robe of righteousness that I wear—will that change by years? The sanctification of the Spirit, will that be destroyed by years? The promises, will they totter? The covenant, will that be dissolved? I can suppose that the everlasting hills shall melt. I can dream that the eternal mountains shall be dissolved like the snow upon their peaks. I can conceive that the ocean may be licked up with tongues of forked flame. I can suppose the sun stopped in its career. I can imagine the moon turned into blood. I can conceive the stars falling from the vault of night. I can imagine “the wreck of nature and the crash of worlds.” But I cannot conceive the change of a single mercy, a single covenant blessing, a single promise, or a single grace which God bestows upon His people! I find every one of them in itself stamped with immutability and I have no reason to put this merely upon guess-work! I find, when I turn over the whole Bible, that the experience of the saints, one thousand, two thousand, three thousand years ago, was just the same as the experience of the saints today! And if I find God’s mercy is unchanged from David’s time till mine, can I conceive that God, who lasts the same for thousands, would change during the brief period of seventy? No. We still hold that He will carry us and He will bear us in old age as well as in our youth. But, besides that, we have living witnesses, living testimonies. I could fetch up from the ground floor of this place and from the galleries, not one or two, not 20 of you—but a hundred living witnesses, who, rising up, would tell you that God does carry them, now, as He did of old and that He still does bear them! I need not appeal to my friends, or they would stand up in their pews and, with the tears trickling down their cheeks, they would say, “Young men, young women, trust your God. He has not forsaken me!” I find that—

***“Even down to old age, all His people do prove,  
His sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love!  
And when gray hairs do their temples adorn  
Like lambs they still now in His bosom are borne.”***

Ask yon aged friend! Ask any aged Christian whether he finds God has, in the least forsaken him and you will see him shake his head and hear him say, “O young man, if I had another 70 years to live, I would still trust Him, for I have not found Him fail all the way that the Lord God has led me. Not one promise has failed, but all has come to pass.” And I think I see him lifting up his hands in the midst of the assembly and saying, “I have nothing to regret but my sin. If I had to live over again, I would only want to put myself into the hands of the same providence, to be led and directed by the same grace.” beloved, we need not prove to you any farther, for living witnesses testify that God carried out His promise, “I have made and will bear. Even I will carry and deliver you.”

**II.** But now we come to our real subject, which is, to consider THE TIME OF OLD AGE AS A SPECIAL PERIOD and to mark, therefore, the constancy of divine Love—that God bears and succors His servants in their later years. I cannot imagine or dream that I need offer any apology for preaching to aged people. If I were in sundry stupid circles where people call themselves ladies and gentlemen and always need to conceal their ages, I might have some hesitation. But I have nothing to do with that here! I call an old man, an old man—and an old woman, an old woman—whether they think themselves old or not is nothing to me! I guess they are, if they are getting, anyway, past sixty, onto 70 or eighty. Old age is *a time of peculiar memories, of peculiar hopes, of peculiar concerns, of peculiar blessedness, and of peculiar duties.* And yet in all this, God is the same, although man is peculiar.

**1.** First, *old age is a time of peculiar memory.* In fact, it is the age of memory. We young men talk of remembering such-and-such things a certain time ago. But what is our memory compared to our fathers? Our father looks back on three or four times the length of time over which we cast our eyes. What a peculiar memory the old man has! How many joys he can remember! How many times has his heart beat high with rapture and blessedness! How many times has his house been gladdened with plenty! How many harvest homes has he seen! How many “readings of the vintage”! How many times has he heard the laugh run round the fireplace! How many times have his children shouted in his ears and rejoiced around him! How many times have his eyes sparkled with delight! How many hills Mizar has he seen! How many times has he had sweet banqueting with the Lord! How many periods of communion with Jesus! How many hallowed services has he attended! How many songs of Zion

has he sung! How many answered prayers have gladdened his spirit! How many happy deliverances have made him laugh for joy! When he looks back, he can string his mercies together by the thousands! And looking upon them all, he can say, though he will think of many troubles that he has had to pass through, "Surely, goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life." God has been with him to gray hairs and even to old age. He has carried him. His joys he looks back upon as proofs of God's constancy.

And how many griefs has he had! How many times has that old man been to the chamber of sickness! How many times has that aged sister been stretched on the bed of affliction! How many diseases can he or she look back upon! How many hours of bitter travail and pain! How many seasons of trouble, infirmity and approaching to the grave? How many times has the old man tottered very near that brook from which no traveler can return? How many times has he had the Father's rod upon his shoulders? And yet, looking back upon all, he can say, "Even to old age He is the same. And even to gray hairs He has carried me." How frequently, too, has that old man gone to the grave where he has buried many he has loved? There, perhaps, he has laid a beloved wife and he goes to weep there. Or the husband sleeps, while the wife is yet alive. Sons and daughters, too, that old man can remember—snatched away to heaven almost as soon as they were born. Or perhaps permitted to live until their prime and then cut down just in their youthful glory. How many of the old friends he has welcomed to his fireside has he buried? How frequently has he been forced to exclaim, "Though friends have departed, yet 'there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother,' on Him I still trust and to Him I still commit my soul."

And mark, moreover, how many times temptation has shattered that venerable saint! How many conflicts has he had with doubts and fears! How many wrestlings with the enemy! How often he has been tempted to forsake his faith! How frequently he has had to stand in the thickest part of the battle. But yet he has been preserved by mercy and not quite cut down. He has been enabled to persevere in the heavenly road. How travel-sore are his feet! How blistered by the roughness of the way. But he can tell you that notwithstanding all these things, Christ has, "kept him till this day and will not let him go." And his conclusion is, "even to old age God has been the same and even to gray hairs He has carried him."

There is one sad reflection which we are obliged to mention when we look upon the bald head of the aged saint and that is, how many sins he has committed! Ah, my beloved, however pure may have been your lives, you will be obliged to say, "Oh, how have I sinned, in youth, in middle

age and even when infirmities have gathered around me! Would to God I had been holy! How often have I forsaken God! How frequently have I wandered from Him! Alas, how often have I provoked Him! How frequently have I doubted His promises when I had no cause whatever to distrust Him! How frequently has my tongue sinned against my heart! How constantly have I violated all I knew to be good and excellent! I am forced to say now, in my gray old age—

***Nothing in my hands I bring,  
Simply to Your cross I cling.***

“I am still—

***A monument of grace,  
A sinner saved by blood!***

I have no hope, now, save in the blood of Christ and can only wonder how it is that Christ could have preserved me so long. Truly, I can say, ‘Even to old age He is the same and even to gray hairs He has carried me.’”

**2.** The aged man, too, has *peculiar hopes*. He has no such hopes as I or my young friends here. He has few hopes of the future in this world. They are gathered up into a small space, and he can tell you in a few words what constitutes all his expectation and desire; but he has one hope, and that is the very same which he had when he first trusted in Christ. It is a hope “undefiled, that fades not away, reserved in heaven for them that are kept by the power of God through truth unto salvation.” Let me talk a little of that hope and you will see from it that the Christian is the same as he ever was. And even down to gray hairs, God deals the same with him. My venerable brother, what is the ground of your hopes? Is it not the same as that which animated you when you were first united with the Christian Church? You said then, “My hope is in the blood of Jesus Christ.” I ask you, brother, what’s your hope, now? And I am sure you will answer, “I do not hope to be saved because of my long service, nor because of my devotedness to God’s cause—

***All my hope on Christ is staid,  
All my help from Him I bring—  
He covers my defenseless head  
With the shadow of His wing.***

And, my brother, what is *the reason* of your hope? If you are asked what reason you have to believe you are a Christian, you will say, “The same reason I gave at the church meeting.” When I came before it, I said, then, “I believe myself to be a child of God because I feel myself to be a sinner and God has given me grace to put my trust in Jesus.” I think that is all the reason you have to believe yourself a child of God now. At times you have some evidence, as you call it. But there are hours when your graces

and virtues are obscured and you cannot see them, for gloomy doubts prevail and you will confess, I am sure, that the only way to get rid of your doubts will be to come and say, again—

***“A guilty, weak and helpless worm,  
On Christ’s kind arms I fall.  
He’s still my strength and righteousness,  
My Savior and my all.”***

And *the object or end* of hope, is not that the same? What was your hope when you first went to the wicket gate? Why, your hope was that you might arrive at the land of the Blessed! And is it not the same, now? Is your hope of heaven changed? Do you wish for anything else or for anything better? “No,” you will say, “I thought when I started, I would one day be with Jesus. That is what I expect now. I feel that my hope is precisely the same. I want to be with Jesus, to be like He is and to see Him as He is.” And is not *the joy* of that hope just the same? How glad you used to be when your minister preached about heaven and told you of its pearly gates and streets of shining gold! And has it lost any of its beauty in your eyes, now? Do you not remember, that in your father’s house, at family prayer, one night, they sang—

***“Jerusalem, my happy home,  
Name, ever dear to me!  
When shall my labors have an end  
In joy and peace and thee”?***

Can you not sing that, now? Do you want any other city besides Jerusalem? Do you remember how they used to rise up, sometimes, in the house of God, when you were children and sing—

***“On Jordan’s stormy banks I stand,  
And cast a wishful eye”?***

Will not that hymn do for you, now, even better than it did for you then? You can now sing it, as your old father used to sing it, with a firm heart and yet with a quivering lip! The hope that ravished you, then, ravishes you now! You start at the same watchword. Heaven is still your home—

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

Does not all this prove, again, that though our hopes are somewhat more contracted than they were, yet, “God is still the same and even to gray hairs He will carry us”?

**3.** Again, old age is a time of *peculiar concern*. An old man is not anxious about many things, as we are, for he has not so many things for which to concern him. He has not the cares of starting in business, as he once had. He has no children to launch out in business. He has not to cast his anxious eyes on his little family. But his concern has somewhat increased in another direction. He has more concern about his bodily

frame than he once had. He cannot now run as he used to do. And he must walk with a more sober gait. He fears, every now and then, that the pitcher will be “broken at the cistern,” for “the noise of the grinders is low.” He has, no longer, that strength of desire he once possessed—his body has begun to totter, to shake and to quiver. The old tenement has stood these 50 years and who expects a house to last forever? A bit of mortar has gone off from one place and a brick out of another. And when a little wind comes to shake it about, he is ready to cry out, “The earthly house of my tabernacle is about to be dissolved.” But I told you before, this peculiar concern is but another proof of divine faithfulness—for now that you have little pleasure in the flesh, do you not find that God is just the same? And that though the days are come when you can say, “I have no pleasure in *them*,” yet the days have *not* come when you can say, “I have no pleasure in Him”? No! On the contrary—

***“Though all created streams are dry,  
His goodness is the same.  
With this you still are satisfied,  
And glory in His name.”***

If He had only been your God when you were a strong young man, you might have thought that He loved you for what you could do for Him. But now you have become a poor worn-out pensioner, have you any better proof that He is an unchanging God because He loves you when you can do so little for Him? I tell you, even your bodily pains are but proofs of His love! For He is taking down your old tenement, stick by stick, and is building it up again in brighter worlds, never to be taken down again!

And remember, too, there is another concern—a failure of mind—as well as of body. There are many remarkable instances of old men who have been as gifted in their old age as in their youth. But with the majority, the mind becomes somewhat impaired, especially the memory. They cannot remember what was done yesterday, although it is a singular fact that they can remember what was done fifty, sixty, or 70 years ago! They forget much which they would wish to remember. But still they find that their God is just the same. They find that His goodness does not depend on their memory; that the sweetness of His grace does not depend upon their palate. When they can remember but little of the sermon, they still feel that it leaves as good an impression on their heart as when they were strong in their memories. And thus they have another proof that God, even when their mind fails a little, carries them down to their gray hairs, their old age and, that to them, He is always the same.

But the chief concern of old age is death. Young men may die soon. Old men *must* die. Young men, if they sleep, sleep in a siege. Old men, if they sleep, sleep in an attack, when the enemy has already made a

breach and is storming the castle. A gray-headed old sinner is a gray-bearded old fool—but an aged Christian is an aged wise man! But even the aged Christian has peculiar concerns about death. He knows he cannot be a long way from his end. He feels that even in the course of nature, apart from what is called, “accidental death,” there is no doubt but in a few more years he must stand before his God. He thinks he may be in heaven in 10 or 20 years—and how short do those 10 or 20 years appear! He does not act like a man who thinks a coach is a long way off and he may take his time. No, he is like one who is about to go a journey and hears the post-horn blowing down the street and he is getting ready. His one concern, now, is to examine himself whether he is in the faith. He fears that if he is wrong, now, it will be terrible to have spent all his life claiming to be a Christian and to find, at last, that he has got nothing for his pains except a mere empty name—which must be swept away by death. He feels now how solemn a thing the gospel is. He feels the world to be as nothing. He feels that he is near the bar of doom. But still, beloved, mark—God’s faithfulness is the same! For if he is nearer death, he has the sweet satisfaction that he is also nearer heaven! And if he has more need to examine himself than ever, he has also more evidence whereby to examine himself. For he can say, “Well, I know that on such-and-such an occasion the Lord heard my prayers. At such-and-such a time He manifested Himself to me, as He did not unto the world,” and, though examination presses more upon the old, they still have greater materials for it! And here, again, is another proof of this grand truth of God—“Even unto old age I am the same,” says God, “and even to gray hairs will I carry you.”

4. And now, once more—old age has its *peculiar blessedness*. Some time ago I stepped up to an old man whom I saw when preaching at an anniversary, and I said to him, “brother, do you know there is no man in the whole chapel I envy as much as you.” “Envy *me*,” he said—“why, I am eighty-seven.” I said, “I do, indeed—because you are so near your home and because I believe that in old age there is a peculiar joy which we young people do not taste at present. You have got to the bottom of the cup and it is not with God’s wine as it is with men. Man’s wine becomes dregs at the last, but God’s wine is sweeter, the deeper you drink it.” He said, “That’s very true, young man,” and shook me by the hand. I believe there is blessedness about old age that we young men know nothing of! I will tell you how that is. In the first place, the old man has a good experience to talk about. The young men are only just trying some of the promises. But the old man can turn them over, one by one, and say, “There, I have tried that and that and that.” We read them over and say, “I *hope*

they are true.” But the old man says, “I *know* they are true.” And then he begins to tell you why. He has got a history for every one, like a soldier for his medals, and he takes them out and says, “I will tell you when the Lord revealed that to me—just when I lost my wife—just when I buried my son; just when I was turned out of my cottage, and did not get work for six weeks—or, at another time, when I broke my leg.” He begins telling you the history of the promises and says, “There! Now, I know they are all true.” What a blessed thing, to look upon them as paid notes—to bring out the old checks that have been cashed and say, “I know they are genuine, or else they would not have been paid.” Old people have not the doubts young people have about the doctrines. Young people are apt to doubt but when they get old, they begin to get solid and firm in the faith! I love to get some of my old brethren to talk with me concerning the good things of the kingdom of God. They do not hold the truth with their two fingers, as some of the young men do—they get right hold of it and nobody can take it from their grasp!

Rowland Hill once somewhat lost his way in a sermon and he turned to this text—“Oh, Lord, my heart is fixed.” “Young men,” he said, “There is nothing like having your hearts fixed. I have been all these years seeking the Lord. Now my heart is fixed. I never have any doubts, now, about election, or any other doctrine. If man brings me a new theory, I say, ‘Away with it!’ I stand hard and fast by the truth of God alone.” An old gentleman wrote me a little time ago and said I was a little too high. He said he believed the same doctrines as I do, but he did not think so when he was as old as I am. I told him it was just as well to begin right, as to end right, and it was better to be right at the beginning than to have to rub off so many errors afterwards! An old countryman once came to me and said, “Ah young man, you have had too deep a text. You handled it well enough, but it is an old man’s text, and I felt afraid to hear you announce it.” I said, “Is God’s truth dependent on age? If the thing is true, it is just as well to hear it from me as from anyone else. And if you can hear it better anywhere else, you have got the opportunity.” Still, he did not think that God’s precious truths were suitable to young people! But I hold they are suitable for all God’s children—therefore I love to preach them! But how blessed it is to come to a position in life where you have good anchorage for your faith—where you can say—

**“Should all the forms that hell devise,  
Assail my faith with treacherous art.”**

I shall not be very polite to them—

**“I’ll call them vanity of lies  
And bind the gospel to my heart.”**

And I think there are peculiar joys which the old Christian has, of another sort. And that is, he has peculiar fellowship with Christ—more than we have. At least, if I understand John Bunyan rightly, I think he tells us that when we get very near to heaven there is a very glorious land. “They came into the country of Beulah, whose air was very sweet and pleasant. The way lying directly through it, they solaced themselves there for a season. Yes, here they continually heard the singing of birds and saw, every day the flowers appear on the earth, and heard the voice of the turtle in the land. In this country the sun shines night and day—therefore this was beyond the valley of the Shadow of Death and also out of the reach of Giant Despair. Neither could they, from this place, so much as see Doubting Castle. Here they were within sight of the City they were going to—also here met they some of the inhabitants thereof—for in this land the shining ones commonly walked, because it was upon the borders of heaven. In this land, also, the contract between the Bride and the Bridegroom was renewed. Yes, here, as the Bridegroom rejoices over the Bride, so does their God rejoice over them. Here they had no lack of corn and wine. For in this place they met with abundance of what they had sought for in all their pilgrimages. Here they heard voices from out of the City, loud voices, saying, ‘Say you to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your salvation comes.’ Behold, His reward is with Him. Here all the inhabitants of the country called them, ‘the holy people, and the redeemed of the Lord.’” There are peculiar communings, peculiar openings of the gates of paradise, peculiar visions of glory, just as you come near to it. It stands to reason that the nearer you get to the bright light of the celestial city; the clearer shall be the air. And, therefore, there are peculiar blessings belonging to the old, for they have more of this peculiar fellowship with Christ. But all this only proves that Christ is the same—because, when there are fewer earthly joys, He gives more spiritual ones! Therefore, again, it becomes the fact—“Even to old age I am He. And even to gray hairs will I carry you.”

**5.** And now, lastly, the aged saint has *peculiar duties*. There are certain things which a good man can do, which nobody else ought to do, or can do well. And that is one proof of divine faithfulness, for He says of His aged ones, “They shall bring forth fruit in old age.” And so they do. I will tell you some of them.

*Testimony* is one of the peculiar duties of old men. Now, suppose I should get up and say, “I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread”? Someone would reply, “Why, you are not 22 yet! What do you know about it?” But if an old man gets up and says, “I have been young and now am I old. Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken,

nor his seed begging bread,” with what power that testimony comes! Suppose I say to you, “Trust in God with all your troubles and trials. I can bear witness that He will not forsake you.” You will reply, “Oh, you, young man, but you have not had many troubles. You have not been a child of God above these six years—how should you know?” But up gets an old Christian—and well do I remember an ancient Christian rising up at the sacramental table and saying, “Dear brothers and sisters, we are met again around this table and I think all an old man can do is to bear testimony to his Master. These 45 years I have walked in His truth. Young people, hear what I have to say! He has been my God these 45 years and I have no fault to find with Him. I have found religion’s ways to be ways of pleasantness and her paths to be paths of peace.” You know, if you hear an old man talk, you pay greater attention to what he says because he is old. I remember hearing the late Mr. Jay. I fancy that if I had heard the same sermon preached by a young man, I would not have thought so much of it. But there appeared such a depth in it because it came from an old man, standing on the borders of the grave. It was like an echo of the past coming to me, to let me hear of my God’s faithfulness, that I might trust for the future. Testimony is the duty of old men and women! They should labor, whenever they can, to bear testimony to God’s faithfulness and to declare that now, also, when they are old and gray-headed, their God forsakes them not!

There is another duty which is peculiarly the work of the aged and that is the work of comforting the young believer. There is no one more qualified that I know of than a kind-hearted old man to convert the young. I know that down in some parts of the country, there is a peculiar breed of old man who, for the good of the Church, I heartily hope will soon become extinct—as soon as they see a young believer, they look at him with suspicion, expecting him to be a hypocrite! They go off to his house and find everything satisfactory. But they say, “I was not so confident as that when I was young. Young man, you must be kept back a bit.” Then there are some hard questions put and the poor young child of God gets hard pressed and is looked upon with suspicion because he does not come up to their standard. But the men I allude to are such as some I have here, with whom I delight to speak, who tell you not hard things, but utter gentle words—who say, “I was imprudent when I was a young man. I know that when I was a little child, I could not have answered these questions. I do not expect so much from you as from one who is a little older.” And when the young Christian comes to them they say, “Do not fear—I have gone through the waters and they have not overflowed me. And through the fire and have not been burned. Trust in

God—“for down to old age He is the same and to gray hairs He will carry you.”

Then there is another work that is the work of the old and that is the work of warning. If an old man were to go out in the middle of the road and shout out to you to stop, you would stop sooner than you would if a boy were to do it. For then you might say, “Out of the way, you young rascal,” and go on. The warnings of the old have great effect. And it is their peculiar work to guide the imprudent and warn the unwary.

Now I have done, except the application. And I want to speak to three classes of persons.

What a precious thought, young men and women, is contained in this text—“That even to old age, God will be the same to you. And even down to your gray hairs He will not forsake you”! You need a safe investment—well, here is an investment safe enough! A bank may break, but heaven cannot! A rock may be dissolved and if I build a house on that, it may be destroyed. But if I build on Christ, my happiness is secure forever! Young man! Young woman! God’s religion will last as long as you will! You will never be able to exhaust His comforts in all your life! And you will find that the bottle of your joys will be as full when you have been drinking 70 years as it was when you first began. Oh, do not buy things that will not last you—“eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” Oh, how pleasant it is to be a young Christian! How blessed it is to begin in the early morning to love and serve God! The best old Christians are those who were once young Christians! Some aged Christians have but little grace for this reason—that they were not young Christians! Oh, I have sometimes thought that if there is any man who will have an abundant entrance into heaven, it is the man who, in early life, was brought to know the Lord! You know, going into heaven will be like the ships going into harbor. There will be some tugged in almost by miracle, “saved so as by fire.” Others will be going in just with a sheet or two of canvas—they will “scarcely be saved!” But there will be some who will go in with all their canvas up and unto these “an abundant entrance shall be ministered into the kingdom of their God and Savior.” Young people! It is the ship that is launched early in the morning that will get an abundant entrance and come into God’s haven in full sail!

Now, you middle-aged men, you are plunged in the midst of business and are sometimes supposing what will become of you in your old age. But is there any promise of God to you when you suppose about tomorrows? You say, “Suppose I should live to be as old as so-and-so and be a burden upon people? I should not like that.” Don’t get meddling with God’s business—leave His decrees to Him! There is many a person who

thought he would die in a workhouse, who has died in a mansion. And many a woman, who thought she would die in the streets, has died in her bed, happy and comfortable, singing of providential grace and everlasting mercy. Middle aged man, woman! Listen to what David says, again, "I have been young and now am old. Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Go on, then, unsheathe your sword once more. "The battle is the Lord's." Leave your declining years to Him and give your present years to Him. Live to Him, now, and He will never cast you away when you are old. Do not lay up for old age and keep back from the cause of God. But rather trust God for the future. Be "diligent in business." But take care you do not hurt your spirit by being too diligent, by being grasping and selfish! Remember you will—

**"Need but little here below,  
Nor need that little long."**

And lastly, my dear venerable fathers in the faith, and mothers in Israel, take these words for your joy. Do not let the young people catch you indulging in melancholy, sitting in your chimney corner, grumbling and growling. But go about cheerful and happy and they will think how blessed it is to be a Christian! If you are surly and fretful, they will think the Lord has forsaken you! But keep a smiling countenance and they will think the promise is fulfilled—"And even to your old age I am He. And even to gray hairs will I carry you. I have made and I will bear. Even I will carry and will deliver you." Do, I beseech you, my venerable friends, try to be of a happy temperament and cheerful spirit, for a child will run away from a surly old man! But there is not a child in the world but loves his grandpapa if he is cheerful and happy. You can lead us to heaven if you have got heaven's sunlight on your face! But you will not lead us at all if you are cross and ill-tempered, for then we shall not care about your company. Make yourselves merry with the people of God and try to live happily before men. For so will you prove to us—to a demonstration—that even to old age, God is with you and that when your strength fails, He is still your preservation! May God Almighty bless you, for the Savior's sake! Amen.

*The foregoing sermon exceeding the limits of the usual Penny Number, and it being desirable that it should be given in full, it has been deemed advisable to make the present a double number. The two appended Tracts have been inserted as a specimen of a series called, "The New Park Street Tracts," printed in large type, at 1s. 4d. per 100.*

**THE NEW PARK STREET TRACTS**  
**EDITED BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.**

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**THE INFIDEL'S SERMON**  
**TO THE PIRATES**

A native of Sweden, who had imbibed infidel views, had occasion to go from one port to another in the Baltic Sea. When he came to the place from where he expected to sail, the vessel was gone. On inquiring, he found a fishing boat going the same way, on which he embarked. After being, for some time out to sea, the men, observing that he had several trunks and chests on board, concluded he must be very rich, and therefore, agreed among themselves to throw him overboard. This he heard them express, which gave him great uneasiness. However, he took occasion to open one of his trunks, which contained some books. Observing this, they remarked among themselves that it was not worth while to throw him into the sea as they did not need any books, which they supposed were all the trunks contained. They asked him if he were a priest. Hardly knowing what reply to make them, he told them he was. And at this they seemed much pleased, and said they would have a sermon on the next day, as it was the Sabbath. This increased the anxiety and distress of his mind for he knew himself to be as incapable of such an undertaking as it was possible for anyone to be, as he knew very little of the Scriptures; neither did he believe in the inspiration of the Bible.

At length they came to a small rocky island, perhaps a quarter of a mile in circumference, where was a company of pirates who had chosen this little sequestered spot to deposit their treasures. He was taken to a cave and introduced to an old woman, to whom they remarked that they were to have a sermon preached the next day. She said she was very glad of it, for she had not heard the Word of God for a great while. His was a trying case, for preach he must, even though he knew nothing about preaching! If he refused or undertook to preach, and did not please, he expected it would be his death. With these thoughts, he passed a sleepless night, and in the morning his mind was not settled upon anything. To call upon God, whom he believed to be inaccessible, was, in his mind,

altogether vain. He could devise no way whereby he might be saved. He walked to and fro, still shut up in darkness, striving to collect something to say to them, but could not think of even a single sentence!

When the appointed time for the service arrived, he entered the cave where he found the men assembled. There was a seat prepared for him and a table with a Bible on it. They sat for the space of half an hour in profound silence. And even then, the anguish of his soul was as great as human nature was capable of enduring! At length these words came to his mind—"Verily, there is a reward for the righteous—verily, there is a God that judges in the earth." He arose and delivered them. Then other words presented themselves, and so on, till his understanding became opened, and his heart enlarged in a manner astonishing to himself! He spoke upon subjects suited to their condition; the reward of the righteous, the judgments of the wicked, the necessity of repentance, and the importance of a change of life. He spoke of the matchless love of God to the children of men which had such a powerful effect upon the minds of these wretched beings that they were melted into tears. Nor was he less astonished at the unbounded goodness of Almighty God, in thus interposing to save his spiritual as well as his natural life! And well might he exclaim, "This is the Lord's doing, and marvelous in our eye." Under a deep sense of God's goodness, his heart became filled with thankfulness, which it was out of his power to express. What a marvelous change was thus suddenly brought about by divine interposition; he who a little while before disbelieved in communion with God and the soul, became as humble as a little child; and they who were so lately meditating on his death, now were filled with love and goodwill towards each other, particularly towards him—manifesting affectionate kindness, and willing to render him all the assistance in their power.

The next morning they fitted out one of their vessels, and conveyed him where he desired. From that time he became a changed man; from being a slave to the influence of infidelity, he was brought to be a sincere believer in the power and efficacy of the truth as it is in Jesus.

[How marvelous the providence of God, and the sovereignty of His grace! Who is he that has stepped beyond the range of Almighty love? Or has sinned too much to be forgiven? Reader! Are you an infidel? What would you do in a similar situation? What other doctrine than that of Scripture would benefit pirates? Certainly not your own! What would you like to teach your own children? Certainly not your own sentiments! You feel that you would not wish to hear your own offspring blaspheming God. Moreover, forgive us if we declare our opinion that you know that there is a God, though with your lips you deny Him. Think, we beseech

you, of your Maker, and of His Son, the Savior; and may Eternal love bring even you to the Redeemer.—C.H.S.]

## NO. 3—THE ACTRESS.

AN actress, in one of the English provincial or country theatres, was one day passing through the streets of the town in which she then resided. Her attention was attracted by the sound of voices which she heard in a poor cottage before her. Curiosity prompted her to look in at an open door, where she saw a few poor people sitting together, one of whom, at the moment of her observation, was giving out the following hymn, which the others joined in singing—

***“Depth of mercy! Can there be  
Mercy still reserved for me?”***

The tune was sweet and simple, but she heeded it not. The words had riveted her attention, and she stood motionless until she was invited to enter by the woman of the house, who had observed her standing at the door. She complied and remained during a prayer which was offered up by one of the little company. And uncouth as the expressions might seem in her ears, they carried with them a conviction of sincerity on the part of the person then employed. She left the cottage, but the words of the hymn followed her. She could not banish them from her mind, and at last she resolved to procure the book which contained the hymn. The more she read it, the more decided her serious impressions became. She attended the ministry of the gospel, read her up to now neglected and despised Bible, and bowed herself in humility and contrition of heart before Him whose mercy she felt she needed, whose sacrifices are those of a broken heart, and a contrite spirit, and who has declared that therewith He is well pleased!

Her profession she determined at once and forever, to renounce; and for some little time excused herself from appearing on the stage, without, however, disclosing her change of sentiments, or making known her resolution finally to leave it.

The manager of the theater called upon her one morning, and requested her to sustain the principal character in a new play which was to be performed the next week for his benefit. She had frequently performed this character to general admiration; but she now, however, told him her resolution never to appear as an actress again, at the same time giving her reasons. At first he attempted to overcome her scruples by ridicule, but this was unavailing; he then represented the loss he would incur by her refusal, and concluded his arguments by promising that if to oblige

him she would act on this occasion, it should be the last request of the kind he would ever make. Unable to resist his solicitations, she promised to appear, and on the appointed evening went to the theater. The character she assumed required her, on her first entrance, to sing a song; and when the curtain was drawn up, the orchestra immediately began the accompaniment. But she stood as if lost in thought. And as one forgetting all around her, and her own situation. The music ceased, but she did not sing. And supposing her to be overcome by embarrassment, the band again commenced. A second time they paused for her to begin, and still she did not open her lips. A third time the air was played and then, with clasped hands, and eyes suffused with tears, she sang, not the words of the song, but—

***“Depth of mercy! Can there be  
Mercy still reserved for me!”***

It is almost needless to add that the performance was suddenly ended. Men ridiculed, though some were induced from that memorable night to “consider their ways,” and to reflect on the wonderful power of that religion which could so influence the heart, and change the life of one, up to now so vain, and so evidently pursuing the road which leads to destruction.

It would be satisfactory to the reader to know that the change in Miss \_\_\_\_\_ was as permanent as it was singular! She walked consistently with her profession of religion for many years, and at length became the wife of a minister of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[Perhaps, dear reader, you are a great transgressor, and you fear there is no forgiveness for you. Let this remove your fears! You may be the vilest creature out of hell, and yet divine grace can make you as pure as the angels in heaven! God would be just should He damn you, but He can be just, and yet save you! Do you feel that the Lord has a right over you to do as He pleases? Do you feel that you have no claim upon Him? Then, rejoice, for Jesus Christ has borne *your* guilt, and carried *your* sorrows, and you shall assuredly be saved! You are a *sinner* in the true sense of that word, then remember Jesus came to save sinners, and you among the rest, if you know yourself to be a sinner.—C.H.S.]

***“Lo, the incarnate God ascended,  
Pleads the merit of His blood—  
Venture on Him, venture wholly,  
Let no other trust intrude!  
None but Jesus  
Can do helpless sinners good!”***

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# INDWELLING SIN

## NO. 83

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 1, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Then Job answered the Lord and said, Behold, I am vile.”  
Job 40:3, 4.***

SURELY if any man had a right to say I am *not* vile, it was Job. According to the testimony of God, Himself, Job was “a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil.” Yet we find even this eminent saint when, by his nearness to God he had received light enough to discover his own condition, exclaiming, “Behold, I am vile.” We are sure that what Job was forced to say, we may each of us assent unto—whether we are God’s children or not. And if we are partakers of divine grace, it becomes a subject of great consideration for us since even we, although we are regenerated, must exclaim, each one, “Behold, I am vile.”

It is a doctrine, as I believe, taught us in Holy Writ, that when a man is saved by divine grace, he is not wholly cleansed from the corruption of his heart. When we believe in Jesus Christ, all our sins are pardoned. Yet the power of sin, albeit weakened and kept under by the dominion of the new-born nature which God does infuse into our souls, does not cease. It still tarries in us and will do so to our dying day. It is a doctrine held by all the orthodox—that there still dwells in the regenerate, the lusts of the flesh—and that there does still remain in the hearts of those who, by God’s mercy are converted, the evil of carnal nature. I have found it very difficult to distinguish, in experimental matters, concerning sin. It is usual with many writers, especially with hymn writers, to confuse the two natures of a Christian. Now, I hold that there is in every Christian, two natures, as distinct as were the two natures of the God-Man, Christ Jesus. There is one nature which cannot sin, because it is born of God—a spiritual nature coming directly from heaven—as pure and as perfect as God, Himself, who is the Author of it. And there is also in man that ancient nature which, by the fall of Adam, has become altogether vile, corrupt, sinful and devilish! There remains in the heart of the Christian a nature which cannot do that which is right any more than it could before regeneration. It is as evil as it was before the new birth—as sinful, as altogether hostile to God’s laws, as ever it was! It is a nature which, as I said before, is curbed and kept under by the new nature in a great measure. But it is not removed and never will be until this tabernacle of

our flesh is broken down and we soar into that land unto which there shall never enter anything that defiles.

It will be my business, this morning, to say something of that evil nature which still abides in the righteous; that it does remain, I shall first attempt to prove; and the other points I will suggest to you as we proceed.

**I. THE FACT**, the great and terrible fact that **EVEN THE RIGHTEOUS HAVE IN THEM EVIL NATURES**. *Job* said, "Behold, I am vile." He did not always know it. All through the long controversy, he had declared himself to be just and upright. He had said, "My righteousness I will hold fast and I will not let it go." And notwithstanding he did scrape his body with a potsherd and his friends did vex his mind with the most bitter reviling, yet he still held fast his integrity and would not confess his sin. But what happened when God came to plead with him? *Job* had no sooner listened to the voice of God in the whirlwind and heard the question, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" than at once he put his finger on his lips and would not answer God, but simply said, "Behold I am vile." Possibly some may say that *Job* was an exception to the rule. And they will tell us that other saints had not in them such a reason for humiliation but we remind them of *David*. And we bid them read the 51<sup>st</sup> penitential Psalm, where we find him declaring that he was shaped in iniquity and in sin did his mother conceive him—confessing that he had sin in his heart and asking God to create in him a clean heart and to renew a right spirit within him. In many other places in the Psalms, *David* does continually acknowledge and confess that he is not perfectly rid of sin—that the evil viper still twists itself around his heart. Turn also, if you please, to *Isaiah*. There you have him, in one of his visions, saying that he was a man of unclean lips and that he dwelt among a people of unclean lips. But more especially, under the gospel dispensation, you find *Paul*, in that memorable chapter we have been reading, declaring that he found in his members a law warring against the law of his mind and "bringing him into captivity to the law of sin." Yes, we hear that remarkable exclamation of struggling desire and intense agony, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Do you expect to find yourselves better saints than *Job*? Do you imagine that the confession which befitted the mouth of *David* is too mean for you? Are you so proud that you will not exclaim with *Isaiah*, "I also am a man of unclean lips"? Or rather, have you progressed so far in pride that you dare to exalt yourselves above the laborious Apostle *Paul* and to hope that in you, that is, in your flesh, there dwells any good thing? If you think yourselves to be perfectly pure from sin, listen to the Word of God—"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we say we have no sin, we make God a liar."

But scarcely do I need to prove this, beloved; for all of you, I am sure, who know anything about the experience of a living child of God, have

found that in your best and happiest moments, sin still dwells in you! You know that when you would serve your God the best, sin frequently works in you the most furiously. There have been many saints of God who have abstained, for a time, from doing anything they have known to be sin. But still, there has not been one who has been inwardly perfect. If a being were perfect, the angels would come down in ten minutes and carry him off to heaven, for he would be ripe for it as soon as he had attained perfection! I have found in talking to men who have said a good deal about perfection, that after all, they really did not believe in any such thing! They have taken the Word of God and attached a different meaning to it and either then proved a doctrine which we all knew before, or else supposed a perfection so absurd and worthless that I would not give three half-pence for it if I might have it! In many of them it is a fault, I believe, of their brains, rather than their hearts. As John Berridge says, "God will wash their brains before they get to heaven." But why should I stay to prove this, when you have daily proofs of it yourselves? How many times do you feel that corruption is still within you? Mark how easily you are *surprised into sin*. You rise in the morning and dedicate yourselves by fervent prayer to God, thinking what a happy day you have before you. Scarcely have you uttered your prayer when something comes to ruffle your spirit—your good resolutions are cast to the winds and you say, "This day, which I thought would be such a happy one, has suffered a terrific inroad. I cannot live to God as I would." Perhaps you have thought, "I will go upstairs and ask my God to keep me." Well, you were, in the main, kept by the power of God, but all of a sudden something came—an evil temper all of a sudden surprised you—your heart was taken by storm when you were not expecting an attack! The doors were broken open and some unholy expression came forth from your lips—and down you went, again, on your knees in private—exclaiming, "Lord, I am vile." I have found out that I have a something in *my* heart which, when I have bolted my doors and think all is safe, creeps forth and undoes every bolt and lets in the sin! Besides, beloved, you will find in your heart, even when you are not surprised into sin, such *an awful tendency to evil*, that it is as much as you can do to keep it in check and to say, "This far you shall you come, but no further." No, you will find it more than you can do, unless a divine power is with you and preventing grace restrains your passions and prevents you from indulging your inbred lusts! Ah, soldiers of Jesus, you have felt—I know you have felt, the uprisings of corruption—for you know the Lord in sincerity and in truth and you dare not, unless you would make yourselves liars to your own hearts, hope to be in this world perfectly free from sin!

Having stated that fact, I must just make a remark upon it and leave it. How wrong it is of any of us, from the fact of our possessing evil hearts, to excuse our sins. I have known some persons who profess to be Christians, speak very lightly of sin. There was corruption still remaining

and, therefore, they said they could not help it. Such persons have no visible part or lot in God's covenant! The truly loving child of God, though he knows sin is there, hates that sin. It is a pain and misery to him and he never makes the corruption of his *heart* an excuse for the corruption of his *life*. He never pleads the evil of his nature as an apology for the evil of his conduct! If any man can, in the least degree, clear himself from the conviction of his own conscience on account of his daily failings, by pleading the evil of his heart, he is not one of the broken-hearted children of God! He is not one of the tried servants of the Lord, for they *groan* concerning sin and carry it to God's throne. They know it is in them—they do not, therefore, leave it, but seek with all their minds to keep it down in order that it may not rise and carry them away!

**II.** Thus we have mentioned the fact that the best of men have sin still remaining in them. Now I will tell you what are the doings of this sin. What does the sin which still remains in our hearts, do? I answer—

**1.** Experience will tell you that *this sin exerts a checking power upon every good thing*. You have felt, when you would do good that evil was present with you. Just like the chariot, which might go swiftly down the hill, you have had a clog put upon your wheels. Or, like the bird that would mount towards heaven, you have found your sins, like the wires of a cage, preventing your soaring towards the Most High. You have bent your knees in prayer, but corruption has distracted your thoughts. You have attempted to sing, but you have felt "hosannas languish on your tongue." Some insinuation of Satan has taken fire, like a spark in tinder, and well-near smothered your soul with its abominable smoke! You would run in your holy duties with all speed, but the sin that does so easily beset you, entangles your feet—and when you would be nearing the goal, it trips you up and down you fall—to your own dishonor and pain. You will find indwelling sin frequently retarding you the most when you are most earnest. When you desire to be most alive to God, you will generally find sin most alive to repel you. The "evil heart of unbelief" puts itself straight in the road and says, "You shall not come this way." And when the soul says, "I will serve God—I will worship in His temple"—the evil heart says, "Get you to Dan and Beersheba, and bow yourself before false gods, but you shall not approach Jerusalem. I will not allow you to behold the face of the Most High." You have often felt this to be the case—a cold hand has been placed upon your hot spirit when you have been full of devotion and prayer. And when you have had the wings of the dove and thought you could flee away and be at rest, a clog has been put upon your feet so that you could not mount. Now, that is one of the effects of indwelling sin.

**2.** But indwelling sin does more than that—it not only prevents us from going forward, but at times even *assails* us, as well as seeks to obstruct us. It is not merely that I fight with indwelling sin—it is indwelling sin that sometimes makes an assault on me! You will notice the Apostle

says, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Now, this proves that he was not attacking his sin, but that this sin was attacking him! I do not seek to be delivered from a man against whom I lead the attack—but it is the man who is *opposing* me from whom I seek to be delivered. And so, sometimes, the sin that dwells in believers flies at us, like some foul tiger of the woods or some demon, jealous of the celestial spirit within us. The evil nature rises up—it does not only seek to stop us in the way, but like Amalek, it labors to destroy us and cut us utterly off! Did you ever feel, beloved, the attacks of inbred sin? It may be you have not—but if not, depend upon it—you will! Before you get all the way to heaven, you will be attacked by sin. It will not simply be your driving out the Canaanite, but the Canaanite, with chariots of iron, will attempt to overcome you—to drive you out, to kill your spiritual nature, dampen the flame of your piety—and crush the new life which God has implanted in you!

**3.** The evil heart which still remains in the Christian does always, when it is not attacking or obstructing, *still reign and dwell within him*. My heart is just as bad when no evil emanates from it as when vileness in its external developments is all over it. A volcano is always a volcano. Even when it sleeps, trust it not. A lion is a lion even though he plays like a kid. And a serpent is a serpent even though you may stroke it while, for a season, it slumbers. There is still venom in its sting when its azure scales invite the eyes. My heart, even though for an hour it may not have had an evil thought, is still evil. If it were possible that I could live for days without a single temptation from my own heart to sin, it would be still just as evil as it was before! And the heart is always either displaying its vileness, or else preparing for another display. It is either loading its cannon to shoot against us, or else it is positively at warfare with us. You may rest assured that the heart is never other than it originally was—the evil nature is still evil! And when there is no blaze, it is heaping up the wood wherewith it is to blaze another day. It is gathering up from my joys, from my devotions, from my holiness and from all I do—materials to attack me at some future period! The evil nature is only evil and that continually, without the slightest mitigation or element of good. The new nature must always wrestle and fight with it and when the two natures are not wrestling and fighting, there is no truce between them. When they are not in conflict, they are still foes. We must not trust our heart at any time. Even when it speaks most fair, we must call it a liar. And when it pretends to the most good, still we must remember its nature, for it is evil and that continually!

The doings of indwelling sin I will not mention at length—but it is sufficient to let you recognize some of your own experiences that you may see that it is in keeping with that of the children of God. Even though you may be as perfect as Job, as he you will yet say, "Behold, I am vile."

**III.** Having mentioned the doings of indwelling sin, allow me to mention, in the third place, THE DANGER WE ARE UNDER FROM SUCH EVIL HEARTS. There are few people who think what a solemn thing it is to be a Christian. I guess there is not a believer in the world who knows what a miracle it is to be kept a believer. We little think of the miracles that are working all around us. We see the flowers grow, but we do not think of the wondrous power that gives them life. We see the stars shine. But how seldom do we think of the hand that moves them. The sun gladdens us with its light—yet we little think of the miracles which God works to feed that sun with fuel, or to gird it like a giant to run its course. And we see Christians walking in integrity and holiness but how little do we suspect what a mass of miracles a Christian is! There are as great a number of miracles expended on a Christian every day—as many as the hairs on his head! A Christian is a perpetual miracle. Every hour that I am preserved from sinning, is an hour as of divine a might as that which saw a new-born world swathed in its darkness and heard “the morning stars sing for joy.” Did you ever think how great is the danger to which a Christian is exposed from his indwelling sin? Come let me tell you.

One danger to which we are exposed from indwelling sin arises from the fact that *sin is within us* and, therefore, it has a great power over us. If a captain has a city, he may for a long time preserve it from the constant attacks of enemies *outside*. He may have walls so strong and gates so well secured that he may laugh at all the attacks of besiegers and their sallies may have no more effect upon his walls than sallies of wit. But if there should happen to be a traitor inside the gates—if there should be one who has charge of the keys and who could unlock every door and let in the enemy—how is the toil of the commander doubled!—for he has not merely to guard against foes outside, but against foes *within*. And here is the danger of the Christian. I could fight the devil. I could overcome every sin that ever tempted me if it were not that I had an enemy *within*. Those Diabolians within do more service to Satan than all the Diabolians outside! As Bunyan says in his *Holy War*, the enemy tried to get some of his friends within the City of Mansoul and he found his darlings inside the walls did him far more good than all those outside. Ah, Christian, you could laugh at your enemy if you had not your evil heart within, but remember, your heart keeps the keys—because out of it are the issues of life. And sin is there. The worst thing you have to fear is the treachery of your own heart!

And moreover, Christian, remember *how many backers* your evil nature has. As for your gracious life, it finds few friends beneath the sky. But your original sin has allies in every quarter. It looks down to hell and it finds them there—demons ready to let slip the sweet coos of hell upon your soul! It looks out into the world and sees “the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life.” It looks around and it sees all

kinds of men seeking, if it is possible, to lead the Christian from his steadfastness. It looks into the Church, and it finds all manner of false doctrine ready to inflame lust, and guide the soul from the sincerity of its faith! It looks to the body, and it finds head, hands, feet and all other members ready to be subservient to sin. I could overcome my evil heart if it had not such a mighty host of allies. But it makes my position doubly dangerous to have foes outside the gates in league and amity with a foe viler *within*.

And I would have you remember, Christian, one more thing and that is that this evil nature of yours is *very strong and very powerful*—stronger than the new nature if the new nature were not sustained by divine power. How old is my old nature? “It is as old as myself,” the aged saint may say, “and has become all the stronger from its age.” There is one thing which seldom gets weaker through old age—old Adam. He is as strong in his old age as he is in his young age—just as able to lead us astray when our head is covered with gray hairs, as he was in our youth. We have heard it said that growing in divine grace will make our corruptions less mighty. But I have seen many of God’s aged saints and asked them the question and they have said, “No.” Their lusts have been essentially as strong when they have been many years in their Master’s service as they were at first, although more subdued by the new principle within. So far from becoming weaker, it is my firm belief that sin increases in power. A person who is deceitful becomes more deceitful by *practicing* deceit. So with our heart; it lured us at first, and easily entrapped us, but having learned a thousand snares, it misleads us now, perhaps, more easily than before. And although our spiritual nature has been more fully developed and grown in grace, yet the old nature has lost little of its energy! I do not know that the house of Saul grows weaker and weaker in our hearts—I know that the house of David grows stronger—but I do not know that my heart gets less vile, or that my corruptions become less strong. I believe that if I should ever say my corruptions are all dead, I would hear a voice, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson.” Or, “The Philistines are *in* you, Samson!” Notwithstanding all former victories and all the heaps upon heaps of sins I may have slain, I would yet be overcome if Almighty mercy did not preserve me!

Christian! Mind your danger! There is not a man in battle as much in danger from the shot as you are from your own sin! You carry in your soul an infamous traitor. Even when he speaks with fair words, he is not to be trusted. You have in your heart a slumbering volcano—a volcano of such terrific force that it may yet shake your whole nature! And unless you are circumspect and are kept by the power of God, you have a heart which may lead you into the most diabolical sins and the most infamous crimes. Take care, O take care, Christians! If there were no devil to tempt you and no world to lead you astray, you would have need to take care of your own hearts! Look, therefore, at home. Your worst foes are the foes of

your own households. “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life,” and out of it death may issue, too—death which would damn you if Sovereign mercy did not prevent! God grant, my brothers and sisters, that we may learn our corruptions in an easy way and not discover them by their breaking out into open sin.

**IV.** And now I come to the fourth point, which is, THE DISCOVERY OF OUR CORRUPTION. Job said, “Behold, I am vile.” That word, “behold,” implies that he was astonished! The discovery was unexpected. There are special times with the Lord’s people when they learn by experience that they are vile. They heard the minister assert the power of inbred lust, but, perhaps, they shook their heads and said, “I cannot go as far as *that*.” But after a little while they found, by some clearer Light from heaven, that it was a truth of God after all—“Behold, I am vile.” I remember preaching a little while ago from some deep text concerning the desperate evil of the heart. One of my most esteemed friends said, “Well, I have not discovered that,” and I thought within myself, what a blessing, brother! I wish I had not, for it is a most fearful experience to pass through—I dare say there are many here, now, who say, “I trust in no righteousness of my own. I trust in nothing in the world but the blood of Christ, and still, I have not discovered the vileness of my heart in the way you have mentioned.” Perhaps not, brothers and sisters, but it may not be many years before you are made to learn it; you may be of a peculiar temperament. God has preserved you from all contact with temptations which would have revealed your corruptions. Or perhaps He has been pleased, as a reward of His grace, for deeds which you have been enabled to do for Him, to give you a peaceable life, so that you have not been often tossed about by the tumults of your own sin. But nevertheless, let me tell you that you must expect to find, in the inmost depths of your heart, a lower depth, still! God comfort you and enable you when you come out of the furnace, to lie lower than ever at the footstool of divine mercy!

*I believe we generally find out most of our failings when we have the greatest access to God.* Job never had such a discovery of God as he had at this time. God spoke to him in the whirlwind and then Job said, “I am vile.” It is not so much when we are desponding or unbelieving that we learn our vileness—we do find out something of it then—but not all. It is when, by God’s grace, we are helped to climb the mountain, when we come near to God and when God reveals Himself to us, that we feel that we are not pure in His sight. We get some gleams of His high majesty. We see the brightness of His garments, “dark—with insufferable light”—and after having been dazzled by the sight, there comes a fall—as if smitten by the fiery light of the sun, the eagle should fall from his lofty heights, even to the ground! So with the believer; he soars up to God, and all of a sudden down he comes! “Behold,” he says, “I am vile! I had never known this if I had not seen God. Behold, I have seen Him and now I discover how vile I am.” Nothing shows blackness like exposure to light. If I would

see the blackness of my own character, I must put it side by side with spotless purity. And when the Lord is pleased to give us some special vision of Himself, some sweet communion with His own blessed person—then it is that the soul learns, as it never knew before—with an agony, perhaps, which it never felt, even when at first convinced of sin! “Behold, I am vile.” God is pleased to let us see this, lest we should be, “exalted above measure, by the abundance of the revelation”—and He sends us this “thorn in the flesh,” to let us see *ourselves* after we have seen *Him*.

There are many men who never know much of their vileness till after the blood of Christ has been sprinkled on their consciences, or even till they have been, many years, God’s children. I met, some time ago, with the case of a Christian who was positively pardoned before he had a strong sense of sin. “I did not,” he said, “feel my vileness until I heard a voice, ‘I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions.’ And after that, I thought how black I had been. I did not think of my filthiness,” he said, “till after I saw that I had been washed.” I think there are many of God’s people, who, though they had some notion of their blackness before they came to Christ, never knew how thoroughly vile they were till afterwards. They then thought, “How great must have been my sin to need such a Savior! How desperate my filth to require such a washing! How awful my guilt to need such an Atonement as the *blood* of Christ.” You may rest assured that the more you know of God and of Christ, the more you will know of yourself. And you will be obliged to say, as you did before, “Behold, I am vile.” Vile in an extraordinary sense even as you never guessed or fancied until now. “Behold, I am vile!” “I am vile, indeed!” No doubt many of you will still think that what I say concerning your evil nature is not true. You may, perhaps, imagine that divine grace has cut your evil nature up. But you know little about spiritual life if you suppose that it will not be long before you find the old Adam as strong in you as ever! There will be a war carried on in your heart to your dying day in which grace shall prevail—but not without sighs, groans, agonies, wrestling and a daily death!

**V.** Here is the way in which God shows us our vileness to ourselves. Now, if it is true that we are still vile, WHAT ARE OUR DUTIES? And here, let me solemnly speak to such of you as are heirs of eternal life, desiring as your brother in Christ Jesus, to urge you to some duties which are most necessary on account of the continual filthiness of your heart.

In the first place, if your hearts are still vile and there is still an evil nature in you, *how wrong is it to suppose that all your work is done*. There is one thing concerning which I have much reason to complain of some of you. Before your baptism you were extremely earnest. You were always attending the means of grace and I always saw you here. But there are some, some even now in this place who, as soon as they had crossed that Rubicon, began from that moment to decrease in zeal, thinking that the work was over. I tell you solemnly that I know there are

some of you who were prayerful, careful, devout, living close and near to your God until you joined the church. But from that time forth you have gradually declined. Now, it really appears to me a matter of doubt whether such persons are Christians! I tell you I have very grave doubts of the sincerity of some of you. If I see a man less earnest after baptism, I think he had no right to be baptized, for if he had had a proper sense of the value of that ordinance and had been rightly dedicated to God, he would not have turned back to the ways of the world! I am grieved when I see one or two who once walked very consistently with us, beginning to slide away. I have no fault to find with the great majority of you—as to your firm adherence to God’s Word. I bless God that for the space of two years and more you have held firm and fast by God. I have not seen you absent from the House of Prayer, nor do I think your zeal has flagged. But there are some few who have been tempted by the world and who have been led astray by Satan, or who, by some change in their circumstances, or some removal to a distance, have become cold and not diligent in the work of the Lord. There are some of my hearers who are not as earnest as they once were. My dear friends, if you knew the vileness of your hearts, you would see the necessity of being as earnest, now, as you ever were! Oh, if when you were converted, your old nature were cut up, there would now be no need of watchfulness! If all your lusts were entirely gone and all the strength of corruption dead within you, there would be no need of perseverance! But it is just because you have evil hearts that I bid you be just as earnest as ever you were to stir up the gift of God which is in you! Look as well to yourselves as you ever did—fancy not the battle is over, brothers and sisters—it is but the first trumpet—summoning to the warfare! That trumpet has ceased and you think the battle is over—I tell you, no, the fight has but just begun! The hosts are only just led forth and you have newly put on your armor. You have conflicts yet to come. Be earnest, or else that first love of yours shall die and you shall yet “go out from us, proving that you were not of us.” Take care, my dear friends, of backsliding—it is the easiest thing in the world and yet the most dangerous thing in the world! Take care of giving up your first zeal; beware of cooling in the least degree. You were hot and earnest once—be hot and earnest still—and let the fire which once burnt within you still animate you. Be you still men of might and vigor, men who serve their God with diligence and zeal!

Again—if your evil nature is still within you, *how watchful you ought to be!* The devil never sleeps—your evil nature never sleeps—you ought never to sleep. “What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.” These are Jesus Christ’s words and there is no word that needs repeating half as much as that word, “watch.” We can do almost anything better than watch, or watching is very wearisome work, especially when we have sleepy souls to watch with. Watching is very fatiguing work. There is little open honor received by it and, therefore, we do not have the hope of renown to cheer

us up. Watching is a work that few of us, I am afraid, rightly perform! And if the Almighty had not watched over you, the devil would have carried you away long ago! Dear friends, I bid you watch constantly. When the adjoining house is on fire, how speedily do persons rise from their beds and if they have combustibles, move them from the premises—and watch—lest their house, also, should become a prey to the devouring element! You have corruption in your *heart*—watch for the first spark lest it set your soul on fire. “Let us not sleep as do others.” You might sleep over the crater of a volcano if you liked. You might sleep with your head before the cannon’s mouth. You might, if you pleased, sleep in the midst of an earthquake, or in a pest-house. But I beseech you, do not sleep while you have evil hearts! Watch your hearts. You may think they are very good but they will be your ruin if grace prevents not. Watch daily. Watch perpetually—guard yourselves, lest you sin. Above all, my dear brothers and sisters, if our hearts are, indeed, still full of vileness, how necessary it is that we should still *exhibit faith in God*. If I must trust my God when I first set out, because of the difficulties in the way, if those difficulties are not diminished, I ought to trust God just as much as I did before! Oh, beloved, yield your hearts to God. Do not become self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency is Satan’s net wherein he catches men, like poor silly fish, and destroys them! Be not self-sufficient. Think yourselves as nothing—for you *are* nothing and live by God’s help. The way to grow strong in Christ is to become weak in yourself! God pours no power into man’s heart till man’s power is all poured out. Live, then, daily, a life of dependence on the grace of God. Do not set yourself up as if you were an independent gentleman. Do not start in your own concerns as if you could do all things yourself. But live always trusting in God. You have as much need to trust Him, now, as ever you had. Mark you—although you would have been damned without Christ, at first, you will be damned without Christ, now, unless He still keeps you, for you have as evil a nature, now, as you had then!

Dearly beloved, I have just one word to say, not to the believer, but to the ungodly—one cheering word—sinner, poor lost sinner! You think you cannot come to God because you are vile. Now let me tell you, that there is not a believer in this place but is vile, too! If Job and Isaiah and Paul were all obliged to say, “I am vile,” oh, poor sinner, will you be ashamed to join the confession and say, “I am vile,” too? If I go to God this night, in prayer—when I am on my knees by my bedside, I shall have to come to God as a sinner—vile and full of sin! My fellow sinner, do you want to have any better confession than that? You want to be better, do you? Why, saints in themselves are no better! If divine grace does not eradicate all sin in the believer, how do you hope to do it, yourself? And if God loves His people while they are yet vile, do you think your vileness will prevent His loving you? No, vile sinner, come to Jesus! Vilest of the vile, believe on Jesus! You offcasts of the world’s society—you who are the

dung and dross of the streets—I bid you come to Christ! Christ bids you believe on Him—

***“Not the righteous; not the righteous!  
Sinners, Jesus came to save.”***

Come now—say, “Lord, I am vile, give me faith. Christ died for sinners. I am a sinner. Lord Jesus, sprinkle Your blood on me.” I tell you, sinner, from God, if you will confess your sins, you shall find pardon. If now, with all your heart, you will say, “I am vile. Wash me.” You shall be washed now! If the Holy Spirit shall enable you to say with your heart, now, “Lord, I am sinful—

***‘Just as I am, without one plea  
But that Your blood was shed for me,  
And that You bid’st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.’”***

You shall go out of this place with all your sins pardoned! And though you come in here with every sin that man has ever committed on your head, you shall go out as innocent—more innocent than the new-born babe! Though you come in here all covered with sin, you shall go out with a robe of righteousness, white as angels are, as pure as God, Himself, as far as justification is concerned, for “now,” mark it—“now is the accepted time,” if you believe on Him who justifies the ungodly. Oh, may the Holy Spirit give you faith that you may be saved now, for then you will be saved forever! May God add His blessing to this feeble discourse for His name’s sake! 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 comes and half of him stays 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, which 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 the entire 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 was 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 per-

sons, 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 viler 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 guiltier? As long as he lives, he may become guiltier 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 he is 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 I am, 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 about it.” And you did think about 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, for 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 able to also 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.

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# OMNISCIENCE

## NO. 85

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, JUNE 15, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“You God see me.”  
Genesis 16:13.***

THERE are more eyes fixed on man than he knows of—he sees not as he is seen. He thinks himself obscure and unobserved but let him remember that a cloud of witnesses hold him in full survey. Wherever he is, at every instant, there are beings whose attention is riveted by his doings and whose gaze is constantly fixed by his actions. Within this Hall, I doubt not, there are myriads of spirits unseen to us. Spirits good and spirits evil are upon us tonight. The eyes of angels rest attentively—those perfect spirits regard our order. They hear our songs. They observe our prayers. It may be they fly to Heaven to convey to their companions news of any sinners who are born of God, for there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents! Millions of spiritual creatures walk this earth, both when we wake and when we sleep. Midnight is peopled with unseen shadows and daylight has its spirits, too. The prince of the power of the air, attended by his squadron of evil spirits often flits through the ether. Evil spirits watch our halting every instant, while good spirits, battling for the salvation of God’s elect, keep us in all our ways and watch over our feet, lest at any time we dash them against a stone. Hosts of invisible beings attend on everyone of us at different periods of our lives. We must remember, also, that not only do the spirits of angels, elect or fallen, look on us, but, “the spirits of the just made perfect,” continually observe our conversation. We are taught by the Apostle that the noble army of martyrs and the glorious company of confessors are “witnesses” of our race to Heaven, for he says, “seeing, then, that we 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.” From yon blue Heaven, the eyes of the glorified look down on us. There the children of God are sitting on their starry thrones, observing whether we manfully uphold the banner around which they fought. They behold our valor, or they detect our cowardice. And they are intent to witness our valiant deeds of noble daring, or our ignominious retreat in the day of battle.

Remember that, sons of men—you are not unregarded. You do not pass through this world in unseen obscurity. In darkest shades of night, eyes glare on you through the gloom. In the brightness of the day, angels

are spectators of your labors. From Heaven there look down upon you spirits who see all that finite beings are capable of beholding. But if we think that thought worth treasuring up, there is one which sums up that and drowns it, even as a drop is lost in the ocean. It is the thought, "You God see me." It is nothing that angels see me, it is nothing that devils watch me, it is nothing that the glorified spirits observe me—compared with the overwhelming Truth—God at all times sees me! Let us dwell on that, now, and may God the Spirit make use of it to our spiritual profit!

In the first place, I shall notice *the general Doctrine*, that God observes all men. In the second place, I shall notice *the particular Doctrine*, "You God see me." And in the third place, I shall *draw from it some practical and comforting inferences* to different orders of persons now assembled, each of whom may learn something from this short sentence.

**I.** In the first place, THE GENERAL DOCTRINE, that God sees us.

**1.** This may be easily proved, even from the Nature of God. It were hard to suppose a God who could not see His own creatures. It were difficult in the extreme to imagine a Divinity who could not behold the actions of the works of His hands. The word which the Greeks applied to God implied that He was a God who could see. They called him *Theos* (Theos). And they derived that word, if I read rightly, from the root *Theisthai* (Theisthai), to see, because they regarded God as being the All-Seeing One, whose eyes took in the whole universe at a glance and whose knowledge extended far beyond that of mortals. God Almighty, from His very Essence and Nature, must be an Omniscient God. Strike out the thought that He sees me and you extinguish Deity by a single stroke! There were no God if that God had no eyes, for a blind God were no God at all. We could not conceive such an one. Stupid as idolaters may be, it were very hard to think that even *they* had fashioned a blind god—even *they* have given eyes to their gods, though they see not. Juggernaut has eyes stained with blood and the gods of the ancient Romans had eyes—and some of them were called far-seeing gods. Even the heathen can scarcely conceive of a god that has no eyes to see and certainly we are not so mad as to imagine for a single second that there can be a Deity without the knowledge of everything that is done by man beneath the sun! I say it were as impossible to conceive of a God who did not observe everything as to conceive of a round square! When we say, "You God," we do, in fact, comprise in the word, "God," the idea of a God who sees everything, "You God see me."

**2.** Yet, further, we are sure that God must see us for we are taught in the Scriptures that *God is everywhere* and if God is everywhere, what hinders Him from seeing all that is done in every part of His universe? God is here—I do not simply live near Him, but, "in Him I live and move and have my being." There is not a particle of this mighty space which is

not filled with God—go forth into the pure air and there is not a particle of it where God is not. In every portion of this earth whereon I tread and the spot whereon I move, there is God—

***“Within Your circling power I stand,  
On every side I find Your hand—  
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,  
I am surrounded still with God.”***

Take the wings of the morning and fly beyond the most distant star—but God is there. God is not a Being confined to one place, but He is everywhere! He is there and there and there. In the deepest mine man ever bored, in the unfathomable caverns of the ocean, in the heights, towering and lofty, in the gulfs that are deep which fathom can never reach, God is everywhere. I know from His own words that He is a God who fills immensity. The heavens are not wide enough for Him. He grasps the sun with one hand and the moon with the other. He stretches Himself through the un navigated ether, where the wings of seraph have never flapped—there is God—and where the solemnity of silence has never been broken by the song of Cherub, there is God. God is everywhere! Conceive space and God and space are equal. Well, then, if God is everywhere, how can I refrain from believing that God sees me wherever I am? He does not look upon me from a distance—if He did, I might screen myself beneath the shades of night. But He is here, close by my side and not only *by* me, but *in* me! Within this heart. Where these lungs beat. Or where my blood gushes through my veins. Or where this pulse is beating, like a muffled drum, my march to death—God is there—within this mouth. In this tongue, in these eyes. In each of you, God dwells—He is within you and around you. He is beside you and behind and before. Is not such knowledge too wonderful for you? Is it not high and you cannot attain unto it? I say, how can you resist the Doctrine which comes upon you like a flash of lightning, that if God is everywhere, He must see everything and, therefore, it is a Truth of God—“You God see me.”

**3.** But, lest any should suppose that God may be in a place and yet slumbering, let me remind you that in every spot to which we can travel, there is, not simply God, but also *God’s activity*. Wherever I go, I shall find not a slumbering God but a God busy about the affairs of this world. Take me to the green turf and pleasant pasture—why, every little blade of grass has God’s hand in it, making it grow and every tiny daisy, which a child likes to pluck, looks up with its little eyes and says, “God is in me, circulating my sap and opening my little flower.” Go where you will through this London, where vegetation is scarcely to be found. Look up yonder and see those rolling stars—God is active there—it is His hand that wheels along the stars and moves the moon in her nightly course. But if there are neither stars nor moon—there are those clouds, heavy with darkness, like the carts of night. And who steers them across the

sea of azure? Does not the breath of God blowing upon them drive them along the heavens? God is everywhere, not as a slumbering God, but as an active God! I am upon the sea and there I see God making the everlasting pulse of Nature beat in constant ebbs and flows. I am in the pathless desert, but above me screams the vulture and I see God winging the wild bird's flight! I am shut up in a hermitage. But an insect drops from its leaf and I see in that insect life which God preserves and sustains. Shut me out from the animate creation and put me on the barren rock, where moss, itself, cannot find a footing—I shall *there* discern my God bearing up the pillars of the universe and sustaining that bare rock as a part of the colossal foundation whereon He has built the world—

***“Wherever we turn our gazing eyes —  
Your radiant footsteps shine.  
Ten thousand pleasing wonders rise,  
And speak their source Divine.  
The living tribes of countless forms,  
In earth and sea and air,  
The meanest flies, the smallest worms,  
Almighty power declare.”***

You shall see God everywhere—if you see Him not around you, look within you and is He not there? Is not your blood now flowing through every portion of your body, to and from your heart? And is not God there active? Do you not know that every pulse you beat needs a volition of Deity as its permit and yet more—it needs an exertion of Divine Power as its cause! Do you not know that every breath you breathe needs Deity for its inspiration and expiration and that you would die if God withdraw that power? If we could look within us, there are mighty works going on in this mortal fabric—the garment of the soul—which would astonish you and make you see, indeed, that God is not asleep, but that He is active and busy! There is a working God everywhere, a God with His eyes open everywhere, a God with His hands at work everywhere! A God doing something, not a God slumbering, but a God laboring. Oh, Sirs, does not the conviction flash upon your mind with a brightness, against which you cannot shut your eyes, that since God is everywhere, and everywhere active, it follows, as a necessary and unavoidable consequence, that He must see us and know all our actions and our deeds?

**4.** I have one more proof to offer which I think to be conclusive. God, we may be sure, sees us, when we remember that *He can see a thing before it happens*. If He beholds an event before it transpires, surely reason dictates He must see a thing that is happening now. Read those ancient prophecies. Read what God said should be the end of Babylon and of Nineveh. Just turn to the Chapter where you read of Edom's doom, or where you are told that Tyre shall be desolate. Then walk through the lands of the East and see Nineveh and Babylon cast to the ground, the

cities ruined. And then reply to this question—"Is not God a God of foreknowledge? Can He not see the things that are to come?" Yes, there is not a thing which shall transpire in the next cycle of a thousand years which is not already passed through the Infinite mind of God. There is not a deed which shall be transacted tomorrow, or the next day, or the next, through all eternity, if days can be eternal, but God knows it! And if He knows the future, does He not know the present? If His eyes look through the dim haze which veils us from the things of futurity, can He not see that which is standing in the brightness of the present? If He can see a great distance, can He not see near at hand! Surely that Divine Being who discerned the end from the beginning must know the things which occur now. And it must be true that, "You God see us," even the whole of us, the entire race of man! So much for the general and universally acknowledged Doctrine.

**II.** Now, I come, in the second place, to the SPECIAL DOCTRINE — "You God see *me*."

Come now, there is a disadvantage in having so many hearers, as there always are, in speaking to more than one at a time, because persons are apt to think, "He does not speak to me." Jesus Christ preached a very successful sermon once when he had but one hearer because He had the woman sitting on the well and she could not say that Christ was preaching to her neighbor. He said to her, "Go, call your husband and come here." There was something there which smote her heart. She could not evade the confession of her guilt. But in regard to our congregations, the old orator might soon see his prayer answered, "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears," for when the Gospel is preached, we lend our ears to everybody! We are accustomed to hear for our neighbors and not for ourselves. Now, I have no objection to your lending anything else you like, but I have a strong objection to you lending your ears! I shall be glad if you will keep them at home for a minute or two, for I want to make you hear for yourselves this Truth, "You God see me."

Mark, God sees *you*—selecting anyone out of this congregation—He sees you. He sees you *as much as if there were nobody else in the world for Him to look at*. If I have as many people as there are, here, to look at, of course my attention must be divided. But the Infinite mind of God is able to grasp a million objects at once and yet to set itself as much upon one as if there were nothing else but that one! So that you, tonight, are looked at by God as much as if throughout space there were not another creature but yourself. Can you conceive that? Suppose the stars blotted out in darkness. Suppose the angels dead. I imagine the glorified spirits above are all gone and you are left alone, the last man. And there is God looking at you. What an idea it would be for you to think of—that there

was only *you* to be looked at! How steadily He could observe you! How well He would discern you! But mark you—God does really look at you this night as much, as entirely, as absolutely without division of sight—as if you were the only being His hands had ever made. Can you grasp that? God sees you with His eyes, with the whole of His sight—you—you—you are the particular object of His attention at this very moment! God’s eyes are looking down upon you—remember that!

In the next place God sees you *entirely*. He does not merely note your actions. He does not simply notice what is the appearance of your countenance. He does not merely take into His eyesight what your posture may be. But remember, God sees what you are thinking! He looks within. God has a window in every man’s heart through which He looks. He does not need you to tell Him what you are thinking about—He can see that, He can read right through you! Do you not know that God can read what is written on the rocks at the bottom of the ocean, even though ten thousand fathoms of dark water roll above? And I tell you, He can read every word that is in your breasts. He knows every thought, every imagination, every conception—even your every unformed imagination! He sees it all, every particle, every atom of it—

***“My thoughts, scarcely struggling into birth,  
Great God! are known to You—  
Abroad, at home, still I’m enclosed  
With Your immensity.  
Behind I glance and You are there—  
Before me, shines Your name.  
And ‘tis Your strong, almighty hand  
Sustains my tender frame.”***

Can you appropriate that thought? From the crown of your head to the sole of your foot, God is examining you now. His scalpel is in your heart, His lancet in your breast, He is searching your heart and trying your thoughts. He knows you behind and before. “You God see me.” You see me entirely.

Note again—God sees you *constantly*. You are sometimes watched by man and then your conversation is tolerably correct. At other times you seek retirement and you indulge yourselves in things which you would not dare to do before the gaze of your fellow creatures. But remember, wherever you are, God sees you. You may lay yourselves down by the side of the hidden brook where the willows shelter you, where all is still, without a sound—God is there looking at you! You may retire to your chamber and draw the curtains of your couch and throw yourself down for repose in midnight’s gloomiest shade—God sees you there! I remember going into a castle sometime ago, down many a winding stair, round and round, and round and round—where light never penetrated. At last I came to a space, very narrow, about the length of a man. “There,” said

the keeper, “such-and-such-a-one was shut up for so many years, a ray of light never having penetrated—sometimes they tortured him, but his shrieks never reached through the thickness of these walls and never ascended that winding staircase—here he died and there, Sir, he was buried,” pointing to the ground. But though that man had none on earth to see him, God saw him! Yes, you may shut me up forever where ear shall never hear my prayer, where eyes shall never see my misery. But One’s eyes shall look upon me and one Countenance smile on me, if I suffer for righteousness’ sake. If for Christ’s sake I am in prison, one hand shall be upon me and one voice shall say, “Fear not. I will help you”—at all times, in all places, in all your thoughts, in all your acts, in all your privacy, in all your public doings, at every season—this is true, “You God see me.”

Yet once more—“You God see me” supremely. I can see myself, but not as well as either my friends or foes. Men can see me better than I can see myself, but man cannot see me as God sees me. A man skilled in the human heart might interpret my deeds and translate their motives, but he could not read my heart as God can read it. None can tell another as God can tell us all—we do not know ourselves as God knows us—within yourself knowledge, with all you have been told by others, God knows you more fully than you know yourself—no eyes can see you as God sees you! You may act in daylight. You may not be ashamed of your actions. You may stand up before men and say, “I am a public man, I wish to be observed and noticed.” You may have all your deeds chronicled and all men may hear of them, but I know men will never know you as God will know you. And if you could be chained, as Paul was, with a soldier at your arm—if he were with you night and day, sleeping with you, rising with you—if he could hear all your thoughts, he could not know you as God knows you, for God sees you superlatively and supremely!

Let me now apply that to you—“You God see *me*.” This is true of each of you. Try and think of it for a moment. Even as my eyes rests on you, so, in a far, far greater sense do God’s eyes rest on you! Standing, sitting, wherever you are, this is true, “You God see *me*.” It is said that when you heard Rowland Hill, if you were stuck in a window, or farther away at the door, you always had the conviction that he was preaching at you. Oh, I wish I could preach like that! If I could make you feel that I was preaching at you in particular, that I singled *you* out and shot every word at *you*, then I could hope for some effect. Try and think, then, “You God see *me*.”

**III.** Now I come to DIFFERENT INFERENCES for different persons, to serve different purposes.

First, to the *prayerful*. Prayerful man, prayerful woman, here is a consolation—God sees you—and if He can see you, surely He can *hear* you! Why, we can often hear people when we cannot see them. If God is so

near to us and if His voice is like the thunder, surely His ears are as good as His eyes and He will be sure to answer us! Perhaps you cannot say a word when you pray. Never mind—God does not need to hear. He can tell what you mean even by seeing you. “There,” says the Lord, “is a child of Mine in prayer. He says not a word. But do you see that tear rolling down his cheek? Do you hear that sigh?” Oh, mighty God, you can see both tear and sigh. You can read desire when desire has not clothed itself in words. The naked wish God can interpret. He needs us not to light the candle of our desires with language. He can see the candle before it is lit—

**“He knows the words we mean to speak,  
When from our lips they cannot break,”**

by reason of the anguish of our spirit. He knows the desire when words stagger under the weight of it. He knows the wish when language fails to express it. “You God see me.” Ah, God, when I cannot pray with words, I will throw myself flat on my face and I will groan my prayer. And if I cannot groan it, I will sigh it. And if I cannot sigh it I will wish it—and when these eye-strings break and when death has sealed these lips, I will enter Heaven with a prayer which You will not hear but which You will see—the prayer of my inmost spirit—when my heart and my flesh fail me, that You may be the strength of my life and portion forever! There is comfort for you, you praying ones, that God sees you! That is enough. If you cannot speak He can see you.

I have given a word for the prayerful. Now a word for the careful. Some here are very full of care, doubts, anxieties and fears. “Oh, Sir,” you say, “if you could come to my poor house, you would not wonder that I feel anxious. I have had to part with much of my little furniture to provide myself with a living. I am brought very low. I have not a friend in London. I am alone, alone in the whole wide world.” Stop, stop, Sir! You are not alone in the world! There is at least one regarding you. There is one hand that is ready to relieve you. Don’t give up in despair. If your case is ever so bad, God can see your care, your troubles and your anxieties! To a good man it is enough to see destitution to relieve it. And for God it is enough to see the distresses of His family at once to supply their needs. If you were lying wounded on the battlefield, if you could not speak, you know right well your comrades who are coming by with an ambulance will pick you up, if they but see you. And that is enough for you. So if you are lying on the battlefield of life, God sees you. Let that cheer you—He will relieve you! For He only needs to look at the woe of His children at once to relieve them. Go on then—hope! In night’s darkest hour, hope for a brighter tomorrow. God sees you, whatever you are doing—

**“He knows your cares, your tears,  
Your sighs—He shall lift up your head.”**

And now a word to the *slandered*. There are some of us who come into a very large share of slander. It is very seldom that the slander market is much below par. It usually runs up at a very mighty rate. And there are persons who will take shares to any amount! If men could dispose of railway stock as they can of slander, those who happen to have any scrip, here, would be rich enough by tomorrow at twelve o'clock! There are some who have a superabundance of that matter. They are continually hearing rumors of this, that, and the other. And there is one fool or another who has not brains enough to write sense, nor honesty sufficient to keep him to the truth, who, therefore, writes the most infamous libels upon some of God's servants, compared with whom he, himself, is nothing—and whom for very envy he chooses to depreciate. Well, what does it matter? Suppose you are slandered. Here is a comfort—"You *God* see me." They say that such-and-such is your motive, but you need not answer them. You can say, "God knows that matter." You are charged with such-and-such a thing of which you are innocent. Your heart is right concerning the deed, you have never done it—well, you have no need to battle for your reputation! You need only point your finger to the sky and say, "There is a Witness there who will right me at last—there is a Judge of all the earth, whose decision I am content to wait. His answer will be a complete exoneration of me and I shall come out of the furnace like gold seven times purified." Young men, are you striving to do good and do others impute wrong motives to you? Do not be particular about answering them—just go straight on and your life will be the best refutation of the calumny. David's brothers said that in his pride and the naughtiness of his heart he had come to see the battle. "Ah," thought David, "I will answer you, by-and-by." Off he went across the plain to fight Goliath! He cut off his head and then came back to his brothers with a glorious answer in his conquering hand! If any man desires to reply to the false assertions of his enemies, let him go and do good and he needs not say a word—that will be his answer! I am the subject of detraction. But I can point to hundreds of souls that have been saved on earth by my feeble instrumentality and my reply to all my enemies is this, "You may say what you like. But seeing these lame men are healed, can you say anything against *them*? You may find fault with the style or manner but *God* saves souls and we will hold up that fact, like giant Goliath's head, to show you that although it was nothing but a sling or stone, so much the better, for God has gotten the victory." Go straight on and you will live down your slanderers. And remember, when you are most distressed, "You *God* see me."

Now, *a sentence or two to some of you who are ungodly* and know not Christ. What shall I say to you but this—how heinous are your sins when they are put in the light of this Doctrine! Remember, Sinner, whenever

you sin, you sin in the teeth of God! It is bad enough to steal in darkness, but he is a very thief who steals in daylight. It is vile, it is fearfully vile to commit a sin which I desire to cover, but to do my sin when man is looking at me shows much hardness of heart. Oh, Sinner, remember, you sin with God's eyes looking on you. How black must be your heart! How awful your sin! For you sin in the very face of Justice when God's eyes are fixed on you! I was looking, the other day, at a glass beehive and it was very amazing to observe the motions of the creatures inside. Well, now, this world is nothing but a huge glass beehive. God looks down on you and He sees you all. You go into your little cells in the streets of this huge city. You go to your business, your pleasure, your devotions and your sins. But remember, wherever you go, you are like the bees under a great glass shade—you can never get away from God's observation! When children disobey before the eyes of their parents, it shows that they are hardened. If they do it behind their parents' back, it proves that there is some shame left. But you, Sirs, sin when God is present with you. You sin while God's eyes are searching you through and through! Even now you are thinking hard thoughts of God while God is hearing all those silent utterances of your evil hearts! Does not that render your sin extremely heinous? Therefore, I beseech you, think of it and repent of your wickedness that your sins may be blotted out through Jesus Christ!

And one more thought. If God sees you, O Sinner, *how easy it will be to condemn you*. In the late horrible case of Palmer, witnesses were required and a jury was empanelled to try the accused. But if the judge could have mounted the bench and have said, "I saw the man myself mix the poison. I stood by and saw him administer it. I read his thoughts. I knew for what purpose he did it, I read his heart. I was with him when he first conceived the black design and I have tracked him in all his evasions, in all those acts by which he sought to blindfold justice. And I can read in his heart that he knows himself to be guilty now." If the judge could have said that, the case would have been over. The trial would have been little more than a form. What will you think, O Sinner, when you are brought before God and God shall say, "You did so-and-so," and will mention what you did in the darkness of the night when no eyes were there? You will start back amazed and say, "Oh, heavens! How did God know? Is there knowledge in the Most High?" He will say, "Stop, Sinner. I have yet more to startle you." And He will begin to unfold the records of the past—leaf after leaf He will read of the diary He has kept of your existence! Oh, I can see you as He reads page after page—your knees are knocking together, your hair is standing on end, your blood is frozen in your veins, congealed for fright—and you stand like a second Niobe, a rock bedewed with tears! You are thunderstruck to find your thoughts read out before the sun, while men and angels hear! You are

amazed beyond degree to hear your imaginations read, to see your deeds photographed on the Great White Throne, and to hear a voice saying, “Rebellion at such a time. Uncleanliness at such a time. Evil thoughts at such an hour. Sabbath-breaking on such a day, blasphemy at such a time, theft at such an hour. Hard thoughts of God at such a period. Rejection of His Grace on such a day. Stifling of conscience at another time.” And so onto the end of the chapter and then the awful final doom—“Sinner, depart accursed! I saw you sin, it needs no witnesses. I heard your oath. I heard your blasphemy. I saw your theft. I read your thoughts. Depart! Depart! I am clear when I judge you. I am justified when I condemn you—for you have done this evil in My sight.”

Lastly, you ask me what you must do to be saved. And I will never let a congregation go, I hope, till I have told them that. Hear, then, in a few words, the way of salvation. It is this. Christ said to the Apostles, “Preach the Gospel to every creature—he that believes and is baptized shall be saved and he that believes not shall be damned.” Or, to give you Paul’s version, when he spoke to the jailor, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” You ask what you are to believe. Why, this—that Christ died and rose again! That by His death He did bear the punishment of all Believers. And that by His Resurrection He did wipe out the faults of all His children! And if God gives you faith, you will believe that Christ died for you. And you will be washed in His blood and you will trust His mercy and His love to be your everlasting redemption when the world shall end!

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# UNIMPEACHABLE JUSTICE

## NO. 86

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 15, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Against You, You only have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight—  
that You may be found just when You speak, and be clear when You judge.”  
Psalm 51:4.***

YESTERDAY was to me a day of deep solemnity. A pressure rested on my mind throughout the whole of it which I could not, by any possibility, remove. At every hour I remembered that during that day one of the most fallen of my fellow creatures was launched into an unknown world, and made to stand before his Maker. Some might have witnessed his execution without tears. I think I could not even have *thought* of it for long without weeping at the terrible idea of a man so guilty, about to commence that endless period of unmingled misery which is the horrible doom of the impenitent which God has prepared for sinners. Yesterday morning the sun saw a sight which sickened it—the sight of a man launched, by a judicial process, into eternity, for guilt which has rendered him infamous, and which will stamp his name with disgrace as long as it shall be remembered.

There is now agitating the public mind, something which I thought I might improve this day and turn to a very excellent purpose. There are only two things concerning which the public have any suspicion. The verdict of the jury was the verdict of the whole of England—we were unanimous as to the high probability, the well-near absolute certainty of his guilt. But there were two doubts in our minds—one of them but small, we grant you, but if both could have been resolved, we would have felt more easy than we do now. The one was concerning the criminal's guilt and the other was concerning his punishment. At least some few of our fellow countrymen have been afraid lest we may not have been justified when we spoke against him and quite clear when he was judged. Two things were needed—we would have liked to have had his confession—and certainly we would have preferred something more than circumstantial evidence. We desired to have had the testimony of an eyewitness who could swear to the deed of murder done. But moreover, there is also a strong feeling in the mind of many that the severity of the punishment is questionable. There are some who pronounce authoritatively that the murderer's blood must be shed for murder. But there are some who think the Christian dispensation has improved the law and

that now it is no longer, “eye for eye, tooth for tooth.” Many persons in England have shuddered at the thought of executing a penalty so fearful on any man, however great his crime, seeing that it puts him beyond the pale of hope. I shall not enter into the question of the rightness of capital punishment. I have my opinion upon it, but this is not exactly the place to state it—I only wish to use these facts as an illustration of the text. David says, “O Lord, hear my own confession—‘against You, You only, have I sinned,’ and by my own confession You would ‘be justified when You speak and clear when You judge.’ And, Lord, there is something else besides my own confession. You, Yourself, were eyewitness of my deed. ‘Against You, You only, have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight.’ And now You are indeed ‘justified when You speak, and clear when You judge.’ And as to the severity of my punishment, there can be no doubt of that.” There may be doubt of the severity when man executes punishment for a crime against man, but there can be no doubt when God Himself executes vengeance for a crime that is committed against Him. “You are justified when You speak, You are clear when You judge.”

Our subject this morning, then, will be that both in the condemnation and in the punishment of every sinner, God will be justified—and He will be made most openly clear from the two facts of the sinner’s own confession, and God Himself, having been an eyewitness of the deed. And as for the severity of it, there shall be no doubt upon the mind of any man who shall receive it, for God shall prove to him in his own soul that damnation is nothing more nor less than the legitimate reward of sin.

There are two kinds of condemnation—*the one is the condemnation of the elect*. This takes place in their hearts and consciences when they have the sentence of death in themselves, that they should not trust in themselves—a condemnation which is invariably followed by peace with God. After that there is no further condemnation, for they are then in Christ Jesus and they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The second condemnation is that of the *finally impenitent*, who, when they die, are most righteously and justly condemned by God for the sins they have committed—a condemnation not followed by pardon, as in the present case, but followed by inevitable damnation from the presence of God. On both these condemnations we will discourse this morning. God is clear when He speaks, and He is just when He condemns, whether it is the condemnation which He passes on Christian hearts, or the condemnation which He pronounces from His throne, when the wicked are dragged before Him to receive their final doom.

**I.** In the first place, CONCERNING THE CHRISTIAN, when he feels himself condemned by conscience and by God’s Holy Spirit—and when he hears the thunders of God’s law proclaiming against him a sentence which, if it had not been already executed on his Savior, would have been

fulfilled on him—the man has no grounds whatever, at that time, to plead any excuse! But he will say, in the words of the Psalmist, “You are justified when You speak and clear when You judge.” Let me show you how.

1. In the first place, *there is a confession*. With regard to the man who was executed yesterday, there was no confession. We could not have expected it—such crimes could not have been committed by a man capable of confessing them. The fact that he died hardened in his guilt is well-near conclusive proof that he was guilty, for had he betrayed any emotion, or had he bowed his knees and cried for mercy, we might then have suspected that he had not been guilty of so dark a deed of blood. But from the very fact that he hardened his heart, we infer that he was capable of committing crimes, the infamy of which point them out as the offspring of a seared and torpid conscience! The Christian, when he is condemned by the Holy Law, makes a confession—a full and free confession. He feels when God records the sentence against him, that the execution of it would be just, for his now honest heart compels him to confess the whole story of his guilt. Allow me to make some remarks on the confession which is followed by pardon.

First, such a confession is *a sincere one*. It is not the prattling confession used by the mere formalist when he bends his knees and exclaims that he is a sinner. It is a confession which is undoubtedly sincere because it is attended by awful agonies of mind and usually by tears, sighs and groans. There is something about the penitent’s demeanor which puts it beyond the possibility of a fear that he is a deceiver when he is confessing his sin. There is an outward emotion, manifesting the inward anguish of the spirit. He stands before God and does not merely turn king’s evidence against himself, as the means of saving himself, but with tears in his eyes he cries, “O God, I am guilty.” And then he begins to recount the circumstances of his crime, even as if God had never seen him. He tells God what God already knows—and then the Gracious One proves the truth of the promise—“He who confesses his sin shall find mercy.”

In the next place, that confession is *always abundantly sufficient* for our own condemnation. The Christian feels that if he had only half the sin to confess that he is obliged to tell God, it would be enough to damn his soul forever—that if he had only *one crime* to acknowledge, it would be like a millstone round his neck to sink him forever in the bottomless pit of hell! He feels that his confession is superabundantly enough to condemn him—that it is almost a work of supererogation to confess all, for there is enough in one tenth of it to send his soul to hell and make it abide there forever! Have you ever confessed your sins like this? If not, as God lives, you have never known what it is to make a true confession of

your sin! You have never had the sentence of condemnation passed on you in that way which is succeeded by mercy. But you are yet awaiting that terrible sentence which shall be succeeded by no words of love, but by the execution of the sentence of infinite indignation and displeasure!

This confession is attended with *no apology on account of sin*. We have heard of men who have confessed their guilt and afterwards tried to extenuate their crime and show some reasons why they were not so guilty as apparently they would seem to be. But when the Christian confesses his guilt, you never hear a word of extenuation or apology from him. He says, "Against You, You only, have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight." And in saying this, he makes God just when He condemns him, and clear when He sentences him forever. Have you ever made such a confession? Have you ever thus bowed yourselves before God? Or have you tried to palliate your guilt and call your sins by little names and speak of your crimes as if they were but light offenses? If you have not, then you have not felt the sentence of death in yourselves. You are still waiting till the solemn death-knell shall toll the hour of your doom and you shall be dragged out, amidst the universal hiss of the curse of the world, to be condemned forever to flames which shall never know abatement!

Again—after the Christian confesses his sin, *he offers no promise that he will, of himself, behave better*. Some, when they make confessions to God, say, "Lord, if you forgive me I will not sin again." But God's penitents never say that. When they come before Him they say, "Lord, once I promised, once I made resolves, but I dare not make them now, for they would be so soon broken! They would but increase my guilt and my promises would be so soon violated that they would but sink my soul deeper in hell. I can only say if You will create in me a clean heart, I will be thankful for it and will sing to Your praise forever. But I cannot promise that I will live without sin, or work out a righteousness of my own. I dare not promise, my Father, that I will never go astray again—

***'Unless You hold me fast,  
I feel I must, I shall decline  
And prove like they at last.'***

"Lord, if You do damn me, I cannot murmur; if You cast me into hell, I cannot complain. But have mercy upon me, a sinner, for Jesus Christ's sake." In that case, you see, God is justified when He condemns, and He is clear when He judges, even clearer than any earthly judge can be, because it is seldom that such a confession as that is ever made before the bar.

**2.** Again—when the Christian is condemned by the law in his conscience, there is something else which makes God just in condemning him, beside his confession, and that is the fact that God, *Himself*, the Judge, comes forward as a witness to the crime. The convinced sinner

feels in his own soul that his sins were committed in the face of God, in the teeth of His mercy and that God was an exact and minute Observer of every part and particle of the crime for which he is now to be condemned, and the sin which has brought him to the bar. "Against You, You only, have I sinned and done this evil in *Your sight*—that You may be found just when You speak and be clear when You judge."

The convinced sinner who has just become a Christian feels at that time that God was a witness and that He was a most *truthful* witness—that He saw and saw most clearly. And when God, by His law, says to him, "sinner, you did such-and-such a thing, and such-and-such a thing," the awakened conscience says, "Lord, that is true. It is true in every circumstance." And when God goes on to say, "Your motives were vile, your objectives were sinful," conscience says, "Yes, Lord, that is true. I know that You did see it and that You are a sure observer; You are no false witness, but all that You say in Your law about me is true." When God says, "The poison of asps is under your lips, your throat is an open sepulcher, you flatter with your tongue," conscience says, "It is all true." And when He says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," conscience says, "It is all true." And the sinner has this awful thought, that every sin he ever sinned is written in heaven, and God records it there! He feels, therefore, that God is just when He condemns and clear when He judges.

And, moreover, God is not simply a truthful witness, but the testimony God gives is *an abundant one*. You know that in some cases which are brought before our courts, the witness swears that he saw the man do such-and-such. But then he may be mistaken as to the identity of the person. Perhaps he did not see the whole transaction; and then he has not pried into the man's heart to see what were the man's reasons, which may make the crime lighter or greater, as the case may be. But here we have a witness who can say, "I saw all the crime. I saw the lust when it was conceived. I saw the sin when it was brought forth. I saw the sin when it was finished, bringing forth death. I saw the motive. I beheld the first imagination. I saw the sin when, as a black rivulet, it started on its way—when it suddenly began to increase by contributions of evil. And I saw it when it became, at last, a broad ocean of unfathomable depth—an ocean of guilt which human feet could not pass and over, which the ship of mercy could not have sailed unless some mighty pilot had steered it by shedding His own blood." Then the Christian feels that God, having seen it all, is justified when He speaks and clear when He condemns. I would feel a solemn responsibility, if I were a judge, in putting on the black cap to condemn a man to death—because, however carefully I may have weighed the evidence and however clear the guilt of the prisoner may have seemed—there is a possibility of a mistake. And it seems a solemn

thing to have consigned a fellow creature's soul to a future world, even with a possibility of an error in that judgment! But if I had, myself, beheld the bloody act, with what ease of mind might I then put on the black cap and condemn the man as being guilty, for I should know and the world would know, that having been a witness, I would be just when I spoke and clear when I condemned! Now, that is just what the Christian feels when God condemns him in his conscience—he puts his hand upon his mouth and yields without a word to the justness of the sentence! Conscience tells him he was guilty, because God, Himself, was a witness.

**3.** The other question which I hinted at as being on the public mind is *the severity of the punishment*. In the case of a believer, when he is condemned, there is no doubt about the justice of the punishment. When God, the Holy Spirit, in the soul, passes sentence on the old man and condemns it for its sins, there is felt most solemnly in the heart the great truth of God that hell, itself, is but a rightful punishment for sin. I have heard some men dispute whether the torments of hell were not too great for the sins which men can commit. We have heard men say that hell was not a right place to send such sinners to as they were! But we have always found that such men found fault with hell because they knew right well they were going there! As every man finds fault with the gallows that is going to be hung; so do many men find fault with hell because they fear that they are in danger of it. The opinion of a man about to be executed must not be taken with regard to the propriety of capital punishment, nor must we take the opinion of a man who is, himself, marching to hell concerning the justice of hell, for he is not an impartial judge. But the convinced sinner is a fair witness—God has made him so—for he feels in his soul that there will be pardon given to him and that God, by divine grace, will never condemn him there. But at the same time, he feels that he deserves it and he confesses that hell is not too great a punishment or the eternity of it is not too long a duration of punishment for the sin which he has committed. I appeal to you, my beloved brothers and sisters—you may have had doubts as to the propriety of your being sent to hell before you knew your sins—but I ask you, when you were convinced of God, did you not solemnly feel that He would be unjust if He did *not* damn your soul forever? Did you not say in your prayer, “Lord, if You should now command the earth to open and swallow me up, I could not lift up my finger to murmur against You. And if You were now to roll over my head the billows of eternal fire, I could not, in the midst of my howling in misery, utter one single word of complaint about Your justice”? And did you not feel that if you were to be one thousand, thousand years in hell, you would not have been there long enough? You felt you deserved it all! And if you had been asked what was the right punishment for sin, you would have dared not, even if your own

soul had been at stake, written anything except that sentence, “everlasting fire.” You would have been obliged to have written that, for you felt it was but deserved doom. Now, was not God just, then, when He condemned, and clear when He judged? And did He not come off clear from the judgment seat, because you, yourself, said the sentence would not have been one whit too severe if it had been fulfilled, instead of being simply recorded and then you, yourself, set at liberty?

Ah, my dear friends, there may be some who rail at God’s justice, but no convinced sinner ever will! He sees God’s law in all its glorious holiness and he strikes his hand upon his breast and he says, “O sinner that I am, that I ever could have sinned against such a reasonable law and such perfect commandments!” He sees God’s love towards him and that cuts him to the very quick. He says, “Oh, that I could ever have spit on the face of Christ who died for me! Wretch that I am, that I could ever have crowned that bleeding head with the thorns of my sins, which gave itself to slumber in the grave for my redemption!” Nothing cuts the sinner to the quick more than the fact that he has sinned against a great amount of mercy. This, indeed, makes him weep. And he says, “O Lord, seeing as I have been so ungrateful, the doom You can ever sentence me to, or the fiercest punishment You can ever execute upon my head would not be too heavy for the sins I have committed against You!”

And then the Christian feels, too, what a deal of mischief he has done in the world by sin. Ah, if he has been spared to middle age before he is converted, he looks back and says, “Ah, I cannot tell how many have been damned by my sins. I cannot tell how many have been sent down to hell by words which I have used, or deeds which I have committed.” I confess before you all, that one of the greatest sorrows I had, when first I knew the Lord, was to think about certain persons with whom I knew right well that I had held ungodly conversations and sundry others that I had tempted to sin. And one of the prayers that I always offered, when I prayed for myself, was that such a one might not be damned through sins to which I had tempted him. And I dare say this will be the case with some of you when you look back. Your dear child has been a sad reprobate. And you think, “Did not I teach him very much that was wrong?” And you hear your neighbors swear and you think, “I cannot tell how many I taught to blaspheme.” Then you will recollect your companions, those you used to play cards or dance with and you will think, “Ah, poor souls, I have damned them!” And then you will say, “Lord, You are just if You damn me.” When you reflect what a deal of mischief you have done by yourself, you will then say, “Lord, You are clear when You judge; You are justified when You condemn.” I warn you who are going on in your sins that one of the most fearful things you have to expect is to meet those in another world who perished through being led astray by you!

Think of it, O man! You who have been a universal tempter! There is a man, now in hell that was taught to drink his first glass through you. There lies a soul on his deathbed, and he says, "Ah, John, I had not been here, as I now am, if you had not led me into evil courses which have weakened my body, and brought me to death's door." Oh, what a horrible fate will yours be, when as you walk into the mouth of hell, you will see eyes staring at you, and hear voices saying, "Here he comes! Here comes the man that helped to damn my soul!" And what must be your fate when you must lie forever tossed on the bed of pain with that man whom you were the means of damning? As those who are saved will make jewels in the crowns of glory to the righteous, surely those whom you helped to damn will forge fresh fetters for you, and furnish fearful fire wood to increase the flames of torment which shall blaze around your spirit! Mark that and be warned. The Christian feels this terrible fact when he is convinced of sin, and that makes him feel that God would be clear if He judged him, and would be justified if He condemned him. So much concerning this first condemnation.

**II.** But now a little concerning THE SECOND CONDEMNATION, which is the more fearful of the two. Some of you have never been condemned by God's law in your conscience. Now, as I stated at first that every man must be condemned once, so I beg to repeat it. You must either have the sentence of condemnation passed on you by law in your conscience and then find mercy in Christ Jesus, or else you must be condemned in another world, when you shall stand with the entire human race before God's throne! The first condemnation to the Christian, though exceedingly merciful, is terrible to bear. It is a wounded spirit which none can endure! But, as for the second condemnation, if I could preach with sighs and tears, I could not tell you how horrible that must be! Ah, my friends, could some sheeted ghost start from its tomb and be reunited to the spirit which has been for years in hell, possibly such a man might preach to you and let you know what a fearful thing it will be to be condemned at last! But as for my poor words, they are but air. For I have not heard the *misery* of the condemned, nor have I listened to the sighs and groans and moans of lost spirits! If I had ever been permitted to gaze within the sheet of fire which walls the Gulf of Despair—if I had ever been allowed to walk for one moment over that burning mixture whereon is built the dreadful dungeon of eternal vengeance—then I might tell you somewhat of its misery. But I cannot now, for I have not seen those doleful sights which might frighten our eyes from their sockets and make each individual's hair stand upon our heads! I have not seen such things—but, though I have not seen them, nor you either—we know enough of them to understand that God will be just when He condemns and that He will be clear

when He judges. And, now, I must go over the three points again. But I must be very brief about them.

1. God will be clear when He condemns a sinner from this fact—that the sinner, when he stands before God’s bar will either have made a confession, or else such will be his terror that he will scarcely be able to brazen it out before the Almighty. Look at Judas. When he comes before God’s bar, will not God be clear in condemning him? For he, himself, confessed, “I have sinned against innocent blood,” and he threw the money down in the temple. And few men are so hardened as to restrain themselves from acknowledging their guilt. How many of you, when you thought you were dying, made a confession upon your deathbeds to your God! And mark you, there will be many of you, who, when you come to die, though you have never confessed, yet will lie there and confess before God in your moments of wakefulness during the night, the sins of your youth and your former transgressions. And it may be that when you are lying there, God’s vengeance will be heavy on your conscience. Then you will be obliged to tell those who stand about your bed that you have been guilty of notorious sins. Ah, will not God be just when you shall go straight from your deathbed to His bar, and He shall say, “Sinner, you are condemned on your own confession; there is no need for Me to open the book; no need for Me to pronounce the sentence. You have yourself pronounced your own guilt. Before you died, you stamped yourself with condemnation—‘depart you cursed!’” And though there will be many die who never made a confession in this world, and perhaps there will be some professors so brazen-faced that they will even stand before God’s throne, and say, “When did we see You hungry and gave You nothing to eat? When did we see You naked and clothed You not?” Yet I cannot believe that most of them will be able to plead any excuse. I find Christ saying of one that he stood speechless when he was asked how he got in, not having on a wedding garment. And so it may be with you, sirs. You may brazen it out when here—you may scorn the law and despise the thunders of Sinai—but it will be different with you, *then*. You may sit up in your bed and rail against Christ even when death is staring you in the face—but you will not do it, *then*. Those bones of yours which you thought were of iron will suddenly be melted. That heart of yours, which was like steel or the nether millstone, will be dissolved like wax in your midst! You will begin to cry before God and weep and howl—you will testify to your own guilt when you say, “Rocks! Hide me! Mountains! Fall on me.” For you would need no mountains and no rocks to fall upon you if you were not guilty! You will be justly condemned, for you will make your own confession when you stand before God’s bar.

Ah, if you could see the criminal then, what a difference there is in him! Where, now, are those eyes that stared so impiously at the Bible?

Where, now, are those lips which said, “I curse God and die!” Where, now, is that heart which was once so stout, that spirit once so valiant as to laugh at hell and talk familiarly with death? Ah, where is it? Is that the same creature—he whose knees are knocking together, whose hair is standing up on end? Whose blanched cheek displays the terror of his soul? Is that the same man who just now was burning with impudent rage against his Maker? Yes, it is he—hear what he has to say, “O God, I hate You; I confess it! I was unjust in the world that has gone by, and I am unjust now. Wreak your vengeance on me. I dare ask no mercy and no pardon, for still fixed is my heart to rebel against You. Indissoluble are the bonds of my guilt—I am dammed, I am damned, and I ought to be!” Such will be the confession of every man, woman, and child when he shall stand before his God at last, if he is out of Christ and unwashed in the Savior’s blood. Sinners! Can you hear that and not tremble? Then I have a wonder before me this day—a wonder of conscience, a wonder of hardness of heart, a wonder of impenitency!

**2.** But in the second place, God will be just because *there will be witnesses there to prove it*. There will be none of you, my dear friends, if you are ever condemned, who will be condemned on circumstantial evidence—there will be no necessity for the deliberation of a jury. There will be no conflicting evidence concerning your crimes. There will be no doubts to testify in your favor. In fact, if God, Himself, should ask for witnesses in your case, all the witnesses would be against you! But there will be no need of witnesses. God, Himself, will open His Book; and how astonished will you be when all your crimes are announced—with every individual circumstance connected with them—all the minuteness of your motives and an exact description of your designs! Suppose I would be allowed to open one of the books of God and read that description. How astonished you would be! But what will be your astonishment when God shall open His great book and say, “sinner, here is your case,” and begin to read! Ah, mark how the tears run down the sinner’s cheeks. The sweat of blood comes from every pore. And the loud thundering voice still reads on, while the righteous curse the man who could commit such acts as are recorded in that book. There may be no murder staining the page, but there may be the filthy imagination—and God reads what a man imagines, for to imagine sin is vile, though to do it is viler still! I know I would not like to have my thoughts read over for a single day. Oh, when you stand before God’s bar and hear all this, will you not say, “Lord, You will condemn me, but I cannot help saying You are just when You condemn, and clear when You judge.” There will be eyewitnesses there.

**3.** But lastly, in the sinner’s heart there will be no doubt as to the *righteousness of his punishment*. The sinner may in this world think that he can never, by his sins, by any possibility deserve hell. But he will not

indulge that thought when he gets there. One of the miseries of hell will be that the sinner will feel that he deserves it all. Tossed on a wave of fire, he will see written in every spark that emanates from there, "You knew your duty and you did it not." Tossed back, again, by another wave of flames, he hears a voice saying, "Remember, you were warned!" He is hurled upon a rock and while he is being wrecked there, a voice says, "I told you it would be better for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you." Again he plunges under another wave of brimstone and a voice says, "He who believes not shall be damned—you did not believe—and you are here." And when again he is hurled up and down on some wave of torture, each wave shall bear to him some dreadful sentence which he read in God's Word, in a tract, or in a sermon. Yes, it may be, my friends, that I shall be one of your tormentors in hell, if you should be damned. I trust in God that I, myself, shall be in heaven. And perhaps, if you are lost, one of the most powerful things that shall tend to increase your misery will be the fact that I have always tried to warn you, and warn you as earnestly as possible! And when you lift up your eyes to heaven, you will shriek and say, "O God! There is my minister looking down reprovably on me, and saying, 'sinner, I warned you.'" If you are lost, it is not for lack of preaching! If you are damned, it is not because I did not tell you how you might be saved! If you are in hell, it is not because I did not weep over you, and urge you to flee from the wrath to come, for I did warn you—and that will be the terror of your doom—that you have despised warnings and invitations, and have destroyed yourself! God is not accountable for your damnation, and man is not accountable for it, but you, yourself, have done it. And you will say, "O Lord, it is true; I am now tossed in fire, but I lit the flame. It is true that I am tormented, but I forged the irons which now confine my limbs. I burned the brick that has built my dungeon. I brought myself here! I walked to hell even as a fool goes to the stocks, or an ox to the slaughter! I sharpened the knife which is now cutting my vitals! I nursed the viper which is now devouring my heart! I sinned, which is the same as saying that I damned myself, for to sin is to damn myself—the two words are synonymous." Sin is damnation's sire, it is the root, and damnation is the horrible flower which must inevitably spring from it! Yes, my dear friends, I tell you yet again there will be nothing more patent before the throne of God than the fact that God will be just when He sends you to hell! You will feel that then, even though you do not feel it now!

I thought within myself just this minute, that I heard the whisper of someone saying, "Well, sir, I feel that such men as Palmer, a murderer, will feel that God is just in damning them, but I have not sinned as they have done." It is true, but if your sins are less, remember that your conscience is tenderer, for according to the amount of guilt, men's con-

sciences generally begin to get harder. And because your conscience is tenderer, your little sin is a great sin, because it is committed against greater light and greater tenderness of heart. And I tell you—a little sin against great light may be greater than a great sin against little light! You must measure your sins not by their apparent heinousness, but by the light against which you sinned. No crime could be much worse than the crime of Sodom; but even Sodom, filthy Sodom, shall not have so hot a place as a moral young lady who has fed the poor and clothed the naked, and done all she could, but never loved Christ! What do you say to that? Is it unjust? No, if I am a less sinner than another, I all the more deserve to be damned if I do not come to Christ for mercy!

Oh, my dear hearers, my beloved hearers, *I* cannot bring you to Christ! Christ has brought some of you Himself, but *I* cannot bring you to Christ! How often have I tried to do it! I have tried to preach my Savior's love, and this day I have preached my Father's wrath—but I feel I cannot bring you to Christ! I may preach God's law, but that will not frighten you unless *God* sends it home to your heart! I may preach my Savior's love, but that will not woo you unless my Father draws you! I am sometimes tempted to wish that I could draw you myself—that I could save you. Surely, if I could, you would soon be saved! But ah, remember, your minister can do but little—he can do nothing else but preach to you. Do pray that God would bless me a little; I beseech you, you who can pray. If I could do more, I would do it, but it is very little I can do for a sinner's salvation. Do, I beseech you, my dear people, pray to God to bless the feeble means that I use! It is His work and His salvation, but He can do it. O poor trembling sinner, do you now weep? Then come to Christ! O poor haggard sinner, haggard in your soul! Come to Christ! O poor sin-bitten sinner! Look to Christ! O poor worthless sinner! Come to Christ! O poor trembling, fearing, hungering, thirsting sinner, come to Christ! Our Master cries, "Every one that thirsts, come to the waters; and he that has no money, come, buy wine and milk; yes, come buy wine and milk, without money, and without price." Come! Come! Come! God help you to come for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

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# THE MAJESTIC VOICE

## NO. 87

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 22, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

*“The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.”  
Psalm 29:4.*

ALL God's works praise Him whether they are magnificent or minute. They all discover the wisdom, the power and the benevolence of their Creator. "All Your works praise You, O God." But there are some of His more majestic works which sing the song of praise louder than others. There are some of His doings upon which there seems to be engraved in larger letters than usual, the name of God! Such are the lofty mountains which worship God with uncovered heads both night and day. Such are the rolling seas, too mighty to be managed by man, but held in check by God. And such, especially, are the thunder and the lightning. The lightning is the glance of the eyes of God and the thunder is the uttering of His voice. The thunder has usually been more especially attributed to God, though philosophers assure us that it is to be accounted for by natural causes. We believe them, but we prefer, ourselves, the first great cause and we are content with that odd and universal belief that the thunder is the voice of God. It is marvelous what effect the thunder has had upon all kinds of men. In reading an ode of Horace the other day, I found him in the first two verses singing like a true Ithurean, that he despised God and intended to live merrily. But, by-and-by, he hears the thunder and acknowledging that there is a Jehovah, who lives on high, he trembles before Him! The most wicked of men have been obliged to acknowledge that there must be a Creator when they have heard that marvelous voice of His sounding through the sky! Men of the stoutest nerve and the boldest blasphemy have become the weakest of all creatures when God has, in some degree, manifested Himself in the mighty whirlwind, or in the storm. "He breaks the cedars of Lebanon," He brings down the stout hearts. He lays down the mighty and He obliges those who never acknowledged Him to reverence Him when they hear His voice! The Christian will acknowledge the thunder to be the voice of God from the fact that if he is in the right frame of mind, it always suggests to him holy thoughts. I do not know how it may be with you, but I scarcely ever hear the rolling thunder but I begin to forget earth and look upwards to

my God. I am unconscious of any feeling of terror or pain—it is rather a feeling of delight that I experience, for I like to sing that verse—

***“The God that rules on high  
And thunders when He pleases,  
That rides upon the stormy sky  
And manages the seas—  
This awful God is ours,  
Our Father and our love!  
He shall send down His heavenly powers  
To carry us above.”***

He is our God and I like to sing that and think of it. But why is there something so terrible in that voice, when God is speaking—something so terrific to other men and humbling to the Christian? The Christian is obliged to sink very low in his own estimation. Then he looks up to God and cries, “Infinite Jehovah, spare a worm, crush not an unworthy wretch! I know it is Your voice. I reverence You with solemn awe. I prostrate myself before Your throne. You are my God and beside You there is none else.” It might well have occurred to a Jewish mind to have called the thunder the voice of God when he considered the loudness of it when all other voices are hushed. Even if they are the loudest voices mortals can utter, or the mightiest sounds—yet are they but indistinct whispers compared with the voice of God in the thunder! Indeed, they are entirely lost when God speaks from His throne and makes even the deaf hear and those who are unwilling to acknowledge Him hear His voice!

But we need not stop to prove that the thunder is the voice of God from any natural feeling of man. We have Scripture to back us up and, therefore, we shall do our best to appeal to that. In the first place, there is a passage in the book of Exodus where I would refer you. There, in the margin, we are told that the thunder is the voice of God. In the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter and the 28<sup>th</sup> verse, Pharaoh says, “Entreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunder and hail.” The original Hebrew has it, and my margin has it—and the margin of all of you who are wise enough to have marginal Bibles—“voices of God.” “Let there be no more voices of God and hail.” So you see it is not a mere illusion, but we are really warranted by Scripture in saying that, “the thunder is the voice of God lifted up in the sky.” Now, for another proof: to what shall we refer you unless we send you to the Book of Job? Beginning in his 37<sup>th</sup> chapter at the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse, he says, “He directs it under the whole heaven and His lightning unto the ends of the earth. After it a voice roars; He thunders with the voice of His excellence: and He will not stay them when His voice is heard. God thunders marvelously with His voice; He does great things, which we cannot comprehend.” And so he says in the 40<sup>th</sup> chapter at the 9<sup>th</sup> verse, “Have you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like He?” I am glad, in this age, when men are seeking to forget

God and put Him entirely out of the creation—trying to put laws in the place of God, as if laws could govern a universe without Someone to execute those laws and put power and force into them—I am glad, I say, to be able to bear testimony to something which men cannot deny to be caused immediately by God, the mighty One, Himself!

There is one striking proof I would offer to you that the thunder is the voice of God and that is the fact that when God spoke on Sinai and gave forth His law, His voice is then described, if not in the first passage, yet in the reference to it, as being great thunders. “There were thunders and lightning, exceedingly loud and long.” God spoke, then, and He spoke so terribly in thunder that the people requested that they might hear that voice no more! And I must refer you to one passage in the New Testament which will bear me out thoroughly in describing the thunder to be, indeed, the voice of God. Look at John, in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter, where Jesus lifted up His voice to heaven at the tomb of Lazarus and asked His Father to answer Him. And then a voice came from heaven and they that stood by said, “that it thundered.” It was the voice of God which was then heard and they ascribed it to the thunder. Here is a remarkable proof that the thunder has usually been ascribed to God as being His voice! And when God’s voice has been heard on any remarkable occasion, it has always been accompanied by the sound of thunder, or, rather, has been the sound of thunder itself.

Well, now, leaving these considerations altogether, we come to make some remarks, not upon the voice of God in the thunder, but upon the voice of God as elsewhere heard. It is not only heard there, naturally, but there are spiritual voices and other voices of the Most High. “The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.” God has spoken in various ways to man in order that man might not think Him a God so engrossed with Himself that He does not observe His creatures. It has graciously pleased the Divine being to sometimes *look* upon man, at other times to stretch out His hand to man and, sometimes, to reveal Himself in mortal appearance to man and frequently to speak to man. At sundry times He has spoken absolutely without the use of means—by His own voice—as, for instance, when He spoke from Sinai’s blazing mountaintop. Or when He spoke to Samuel in his bed and said unto him several times, “Samuel, Samuel.” Or when He spoke to Elijah and Elijah said, “He heard the whirlwind and he saw the fire.” And after that there was “a still small voice.” He has spoken immediately from heaven by His own lips on one or two occasions in the life of Christ. He spoke to Him at the waters of Jordan, when He said, “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” He spoke to Him on another occasion, to which we have already referred. He spoke—it was God that spoke, though it was Jesus Christ—He spoke to Saul,

when on his way to Damascus, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” He has spoken several times by His own voice without the intervention of means at all. At other seasons, God has been pleased to speak to men by angels. He has, as it were, written the message and sent it down by His messenger from on high. He has told to man many wonders and secrets by the lips of those glorious beings who are flaming spirits of His that do His pleasure. As frequently, perhaps, God has spoken to men in dreams, in visions of the night when deep sleep falls upon them. Then, when the natural ear has been closed, He has opened the ear of the Spirit and He has taught truths which, otherwise, men could never have known.

More frequently, still, God has spoken to men by men. From the days of Noah even until now, God has raised up His prophets, by whose lips He has spoken. It was not Jeremiah who uttered that lament which we read—it was Jehovah—God in Jeremiah speaking through the natural organs of his voice! It was not Isaiah who foresaw the future and foretold the doom of millions—it was God in Isaiah thus speaking. And so with every prophet of the Lord now living and every minister whom God has raised up to speak—when we speak with power and efficacy and unction—it is not we, who speak, but it is the Spirit of our Father who dwells in us! God speaks through men and now, also, we know that God speaks through His own written Word of Inspiration. When we turn to the pages of Scripture, we must not look upon these words as being, in any degree, the words of men, but as being the Word of God. And though they are silent, yet do they speak. And though they cause no noise, yet, verily, “Their God has gone forth throughout the entire world and their noise unto the ends of the earth.” And again—God even now speaks by the use of means. He does not make man speak, He does not make the Bible speak merely of itself, but He speaks through the Bible and through the man—as really as if He had used no books or employed no man to speak for Him! Yes, and there are times when the Spirit of God speaks in the heart of man without the use of means. I believe there are many secret impulses, many solemn thoughts, and many mysterious directions given to us without a single word having been uttered but by the simple motions of God’s Spirit in the heart. This thing I know, that when I have neither heard nor read, I have yet felt the voice of God within me and the Spirit, Himself, has revealed some dark mystery, opened some secret, guided me into some truth, given me some direction, led me in some path, or in some other way has immediately spoken to me, Himself. And I believe it is so with every man at conversion—with every Christian—as he is carried on through his daily life and especially as he nears the shores of the grave—that God, the Everlasting One, speaks, Himself, to his soul with a voice that he cannot resist, although he may have resisted the

mere voice of man. The voice of the Lord is still heard, even as it was heard before. Glory be to His name!

And now, my beloved, I come to the doctrine, “The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.” First of all, *essentially*, “The voice of the Lord” *must* be “full of majesty”; secondly, *constantly*, “The voice of the Lord is full of majesty”; thirdly, *efficaciously*, in all it does, “The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.”

**I.** First, then, “The voice OF THE LORD IS FULL OF MAJESTY.” Yes, and so it should be. Should not that voice be full of majesty which comes from majesty? Is not God the King of kings and the Ruler of the whole earth? Should He, then, speak with a voice below His own dignity? Should not a king speak with the voice of a king? Should not a mighty monarch speak with a monarch’s tongue? And surely, if God is God, and if He is the Master of all worlds, and the Emperor of the universe, He must, when He speaks, speak with the monarch’s tongue and with a majestic voice! The very nature of God requires that all He does should be Godlike. His looks are divine looks. His thoughts are divine thoughts. Should not His words be divine words, since they come from Him? Verily, from the very essence of God we might infer that His voice would be full of majesty!

But what do we mean by a voice having majesty? I take it that no man’s voice can have majesty in it unless it is true. A lie, if it should be spoken in the noblest language, would never be majestic! A lie, if it is uttered by the most eloquent lips, would be a mean and paltry thing, however it might be spoken! And a lie, wherever uttered and by whomever, is not majestic! A lie can never be truth and truth only can ever have majesty about it. And because God’s words are pure truth, unalloyed with the least degree of error, therefore does it come to pass that His words are full of majesty. Whatever I hear my Father say in Scripture, wherever He speaks to me by the ministry, or by His Spirit—if He speaks it, there is not the slightest alloy of untruth about it! I may receive it just as it is—

**“My faith may on His promise live,  
May on His promise die.”**

I need not reason about it, it is enough for me to take it and believe it because He has said it! I need not try to prove it to the worldling. If I were to prove it, he would believe it none the better. If the voice of God’s majesty does not convince him, surely the voice of my reasoning never will. It need not stand and cut and divide between this voice of God and the other, I know it must be true if He has said it and, therefore, I will believe all that I believe God has said, believing that His voice is full of majesty!

Then, again, when we speak of a majestic voice, we mean by it, that it is *a commanding voice*. A man may speak truth and yet there may be but little majesty in what he says because he speaks it in a tone that never

can command attention and catch the ear of his fellow creatures. In fact, there are some men, expounders of the truth of God, who had better hold their tongues, for they do truth an injury. We know full many who affect to preach God's truth. They go out to battle, they take the lance in their hands to defend the honor of Christ, but they wield the lance so poorly—they have so little of God's Spirit—that they do but disgrace His holy name! It would have been better had they remained at home. Oh, beloved, God's voice, when He speaks, is always a commanding voice! Let the monarch arise in the midst of his creatures—they may have been conversing with each other before—but hush, his majesty is about to speak! It is so with the majesty of God—if He should speak in heaven, the angels would hush their hallelujahs and suspend the notes of their golden harps to hear Him! And when He speaks on earth, it is at all times becoming in all His creatures to hush their rebellious passions and make the voice of their reason be silent. When God speaks, either from the pulpit or from His Word, I hold it to be my duty to keep silent! Even while we sing the glories of our God, our soul stands trembling. But when He speaks forth His own glories, who is he that dares to reply? Who is he that shall lift up his voice against the majesty of heaven? There is something so majestic in the voice of God, that when He speaks, it commands silence everywhere, and bids men listen!

But there is something *very powerful* in the voice of God and that is the reason why it has majesty in it. When God speaks, He speaks not weakly, but with a voice full of power. We poor creatures, at times, are clothed by God with that might and when we speak, grace comes pouring from our lips. But there are oftentimes seasons when we meet with small success. We talk and talk and have not our Master's feet behind us, or our Master's Spirit within us. And, therefore, but little is done. It is not so with God—He never wasted a word yet! He never spoke a solitary word in vain. Whatever He intended, He had but to speak and it was accomplished! Once he said, "Let there be light," and instantly light was. So He said in past eternity that Christ should be His first elect, and Christ was His first elect! He decreed our salvation—He spoke the word, and it was done. He sent His Son to redeem and proclaimed to His elect, justification in Him. And His voice was a powerful voice, for it did justify us! Any other man's voice could not pardon sin—none but the voice of the monarch can speak pardon to the subject. And God's is a majestic voice, for He has only to speak and our pardon is at once signed, sealed and ratified! God is not pompous in His words. He does not speak big-sounding words without meaning. The simplest word He utters may have little meaning to man, but it has a power and meaning in it equal to the omnipotence of God. There is majesty about the voice of God which might

suffice to nerve my soul to fight the dragon. To say, “Where is your boasted victory, death? Where is the monster’s sting?” That one promise has majesty enough in it to make the dwarf a giant and the weakling one of the mightiest of the Most High! It has might enough in it to feed a whole host in the wilderness, to guide a whole company through the mazes of mortal life—majesty enough to divide the Jordan, to open the gates of heaven and admit the ransomed in! Beloved, I cannot tell you how it is that God’s voice is so majestic except from the fact that He is so mighty and that His words are like He!

But just one more thought concerning the voice of God being essentially majestic and I must trouble you to remember this even if you forget everything else that I have said! In some sense, Jesus Christ may be called the voice of God. You know He is called the Word of God frequently in Scripture—and I am sure this Word of God “is full of majesty.” The voice and the word are very much the same thing. God speaks—it is His Son. His Son is the Word, the Word is His Son and the voice is His Son. Ah, truly the voice, the Word of God, “is full of majesty.” Angels! You can tell what sublime majesty invested His blessed person when He reigned at His Father’s right hand. You can tell what was the brightness which He laid aside to become Incarnate. You can tell how sparkling was that crown, how mighty was that scepter, how glorious were those robes bedecked with stars! Spirits, you who saw Him when He stripped Himself of all His glories—you can tell what His majesty was, and oh, you glorified, you who saw him ascend up on high, leading captivity captive—you beloved songsters who bow before Him and unceasingly sing His love—you can tell how full of majesty He is! High above all principalities and powers you see Him sit—angels are but servants at His feet and the mightiest monarchs like creeping worms beneath His throne! High up there, where God, alone, reigns, beyond the sight of angels or the gaze of immortal spirits—there He sits, not merely Majestic, but *full of majesty*. Christian, adore your Savior! Adore the Son of God! Reverence Him, and remember at all seasons and times how little you may be, your Savior, with whom you are allied—the Word of God—is essentially full of majesty!

**II.** Now the second point. IT IS CONSTANTLY FULL OF MAJESTY. God’s voice, like man’s voice, has its various tones and degrees of loudness. But it is constantly full of majesty—whatever tone He uses—it is always full of majesty! Sometimes God speaks to man with a harsh voice, threatening him for sin—and then there is majesty in that harshness. When man is angry with his fellows and he speaks harshly and severely, there is little majesty in *that*. But when the just God is angry with sinful mortals and He says, “I will by no means spare the guilty,” “I, the Lord, am a jealous God.” When He declares Himself to be exceedingly angry

and asks who can stand before the fury of His countenance—when the rocks are cast down by Him—there is a majesty in that terrific voice of His! Then He adopts another voice. Sometimes it is a gentle instructive voice, teaching us what He would have us learn. And then how full of majesty it is! He explains, He expounds, He declares. He tells us what we are to believe—and what majesty there is in His voice then! Men may explain God’s Word and have no majesty in what they say. But when God teaches what His people are to hold to be truth, what majesty there is in it! So much majesty, that if any man takes away from the Words that are written in this Book, God shall take away his name out of the Book of Life and out of the holy city—so much majesty, that to seek to mend the Bible is a proof of a blasphemous heart—that to seek to alter one Word of Scripture is a proof of alienation from the God of Israel! At another time God uses another voice—a sweet consoling voice. And oh, you mourners who have ever heard God’s comforting voice—is not that full of majesty? There is nothing of the mere trifling that sometimes we employ to comfort poor sick souls. Mothers will often talk to those who are sick in some gentle strain—but somehow it appears to be affected and is, therefore, not full of majesty. But when God speaks to comfort, He uses His majestic words. “The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed,” says the Lord who has mercy on you! Oh, is there not majesty in this sweet voice? “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 never forget you.” How sweet, but yet how majestic! We cannot avoid being comforted by it if God speaks it to our souls. Sometimes God’s voice is a reproving voice—and then, too, it is full of majesty. “The ox knows his owner,” He says, “and the ass his master’s crib, but Israel does not know, My people do not consider.” And He speaks reprovingly, as if He had a controversy with them and calls the mountains and the hills to hear His reproof of them on account of sin. “I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against Me.” But God’s reproving voice is always full of majesty! At other times it is a voice of command to His children, when He appears to them and says, “Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward.”

And how majestic are God’s commands, how mighty is His voice when He tells us what to do! Some of you have a very poor estimation of what God’s voice is. God tells you to be baptized in honor of your Lord and Master. He speaks to you and He tells you to come round His Table and to remember His dying sufferings. But you do not think much of it. It seems to be lost upon you. But let me tell you that God’s voice of command is as full of majesty and ought to be as much regarded by His peo-

ple as His word of promise or His word of doctrine! Whenever He speaks, there is majesty about His voice. Whatever tone He may adopt, there is majesty. Ah, beloved and there are times coming when God will speak words which will be evidently full of majesty—then He will speak and say, “Arise, you dead and come to judgment.” There will be majesty in that voice for hell shall then be unlocked and the gates of the grave sawn in two. The spirits of the dead shall again be clothed with flesh and the dry bones shall be made alive once more. And He will speak, by-and-by, and summon all men to stand before His bar. And there will be majesty in His voice, then, when He shall say, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.” And oh, dread thought, there will be tremendous majesty in His voice when He shall exclaim, “Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Again—God’s voice is full of majesty *in all the different degrees of its loudness*. Even in calling, there is a difference in the loudness of God’s voice. Many of you were called gently to Christ and you did not seem to hear the thunders of Sinai, like many of God’s people. But whether the voice is loud or soft, it is always full of majesty!

And *in all its mediums* it is full of majesty. God has, sometimes, chosen the poor to speak His wisdom. If I go and hear a countryman or an untaught man, preach—who makes many mistakes in grammar—yet if it is God’s Word that He preaches, it “is full of majesty.” And sometimes when a little child has repeated a text, we have not noticed the child by reason of the majesty of the voice! In fact, the meaner the instrument employed, the greater the majesty in the voice, itself. I have noticed a tendency in many to despise their poorer brothers and sisters, members of smaller churches, where there is a more humble minister than one they are in the habit of hearing. This is all wrong, for God’s voice is full of majesty and He can speak as well by one as the other!

**III.** In the last place, I must briefly refer to the majesty of God’s voice **WHEN IT IS REVEALED IN ITS EFFECT**—when it is spoken home to the heart of man. Just look at the psalm and let me briefly refer to the facts here mentioned. I shall not understand them naturally, though, doubtless, they were so intended by David, but I shall understand them *spiritually*. As Dr. Hawker remarks, “Doubtless, they were intended to set out gracious operations, as well as natural ones.”

First, the voice of the Lord is a *breaking* voice. “The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars.” The most proud and most stubborn sinner is broken before Him when He speaks! I believe that even the spirit of Voltaire, stubborn as that spirit was, and hard as a millstone, would have been broken in a single instant if God had but spoken to him. The hardest heart I have here needs only one syllable from God to break it in a mo-

ment! I might hammer away to all eternity, but I could not do it. Only “the voice of the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.”

In the next place it is a *moving* voice, an overcoming voice. “He makes them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and sirion like a young unicorn.” Who would ever think of a mountain moving? It stands so fast and firm. But God’s voice, like His voice in Zerubbabel, speaks to the mountain, and says, “Who are you, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain.” There is not a mountain standing in this world that God cannot move away by His voice, whether it is the mountains of Rome, or the mountains of the false prophet, or the mountains of colossal systems of heresy, or infidelity, or idolatry! God has only to speak the word and the idols shall fall from their thrones and the firm mountains shall skip like a calf!

In the next place, the voice of God is a *dividing* voice. “The voice of the Lord divides the flames of fire” or, as it should be, “The voice of the Lord puts out with flames of fire.” You saw the lightning on Friday and you remarked, then, when God’s voice was heard, that the flash seemed to part the cloud and divide the sky. Just so with God’s word. Where God’s word is faithfully preached and His voice is *spiritually* heard, it is always a *dividing* voice. You bring all kinds of different characters into a Chapel and God’s word splits them all in two. It is in this place God divides you. The Son of God holds His throne and sits in judgment here. It divides men from men. It divides sinners from their sins. It divides sinners from their righteousness. It splits through clouds and darkness. It divides our troubles, breaks a way for us to heaven. In fact, there is nothing that the voice of God cannot divide! It is a dividing voice.

And then, again, the voice of the Lord is such a loud voice, that it is said to shake the wilderness. “The Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.” Stand in the middle of a wilderness or a desert and conceive if *you* could make anything hear. But when God speaks, His voice rings through the wilderness and startles the desert, itself! Minister of God, you have only to speak God’s voice and you will be heard! If you have only half-a-dozen to hear you, you will be heard further than you know of! None of us can preach a gospel sermon, but it is heard and talked of more than we imagine. Yes, there is not a pious conversation with a poor woman but may be carried all over the world and produce the most wonderful effects! Nobody can tell how loud God’s voice is, or how far it may be heard. “Lift up your voice; lift it up; be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God.” And your voice may be ever so weak and your ability ever so little—only lift it up and God Almighty, by His grace, may make the very wilderness to shake—yes, He may make the very wilderness of Kadesh to tremble!

And then in the 9<sup>th</sup> verse there is another idea which I must not pass over, although I might have preferred to do so. “The voice of the Lord makes the cattle to calve.” By this I understand what the ancients believed—that so frightened were the cattle by the noise of the thunder, that the period of calving was often hastened on and frequently premature. It is just so with God’s voice. If a man has in him a desire towards Christ, the voice of God makes him bring forth that desire to the joy and rejoicing of his soul. And very frequently, when a man has a bad design towards God, God has only to speak and his design becomes abortive. It is brought forth, as it were, before its time and falls like an untimely fruit to the ground! Whatever man has within him, God can make it come out of him in a single moment. If he has a desire towards God—God can bring forth that desire and He can bring forth the soul and make it live. And if it is a desire *against* God, God can frustrate that desire, kill it, overwhelm it and overthrow it—“for the voice of the Lord makes the cattle to calve.”

And in the next place, the voice of God is a *discovering* voice. It “discovers the forests.” The trees were your former hiding place—but in the forest, however thick it may be, there does the lightning gleam. Under the mighty trees, however thick their covering, the voice of the Lord is heard. God’s voice is a discovering voice. You hypocrites! You get to hiding yourselves under the trees of the forest—but God’s voice thunders after you when it speaks! Some of you hide under ceremonies, good lives, resolutions and hopes. But God’s voice will discover the forests. And remember, there will be a day with some of you when you will hide yourselves, or seek to do it, under rocks and mountains, or in the deepest parts of the forests—but when He sits upon His throne, the voice of the Lord will discover the forests! You may stand under the old oak, or creep within its trunk and feel that there you are hidden—but His eyes, like balls of fire, shall see you through and through—and His voice, like a voice of thunder, shall say, “Come forth, culprit; come forth, man! I can see you—

***‘My eyes can pierce the shades, and find your soul as easily  
In midnight’s darkness, as in blazing noon.’***

Come forth, come forth!” And vain, then, will be your disguises, vain your subterfuges—“The voice of the Lord discovers the forests.” Oh, I would to God that He would speak to some of you this morning and reveal your souls! I wish He would reveal to you, your lost and hopeless condition—that you are damned without Christ—every one of you! Oh that He would show you how horrible your position is considered apart from the Savior! Show to you the fallacy of all your legal hope and of all your experiences, if they are not experiences allied to Christ! I pray that He would reveal to you that all your good works will come tumbling on your head, at last, if

you build them for a house and that you must stand surrounded by no covering, but unveiled before the God who discovers the forests!

I would have preached to you this morning, but I cannot. Yet, perhaps, amidst the multitude of my words there may be some still small voice of God which shall reach your heart, and if the rest of you should despise it, what of that? The voice of God will be as full of majesty in the reprobate as in the elect! If you are cast away into hell, God shall get as much glory from the voice which you heard and which you despised, as He does from His voice which the elect heard and at which they trembled and fled to God! Do not think that your damnation will rob God of any of His honor! Why, sir s, He can be as much glorified in your destruction as in your salvation! You are but little creatures in the account of His glory. He can magnify Himself anyhow! Oh, humble yourselves, therefore, before God! Bow down before His love and His mercy and hear, now, what the plan of salvation is, whereby God brings out His elect. It is this—"He who believes," in that voice, that Word, that Son of His, "He who believes,"—not he who hears—"He who *believes*"—not he who talks—"He who *believes*"—not he who reads—"He who *believes*"—not merely he that hopes—"He who *believes* and is baptized shall be saved; he who believes not shall be damned."

Ah, hearers, if I could leap out of my body and could lay aside the infirmities of my spirit, I think that *then* I might preach to you! But I know right well that even then it must be God who speaks—and therefore I leave the words—My God! My God! Save these, my people, for Jesus' precious name's sake. Amen and Amen.

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

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# THE PLEA OF FAITH

## NO. 88

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 22, 1855,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“Do as You have said.”  
2 Samuel 7:25.***

NATHAN had been giving to David, on God’s behalf, sundry exceedingly great and precious promises. David expresses his gratitude to God for having so promised and he says, “Now, O Lord God, the word that You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, establish it forever and do as You have said.”

It is a prayer to God. Those words naturally flowed from his lips—after hearing such precious promises, he was anxious for their fulfillment. Such words will be equally in place if they shall be adopted by us in these modern times and if, after reading a promise, on turning to God’s Word, we should finish by saying, “Remember the word unto Your servant, upon which you have caused me to hope,” it will be a practical application of the text, “Do as You have said.”

I shall not commence my sermon, tonight, by endeavoring to prove that this Bible is what God has said. I do not come here to give you arguments to prove the Inspiration of Scripture. I assume that I speak to a Christian congregation and I assume, therefore, from the start, that this is God’s Word and none other! Leaving that matter, then, altogether, permit me to proceed at once to the text, understanding by what God has said, the Scriptures are His truth. And I trust there are some here who will be led, tonight, to cry to God in behalf of some promise made to their souls, “O Lord, do as You have said.”

**I.** Our first remark shall be HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO KNOW WHAT GOD HAS SAID, for unless we know what God has said, it will be folly to say, “Do as You have said.” Perhaps there is no book more neglected in these days than the Bible. I do verily believe there are more moldy Bibles in this world than there are of any sort of neglected books. We have still-born books in abundance. We have innumerable books which never see any circulation except the circulation of the butter shop. And we have no book that is so much bought and then so speedily laid aside and so little used as the Bible! If we buy a newspaper, it is generally handed from one person to another, or we take care to peruse it pretty well. Indeed, some go so far as to read advertisements and all! If a person purchases a nov-

el, it is well known how he will sit and read it all the way through, till the midnight candle is burnt out. The book must be finished in one day because it is so admirable and interesting—but the Bible, of course, in the estimation of many, is not an interesting book! And the subjects it treats of are not of any very great importance. So most men think; they think it is a very good book to carry out on a Sunday, but never meant to be used as a book of pleasure, or a book to which one could turn with delight. Such is the opinion of many. But no opinion can be more apart from the truth. For what book can treat of truths one-half as important as those that concern the soul? What book can so well deserve my attention as that which is written by the greatest of all authors, God, Himself? If I must read a valuable book with attention, how much more ought I to give my mind to the study of that book which is invaluable and which contains God's truth without the slightest admixture of error! And if books upon my health, or books which only concern the doings of my fellow creatures occupy some of my time, and deservedly so, how much more time should I spend in reading that which concerns my everlasting destiny, which reveals to me worlds, up to now, unknown—which tells me how I may escape from hell and fly to heaven?

And I must remark that even among Christian people, the Bible is one of the least read books that they have in their house. What with our innumerable magazines, our religious newspapers and our perpetual controversies about the Bible, it is too seldom that people read the Bible! There certainly is not that reading of it that there used to be. Our predecessors, the ancient Puritans, would scarcely read any book but the Bible! And if a book were not concerning the Bible, they did not care about reading it at all. Perhaps therein they may have been too strait and narrow and may somewhat have cramped their minds, but I would rather have my mind cramped with divinity, than I would have it enlarged with lies! I would rather have a little truth of God and have a mind filled with that, though that mind should only be as large as a nutshell, than have the most gigantic intellect and have that crammed with error! It is not the greatness of our intellect; it is the *rightness* of it that makes us men in this world and right men before God. I beseech you, therefore, you who are members of Christian churches, if you have but little time, do not expend it in reading ephemeral books, but take your Bible and read it constantly. And I promise you one thing, that if you are already Christians, the more you read the Bible, the more you will love it! You may find it hard, perhaps, at present, to read a short passage and meditate upon it all day, but as you proceed, you will see such unfathomable depths, such heights beyond your reach and you will discover such unutterable sweetness in this precious honeycomb dropping with drops of

honey, that you will say, "I must have more of it!" And your spirit will always cry, "Give! Give!" Nor will it be content until you can have God's statutes upon your mind, daily, to be your songs in the house of your pilgrimage!

*The errors of this present age have sprung from a non-reading of the Bible.* Do you think, my brothers and sisters that if we all read the Scriptures with judgment and desired to know them rightly, there would be so many sects as there are? Heresies and schisms have sprung from this—one man has gone a little astray upon a point—another man, without referring to Scripture, has endorsed all he has said. Another one has added something else to it. And then another one, being cunning and full of subtlety of the devil, has twisted passages of Scripture and woven them into a system—a system which has been fashioned, in the first place, by mistake—and has accumulated and become more colossal by sundry other mistakes which naturally accrued to it and, at last, has been perfected by the craft of designing heretics!

And, again—*bigotry, ill feeling and uncharitableness must all be traced, in a large degree, to our lack of reading the Bible.* What is the reason why you man hates me because I preach what I believe to be right? If I speak the truth of God, am I responsible for his hating me? Not in the least degree! I am sometimes told by my people that I attack certain parties very hard. Well, I cannot help it. If they are not right, it is not my fault—if they come in my way, then I am compelled to run over them! Suppose two of you should be driving in the road tomorrow and one of you should be on the right side of the road and some accident should occur. You would say, "sir, the other man ought to have pulled up, he must pay the damages, for he had no business there at all on his wrong side." And it will be the same with us if we preach God's truth! We must go straight on. If the greatest ill-feeling in the world rises up, we have nothing to do with it. God's truth will sometimes bring about warfare—Jesus Christ, you know, said that He came to put warfare between man and man—to set the mother-in-law against the daughter-in-law and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law. And He said that a man's foes would be those of his own household! But if there is ill-feeling, if there is clamoring of sects, to who is it due? Who is responsible for it? Why, the man who makes the new sects, not the man who abides fast and firm by the old one! If I am safely moored by a good strong anchor of fundamental truths of God and some other shall strike my vessel and sink himself, I will not pay the damages. I stand firm—if others choose to go away from the truth, to cut their cables and slip their moorings—then let them! God grant that we may not do the same. Hold the truth, my friends, and hold it as the easiest method of sweeping away heresies and false doctrines!

But nowadays, you know, you are told, “Oh, it does not matter what you believe! Doctrines are nothing.” And they have tried, lately, to make a very happy family of us, like the happy family near Waterloo Bridge, where all kinds of creatures are shut up together! But they are only kept in order by a mesh which the man, when we turn our heads, applies between the bars of the cage! Just so with denominations; they want to amalgamate us all. We differ in various doctrines and, therefore, some of us must be wrong if we hold doctrines which are directly hostile to each other. But we are told, “It does not matter—doubtless, you are all right.” Now, I cannot see that! If I say one thing and another man says another, how, by all that is holy, can both speak the truth of God? Shall black and white be the same color? Shall lies and truth be the same? When they shall be—and fire shall sleep in the same cradle with the waves of the ocean—then shall we agree to amalgamate ourselves with those who deny our doctrines, or speak evil of what we believe to be the Gospel!

My brethren, no men have any right to absolve your judgment from allegiance to God. There is liberty of conscience between man and man, but there is none between *God* and man! No man has a right to believe what he likes. He is to believe what *God* tells him! And if he does not believe that, though he is not responsible to man, or to any set of men, or to any government, yet mark you, he is responsible to God! I beseech you, therefore, if you would avoid heresies and bring the Church to a glorious union, read the Scriptures! Read not so much man’s comments, or man’s books, but read the *Scriptures* and keep your faith on this—“God has said it.” If you cannot make all God’s truths agree, yet remember God has not made two sets of truth opposite to each other. That is impossibility which even God Himself could not accomplish, mighty though He is! My brothers and sisters, always stand by what God has said and do not be turned aside from it by all the arguments that can be brought to bear against you! “Search the Scriptures, for they testify of Christ.”

**II.** Now for our second point. ALL THAT FAITH NEEDS TO BUILD UPON IS WHAT GOD HAS SAID. “Do as You have said.” The only solid foothold that faith has is, “*It is written*, God has said it.” When a sinner comes to God, he must have nothing else to rely upon except this, “Do as You have said.” There is a tendency in most men’s minds to bring before God something which He did not say. Many of you, I dare say, will go and ask God in prayer for something for which you cannot prove a positive promise that He will ever give it to you. You go to God and say, “Lord, do as John Bunyan said, do as Whitefield said—let me have an experience like theirs.” Now, that is all wrong. We must, when we come to God, say only, “Lord, do as You have said.” And then, again, I do believe that many of those who are members of our churches have not put their faith simp-

ly in what God has said. If I were to go round to some of you and ask you why you believe yourselves to be Christians, it is marvelous what strange reasons many of you would bring. It is very singular what strange views persons often have as to the way of salvation. It is hard to bring a sinner to God simply with this—"Lord, do as You have said."

I know some who think they are God's children because they dreamed they were! They had a very remarkable dream, one night, and if you were to laugh at them, they would be unutterably indignant. They would cut you at once out of the family of God and call you an "accuser of the brethren." They do not rely upon what God has said in the Bible—they had some singular vision, when deep sleep had fallen upon them and because of that vision, they reckon they are children of God! In the course of my seeing persons who come to me, I hear, every now and then, a story like this, "sir, I was in such-and-such a room and suddenly I thought I saw Jesus Christ and heard a voice saying such-and-such a thing to me and that is the reason why I hope I am saved." Now, that is not God's way of salvation! The sinner is not to say, "Lord, do as I dreamed, do as I fancy." He is to say, "Do as *You* have *said*." And if I have anyone here who has never had a dream, or vision, he does not need to have one—if he goes to God with this, "Lord, You have said Christ died to save sinners. I am a sinner. Save me!" That is faith. "Do as You have said." There are other persons far more rational, who if they were asked the reason for their supposing that they are saved, would speak of some remarkable feeling which, on a particular occasion, they had when hearing a certain minister. Or of a particular text which struck them suddenly and transported them to the seventh heaven and they had such thoughts as they never had before! "Oh, sir, they say, it is marvelous! I thought my heart would break; it was so full of joy and gladness! I never felt so before, in all my life, and when I went out of the chapel, I felt so light and so ready to run home, I thought I would sing all the way! So I know I must be a child of God." Well, you may know it, but I don't, because there are many persons who have been deluded by the devil in that fashion who never had faith in Christ! Faith in Christ never rests in feelings. It rests on a "You have said it." Ask faith whether it will ever take its stand on anything but a, "You have said," and faith will answer, "No. I cannot climb to heaven on a ladder made of dreams—they are too flimsy to bear my feet." Faith, why do you not march on? Why do you not cross that bridge? "No," says faith, "I cannot. It is made up of feelings and feelings are intoxicating things—and I cannot place my feet upon them." Faith will stand on a promise, though it is no bigger than a grain of mustard seed! But it could not stand on a feeling if it were as large as the everlasting mountains! Faith can build on a "You have said it." But it cannot build

on feelings, on dreams and experiences—it only relies on this—“You have said it.” Let me caution my hearers against suppositions which some of them have as to salvation. Some persons think that the Holy Spirit is a kind of electric shock working in the heart. That there is some mysterious and terrible thing they cannot understand, which they must *feel*, not only very differently from what they ever felt before, but even superior to anything described in God’s Word! Now I beg to tell you that so far from the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit being a dark thing in its manifestation, it is, because it is the Holy Spirit, a thing of simplicity and light! The way of salvation is no great mystery—it is very plain—it is, “Believe and live.” And faith needs no mysteries to hang itself upon. It catches hold of the bare naked promise, and it says, “Lord, do as You have said.”

My faith can, on this promise, live. I know that on this promise it can never die. Faith needs neither testimonies of man, nor learning of philosophers, nor eloquence of orators, nor feelings, nor visions, nor dreams! It needs nothing else applied to the heart but what God has said! And it goes to God and says, “Lord, do as You have said.”

**III.** Now for the third remark. We see that Faith is a very bold thing—when God promises something, faith goes to God and says, “Lord, do as You have said.”

My third remark is that FAITH IS QUITE RIGHT IN SO DOING. The Lord always meant, when He said a thing, that we should remind Him of it; God’s promises were never meant to be waste paper; He means that they should be used! Whenever God gives a promise, if a man does not use that promise, the promise fails in effect to that man and God’s great intention therein is in some measure frustrated. God sent the promise on purpose to be used. If I see a Bank of England note, it is a promise for a certain amount of money and I take it and use it. And oh, my friend, do try and use God’s promises—nothing pleases God better than to see His promises put in circulation! He loves to see His children bring them up to Him and say, “Lord, do as You have said.” And let me tell you that it glorifies God to use His promises. Do you think that God will be any the poorer for giving you the riches He has promised? Do you think He will be any the less holy for giving holiness to you? Do you think He will be any the less pure for washing you from your sins? And He has said, “Come now, let us reason together, though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they are red, they shall be whiter than snow.” Faith gets hold of that promise and it does not just say, “This is a precious promise, I will look at it.” No, it goes right up to the throne of God and says, “Lord, here is the promise, do as You have said.” And God says, “Oh, faith, I am as glad to see the promise brought to Me, as you

are to bring it. I meant My promise to be used and the using of it glorifies Me.” Why, if anyone gave us a check and we did not go to have it cashed—though we might need the money badly enough—but suppose we said, “I don’t like to go”—there would be some slur cast upon the character of the man whose signature had made it valid! And so when a Christian gets a promise, if he does not take it to God, he dishonors Him. But when faith, in all its raggedness, poverty and sickness about it, goes to God and says, “Lord, I have nothing to recommend me but this—‘You have said it’—here is the promise, Lord, give me the fulfillment.” God smiles and says, “Yes, My child, I love to see you trust Me. Here, take back the fulfillment and go on your way rejoicing.” Never think that God will be troubled by your asking Him about His promises! God likes to be troubled, if I may use such an expression. He likes you to go to His door and say, “Great Banker, cash this note; great promiser, fulfill this promise; great covenant God, fulfill Your covenant, and send me not away empty.” “Do as You have said,” is a legitimate request. We ought to say it. It honors God and God meant that we should so use His promises! “Do as You have said.”

Another remark—*Faith has very good reason for appealing to God to do as He has said.* If you should say to faith, “Faith, why do you expect God to do as He has said? Do you know you are undeserving of such-and-such a mercy? Though He has said it, why do you expect it?” Faith would answer, “I have a whole bundle of reasons that justify the act. And in the first place, I have a right to expect Him to do as He has said, because He is a *true* God—I know He cannot lie. He has said He will give me such-and-such a thing. If He were not a truthful God, I would not say, ‘Do as You have said.’ But since He is a true God and never was known to break His promise, and since, moreover, by two Immutable things, wherein it is impossible for God to lie; His oath and His promise—He has made the thing secure. And since I know that in Christ all the promises are yes, and amen, I think I have good reason enough for going to Him and saying, ‘Do as You have said.’ If He were some fallible being who promised and would not perform, I might hesitate somewhat. But since He is always true and constantly precious, I will go and say to Him, ‘Lord, do as You have said.’” Poor sinner! God has said, “He that confesses his sin shall find mercy.” Now, if you go to God, you need no other plea than this—“Lord, do as You have said. I have confessed my sins—do as You have said.” “But, sinner, why should I do as I have said? You do not deserve it.” “Lord, You are a true God—

***You have promised to forgive,  
All who on Your Son believe.  
Lord I know You cannot lie,  
Give me Christ or else I die.”***

Go, poor sinner, tell the Lord that! And as truly as He is God, He will never send you away empty! Faith has good reasons to feel that God is true, and therefore He will do as He has said. And not only so, but He is *able to do it*—His ability is infinite! His intentions, also, are the *same*—His promises never get worn out by being circulated and they become all the surer for being tried! Poor sinner, here again is a joyful thought—you can go to God and say, “Lord You have promised to wash away all our iniquities and cast them into the depths of the sea. Lord, if You had been a changeable God, I might have thought You would not wash away mine, but You did wash Manasseh and you did wash Paul. Now, Lord, because You are unchangeable, ‘Do as You have said.’ For You are just the same, now, just as merciful, just as powerful and just as kind as ever You were. Will you break Your promise, Lord? ‘Do as You have said.’”

But faith puts it on stronger ground than this—it says, “Lord, if You do not do as You have said, You will be dishonored, You will be disgraced.” If a man does not carry out his promise, he is shunned—men care not to associate with one who breaks his promise! And what would become of God’s great name if He were to break His promise? Poor sinner! You are coming to the fountain—God has given the promise that He will wash every sinner that comes to the fountain. Now, with reverence, let me say it, poor sinner. If Christ did not wash You, it would be a dishonor to His truth! If you were to go to Christ and He cast you out, surely the devils in hell would despise the name of Him who breaks His promise! Beloved, to suppose that God could violate His promise is to suppose Him divested of His Godhead! Take away God’s honor from Him, and He becomes less than man. Take away the honor which even man holds dear and what do you make of God? “Oh, sir,” you say, “but I do not deserve it. I am such a poor worthless creature! He will not keep His promise to *me*.” I tell you that does not make a whit of difference in God’s promise. If He has promised, He is divinely bound to perform His promise, in whatever state you may be. Though you have slandered God, though you may have hated Him and despised Him, run away from Him and in every way ill-treated Him—if He has made a promise to you, here, in His word, I will be bound for my God! He would keep a promise to the devil if He had made one. And if He has made a promise to you who are ever so vile, He will keep that promise to you. Hear the promise, then, once more—Are you a sinner?—“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief.” And, again—“He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.” And, again—“Come unto Me, all you that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” And let me say again—with the most profound reverence—if Christ did not give rest to every weary,

heavy-laden sinner that came to Him, He would not be Christ. He would lose His truthfulness, He would be undeified, He would lose His veracity—and the loss of one poor believing sinner would be the loss of God’s own godhead. It would be the dethroning of the immortal; it would be the pulling down of heaven; the breaking asunder of the universe and the dissolution of creation’s own earth and creation, itself. Faith may well go to God and say, “Lord, do as You have said, for if You do not, it will be a dishonor to Yourself.”

And—let us conclude by asking, *what has God said?* I cannot tell you all that He has said to you, because I cannot mark out all the different characters here. But, my dear friends, whatever may be your character, from the earliest stage of religion up to the last; there is always some special promise to you. And you have only to turn your Bible over and find it and then go to God with, “Do as You have said.” Let me just select a few characters. There is one here, exceedingly faint in the ways of the Lord. “Oh,” he says, “I am faint, though I hope I am pursuing.” Now, here is the promise—“He gives power unto the faint.” When you get such a promise, stick hard and fast to it. Do not let the devil cheat you out of it, but keep on saying, “Lord, You have said, ‘He gives power unto the faint.’ Do as You have said.” Let it ring and ring again in the ears of the promiser and He will be a performer! “Ah,” says another, “I am not faint. I am afraid I scarcely have life at all. I am a hungry and thirsty soul. I need Christ, but I cannot get at Him.” Hear this—“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Take that promise to God and keep to it—do not plead anything else, but go to God over and over again with this—“Lord, You have said it—do as You have said.” Are you covered all over with sin and under a deep sense of your iniquities? Go and tell Him this—“You have said, ‘I will cast their iniquities into the depths of the sea.’ Lord, I know I have these sins. I do not deny it. But you have said, ‘I will pardon them.’ I have no reason why You should pardon them. I cannot promise that I shall be better—but, Lord—You have said it and that is enough—‘Do as You have said.’” Another one here is afraid lest he should not be able to hold onto the end and lest, after having been a child of God, he should be a castaway. Then, if that is your state, go and take this to God—“The mountains may depart and the hills may be removed, but the covenant of My love shall not depart from you.” And when you are thinking that the Savior is going away, catch hold of His garment and say, “Jesus, do as You have said. You have said, ‘I will never leave you.’ Do as You have said.” Or, if you have lost His presence, remember the promise, “I will come again to you.” Go and say, “Lord, I have lost the sweet comfort of Your presence in my heart. But You have said, ‘I will come again to you.’” And if Satan says,

“He is gone away and will never come back again,” tell Satan he has nothing to do with it! God has said it and keep to this, “Do as You have said.” If you do that, you will need no other argument and no other reason.

Let us suppose a case and having tried to illustrate the truth by it, we will have done. There is a desperate ruffian. He has been involved in 20 burglaries. It is said he has committed several murders. The police are on his trail, they are hunting after him. He cannot be found. The principal point is to find him, for it is hoped that by his discovery and his pardon, more good might be done than even by his execution. Persons come to this desperately bad fellow and they tell him, “If you give yourself up, I dare say you will get a free pardon.” “I do not give myself up on *daresays*,” he says. Another comes and says, “If you were to give yourself up, I would intercede for you. I know my lord so-and-so, and such a man, member of parliament, would intercede for you.” “No,” he would say, “let well enough alone. I am pretty safe now. I am not going to give myself up on the mere speculation that someone will intercede for me.” But, by-and-by, there comes out a huge placard, “V. R. Free pardon to such a man if he surrenders himself.” He walks straight up to the place. Someone says to him, “Stop, my dear fellow; perhaps they will hang you.” “No,” he says “they won’t.” Someone says, “They have been many years looking for you. You do not think that if you get into the fangs of the law now, after all these years that the Queen will pardon you, do you?” “Yes,” he says, “I can trust her. She has never given a free pardon, and then executed anyone.” He goes to the office and they say, “We are astonished to see this fellow. He might have stayed away—he had no necessity to give himself up.” “See,” says one, “there is a policeman, are you not afraid? There are the handcuffs. Are you not afraid that they will be put on your wrists and that you will be put into jail?” “No,” he says, “I will walk all through the prison, but there is not a cell in which I may be locked up. The Queen has said she will pardon me, and I do not need anything else.” “But look at your conduct. You know you deserve to be hanged.” “I know I do, but I have received a free pardon and I will surrender myself.” “But who can tell how many burglaries you will commit if you are allowed to go free.” “Never mind, she has promised to pardon me and I know well that her word will not be violated. Surely the Queen of England will not lie even against such an offender as I am.”

Now, you would not wonder at that, would you? It would be no very marvelous thing, because we can trust Her Majesty pretty fairly. But it is the hardest thing to get sinners to come to God. “No,” says one, “I have been a drunkard, God will not forgive me.” My dear fellow, it is said, “All manner of sin and iniquity shall be forgiven to man.” “Oh,” says another,

“I have been a swearer, I have been an infidel, I have blasphemed God, and broken all His statutes.” My dear fellow creature, it is said, “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” Cannot you believe it? God means what He says! Can you not come to God, though you are trembling—cast yourself before His feet—and say, “Lord, if You damn me, I deserve it; if You should cast me down to hell, I know You would be just; but then, Lord, You have said, ‘Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out’”? I tell you, God will do as He has said! If you have but faith to believe that promise, you need never fear!

Worthless, vilest of the vile, sweepings of the universe, the very offal of creation—if you come to God, He will take you in—for His promise is not to be broken by reason of your vileness! He will receive you if you can but plead a promise of your own case and say to Him, “Do as You have said.” Now, then, I will say in conclusion—it will be easy enough for every poor sinner, for every penitent sinner, for every weak saint, to go home and turn his Bible over. And by a little diligence he will be able to find a promise that will exactly suit his case. And if he does not find such a promise, it will be because he did not look long enough, for there is one that just fits. And when he has got hold of it, let him go to God and say, “Lord, do as You have said,” and let him keep to that. And the heavens would sooner fall than one of God’s promises should be broken!

Oh, trust my Master! Oh, trust my Master! Trust your souls to Him! Trust your bodies to Him, I beseech you; do it, for His own name’s sake! Amen and Amen.

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

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# HATRED WITHOUT CAUSE

## NO. 89

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 29, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“They hated Me without a cause.”  
John 15:25.***

IT is usually understood that the quotation our Savior here refers to is to be found in the 35<sup>th</sup> Psalm, at the 19<sup>th</sup> verse, where David says, speaking of himself, immediately, and of the Savior, prophetically, “Let not them who are My enemies rejoice over Me, neither let them wink with the eye that hate Me without a cause.” Our Savior refers to that as being applicable to Himself and thus He really tells us, in effect, that many of the Psalms are Messianic, or refer to the Messiah! And therefore Dr. Hawker did not err when he said he believed the Psalms referred to the Savior, though he may have carried the truth of God too far. But it will be a good plan, in reading the Psalms, if we continually look at them as alluding not so much to David, as to the man of whom David was the type, Jesus Christ, David’s Lord.

No being was ever lovelier than the Savior. It would seem almost impossible not to have affection for Him. Certainly at first sight it would seem far more difficult to hate Him than to love Him. And yet, loveable as He was, “altogether lovely”—no being so early met with hatred and no creature ever endured such a continual persecution as He had to suffer! He is no sooner ushered into the world than the sword of Herod is ready to cut Him off. The innocents of Bethlehem, by their dreadful massacre, gave a sad foretaste of the sufferings which Christ would endure and of the hatred that men would pour upon His devoted head! From His first moment, to the cross, save the temporary lull while He was a child, it seemed as if the entire world were in league against Him and all men sought to destroy Him! In different ways that hatred displayed itself. Sometimes in overt deeds, as when they took Him to the brow of the hill and would have cast Him down headlong. Or when they took up stones, again, to stone Him, because He said that Abraham desired to see His day and saw it and was glad. At other times that hatred showed itself in words of slander, such as these—“He is a drunken man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.” Or in looks of contempt, as when they looked suspiciously at Him because He did eat with publicans and

sinners and sat down to table with unwashed hands. At other times that hatred dwelt entirely in their thoughts and they thought within themselves, "This man blasphemes," because He said, "Your sins are forgiven you." At almost every time there was hatred towards Christ! Even when they took Him and would have made Him king—and a shallow fleeting flood of popular applause would have wafted him onto an unsteady throne—even then, there was a latent hatred towards Him! A hatred only kept hidden by loaves and fishes, but which only needed an equal quantity of loaves and fishes offered by the priests to develop it, itself, into the cry of, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," instead of the shout of, "Hosanna! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord."

All grades of men hated Him. Most men have to meet with some opposition. But then it is frequently a *class* opposition and there are other classes who look at them with respect. The demagogue, who is admired by the poor, must expect to be despised by the rich. And he who labors for the aristocracy, of course, meets with the contempt of the many. But here was a man who walked among the people, who loved them, who spoke to rich and poor as though they were (as indeed they are) on one level in His blessed sight—and yet all classes conspired to hate Him! The priests cried Him down because He spoiled their dogmas. The nobles would put Him to death because He spoke of being a king. The poor, for some reasons best known to themselves, though they admired His eloquence and frequently would have fallen prostrate in worship before Him, on account of the wondrous deeds He did—even these, led by men who ought to have guided them better—conspired to put Him to death and to consummate their guilt by nailing Him to the tree! Then they wagged their heads, bade Him, if He could build a temple in three days, to save Himself and come down from the cross. Christ was the hated one, the slandered and scorned one—He was "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

Now, we shall try, this morning, first, to *justify the Savior's remarks, that He was hated without a cause*; and secondly, to *dwell upon the sin of men—that men hated Him without a cause*; in the third place, to *give a lesson or two to Christ's own people* which they may well learn from the fact that their Savior was hated without a cause.

**I.** First, then, beloved, let us JUSTIFY WHAT THE SAVIOR SAID—"They hated Me without a cause." And we remark, that apart from the consideration of man's sinfulness and Christ's purity, there certainly is no cause whatever to be discovered why the world should have hated Him!

First, let us regard Christ *in His person*. Was there anything in Christ's person as a man, when He lived in this world, which had a natural tendency to make any person hate Him? Let us remark that there was an absence of almost everything which excites hatred between man and man! In the first place, there was *no great rank* in Christ to excite envy. It is a well-known fact that let a man be ever so good, if he is at all lifted above his fellow creatures by riches, or by title—though many will respect him—yet many will often speak against him. Not so much for what he is, as for his rank and his title. It seems to be natural to men to despise nobles. Each man, individually, thinks it a wonderful thing to know a lord. But put men together and they will despise lords and bishops and speak very lightly of principalities and powers. Now Christ had none of the outward circumstances of rank. He had no chariot, no long sleeves, no elevation above His fellows. When He walked abroad, there were no heralds to attend Him, there was no pomp to do Him honor. In fact, one would think that Christ's appearance would naturally have engendered pity! Instead of being lifted above men, He did, in some sense, seem to be below them, for foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of man had not where to lay His Head. Many a democrat has railed against the archbishop when he has gone by Lambeth Palace. But would he curse or despise him if he were told the archbishop had not where to lay his head, but simply toiled for the truth's sake and had no reward? The envy, naturally excited by rank, station and such-like, could not have operated in Christ's case. There was nothing in His garb to attract attention. It was the garb of the peasant of Galilee—"of one piece, woven from the top throughout." Nor was there anything in His rank. He might have been the son of an ancient royal family but its royalty was apparently extinct and He was only known as the Son of the carpenter. They hated Him, then, in that sense, "without a cause."

Many persons seem to have envy excited in them against those who *exercise rule* or government over them. The very fact of a man having authority over me stirs up my evil passions and I begin to look at him with suspicion because he is invested with that authority. Some men naturally fall into the groove and obey simply because the rule is made. Principalities and powers are established and they submit themselves for the Lord's sake. But the many, especially in these republican times, seem to have a natural tendency to kick against authority, simply because it is authority! But if authorities and governments were changed every month, I believe that in some countries, in France, for instance, there would be revolutions as much under one government as under another! In fact, they hate all government there and wish to be without law, that each

man may do what is right in his own eyes. But this did not operate in Christ's case—He was not a king. He did not assume sway over the multitude. It is true He was Lord over tempests and seas; it is true He could command demons, and if He pleased, men would have been His obedient servants; but He did not assume power over them. He marshaled no armies, He promulgated no laws, He made Himself no great one in the land! The people did just as they liked, for all the authority He exercised over them. In fact, instead of binding laws upon them which were severe, He seemed to have loosened the rigidity of their system! For when the adulterous woman, who, otherwise, would have been put to death, was brought before Him, He said, "Neither do I condemn you." And He relaxed, to a certain extent, the rigidity of the Sabbatical ordinance which was, in some respects, too burdensome, saying, "The Sabbath was made for man." Surely, then, they hated Him "without a cause."

Some men make others dislike them because they are *proud*. I know some men that I could have liked very well if the starch had been left out of them. I could really sympathize with them and admire them if they had the least degree of condescension—but they seem to walk about the world with such a style of pride! They may not be proud—very likely they are not—but, as an old divine said, "When we see a fox's tail sticking out of a hole, we naturally expect the fox is there." And, somehow or other, the human mind cannot bear pride. We always kick against it. But there was nothing of that in our Savior. How humble He was! Why He stooped to anything! He would wash His disciples feet. And when He walked about among men, there was no parade about Him, as if He would say to them, "See My talent, see My power, see My rank, see My dignity—stand by—I am greater than you." No, He takes His seat—there is Matthew, the publican, sitting beside Him—and He does not think He is hurt by the publican, although He is the worst of sinners. And there is a harlot—He speaks to her. There is another with seven devils—He casts the devils out of her. And another, who has the leprosy and He even *touches* the leper to show how humble He was, and that there was nothing of pride about Him. Oh, could you have seen the Savior; He was the very paragon of humility! There were none of your forms of etiquette and politeness about Him. He had that true politeness which makes itself affable to all men because it is kind and loving to all. There was no pride in the Savior and, consequently, there was nothing to excite men's anger on that account. Therefore, they hated Him "without a cause."

There are others who you cannot help disliking because they are so snappish and waspish and *angry*. They look as if they were born on some terribly dark stormy day and as if, in the mixture of their body, no small

quantity of vinegar was employed. You could not sit long with them without feeling that you have to keep your tongue on a pretty tight chain. You must not talk freely, or there would be a quarrel, for they would make you an offender for a word! You may say, "Such a one is, no doubt, a good man. But really, that temper of his, I cannot bear it." And when a man stands prominently before the public, with a nasty sour disposition, one feels inclined to dislike him. But there was nothing of this about our Savior. "When He was reviled, He reviled not again." If men spat in His face, He said nothing to them. And when they smote Him, He did not curse them. He sat still and bore their scorn. He walked through the world with contempt and infamy constantly poured upon Him. But, "He answered not a word." He was never angry. You cannot find, in reading the Savior's life that He spoke one angry word, save those words of holy wrath which He poured, like scalding oil, upon the head of Pharisaic pride! Then, indeed, His wrath did boil, but it was holy wrath! With such a loving, kind, gentle spirit, one would have thought that He would have gone through the world as easily as possible. His kind spirit seemed to make a straight road for His feet. But, notwithstanding all that, they hated Him! Truly, we can say, "They hated Him without a cause."

There is another set of people you can scarcely help disliking. They are *selfish* people. Now we know some persons who are very excellent in temper, who are extremely honest and upright—but they are so selfish! When you are with them, you feel that they are just friends to you for what they can get out of you. And when you have served their turn, they will just lay you aside and endeavor to find another. In trying to do good their good deeds have ulterior objectives, but, somehow or other, they are always found out! And no man in the world gets a greater share of public odium than the man who lives a selfish life. Among the most miserable men in the universe, kicked about the world like a football, is the selfish miser! But in Christ there was nothing selfish. Whatever He did, He did for others. He had a marvelous power of working miracles, but He would not even change a stone into bread for Himself. He reserved His miraculous power for others. He did not seem to have a particle of self in His whole Nature. In fact, the description of His life might be written very briefly—"He saved others, Himself He did not save." He walked about. He touched the poorest, the meanest and those who were the most sick. He cared not what men might say of Him. He seemed to have no regard for fame, or dignity, or ease, or honor. Neither His bodily nor His mental comforts were in the least regarded by Him. Self-sacrifice was the life of Christ. But He did it with such an ease that it seemed no sacrifice. Ah, beloved, in that sense, certainly they hated Christ without a cause—for

there was nothing in Christ to excite their hatred—in fact, there was everything, on the contrary, to bind the whole world to love and reverence a character so eminently unselfish.

Another sort of people there are that I do not like—the *hypocritical*—no, I think I could even live with the selfish man if I knew him to be selfish. But the hypocrite; do not let him come anywhere near where I am! Let a public man be a hypocrite, once, and the world will scarcely trust him again. They will hate him! But Christ was, in this particular, free from any blame. And if they hated Him, they hated Him not for that—for there never was a more unvarnished man than Christ. He was called, you know, the child Jesus—because as a child speaks itself out, and has no reserve and no craftiness—even so was it with Jesus. He had no affectation, no deceit. There was no change about Him. He was “without variableness or shadow of turning.” Whatever the world may say of Christ, they never said they believed He was a hypocrite. And among all the slanders they brought against Him, they never disputed His sincerity. Had they been able to show that He really had been imposing upon them, they might have had some grounds for hating Him, but He lived in the sunlight of sincerity and walked on the very mountaintop of continual observation. He could not be a hypocrite and men knew He could not. And yet men hated Him. Verily, my friends, if you survey the character of Christ, in all His loveliness, in all His benevolence, in all His sincerity, in all intense eagerness to benefit man, you must say, indeed, “They hated Him without a cause.” There was nothing in Christ’s person to lead men to hate Him.

In the next place, *was there anything in Christ’s errand* which could make people hate Him? If they had asked Him, “For what reason have You come from heaven?” Would there have been anything in His answer likely to excite their indignation and hatred? I think not. For what purpose did He come? He came, first of all, to explain mysteries—to tell them what was meant by the sacrificial lamb, what was the significance of the scapegoat, what was intended by the ark, the brazen serpent and the pot of manna. He came to rend the veil of the holy of holies and to show men secrets they had never seen before. Should they have hated one who lifted the veil of mystery and made dark things light and expounded riddles? Should they have hated Him who taught them what Abraham desired to see, and what prophets and kings had longed to know, but died without a knowledge of? Was there anything in *that* to make them hate Him? What else did He come for? He came on earth to reclaim the wanderer. And is there anything in that that should make men hate Christ? If He came to reform the drunkard, to reclaim the harlot, gather in the

publicans and sinners and bring prodigals to their father's houses, again, surely that is something with which every philanthropist should agree! It is that for which our governments are formed and fashioned—to bring men to a better state! And if Christ came for that purpose—was there anything in that to make men hate Him? For what else did He come? He came to heal the diseases of the body—is that a legitimate object of hatred? Shall I hate the physician who goes about gratuitously healing all manner of diseases? Are deaf ears unstopped, are mouths opened, are the dead raised, are the blind made to see and widows blest with their sons? Are these causes why a man should be hated? Surely, He might well say, “For which of these works do you stone Me? If I have done good works why do you speak against Me?” But none of these works were the cause of men's hatred—they hated Him without a cause! And He came on earth to die, that sinners might not die—was that a cause of hatred? Ought I to hate the Savior because He came to quench the flames of hell for me? Should I despise Him who allowed His Father's flaming sword to be quenched in His own blood? Shall I look with indignation upon the substitute who takes my sins and griefs upon Him and carries my sorrows? Shall I hate and despise the man who loved me better than He loved Himself—who loved me so much that He visited the gloomy grave for my salvation? Are these the causes of hatred? Surely His errand was one that ought to have made us sing His praise forever and join the harps of angels in their rapturous songs! “They hated Me without a cause.”

But once more—*was there anything in Christ's doctrine* that should have made us hate Him? No, we answer. There was nothing in His doctrine that should have excited men's hatred. Take His perceptive doctrines. Did He not tell us to do to others as we would they should do to us? Was He not also the exponent of everything lovely and honorable and of good repute? And was not His teaching the very essence of virtue—so that if virtue's self had written it—it could not have written such a perfect code of lovely morals and excellent virtues? Was it the ethical part of His doctrines that men hated? He taught that rich and poor must stand on one level. He taught that His gospel was not to be confined to one particular nation, but was to be gloriously expansive, so as to cover the world. This perhaps, was one principal reason of their hating Him. But surely there was no justifiable cause for their indignation in this. There was nothing in Christ to lead men to hate Him. “They hated Him without a cause.”

**II.** And now, in the second place, I come to dwell on MAN'S SIN, that he should have hated the Savior without a cause. Ah, beloved, I will not

tell you of man's adulteries and fornications and murders and poisonings and sodomies. I will not tell you of man's wars and bloodsheds and cruelties and rebellions. If I want to tell you of man's sin, I must tell you that man is a *deicide*—that he put to death his God and slew his Savior, and when I have told you that, I have given you the essence of all sin; the masterpiece of crime; the very pinnacle and climax of the terrific pyramid of mortal guilt. Man outdid himself when he put his Savior to death, and sin did out-Herod, Herod, when it slew the Lord of the universe, the lover of the race of man who came on earth to die! Never does sin appear as exceedingly sinful as when we see it pointed at the person of Christ whom it hated without a cause! In every other case when man has hated goodness, there have always been some extenuating circumstances. We never see goodness in this world without alloy—however great may be any man's goodness—there is always some peg whereon we may hang a censure. However excellent a man may be, there is always some fault which may diminish our admiration or our love. But in the Savior, there was nothing of this! There was nothing that could blot the picture—holiness stood out to the very life! There was holiness—only holiness! Let a man hate Whitefield, one of the holiest men that ever lived, he would tell you he did not hate his goodness, but he hated his ranting, preaching and the extraordinary anecdotes he told. Or he would pull out something that dropped from his lips and hold it up to derision. But in Christ's case, men could not do that, for though they sought for false witnesses, yet their witnesses agreed not together! There was nothing in Him but holiness—and any person with half an eye can see that the thing men hated was simply that Christ was perfect. They could not have hated Him for anything else. And thus you see the abominable, detestable evil of the human heart—that man hates goodness simply because it is such! It is not true that we Christian people are hated because of our infirmities. Men make our infirmities a nail whereon to hang their laughter—but if we were not Christians, they would not hate our infirmities. They hold our inconsistencies up to ridicule. But I do not believe our inconsistencies are really what they care about. We might be as inconsistent as all the rest of the world if we did not profess religion, or if they did not think we had any. But because the Savior had no inconsistencies or infirmities, men were stripped of all their excuses for hating Him—but it came out that man *naturally* hates goodness—because he is so evil that he cannot but detest it!

And now let me appeal to every sinner present and ask him whether he ever had any cause for hating Christ. But someone says, "I do not hate Him. If He were to come to my house, I would love Him very much."

But it is very remarkable that Christ lives next door to you, in the person of poor Betty, there. She goes to such-and-such a chapel, and you say she is nothing but a poor canting Methodist! Why don't you like Betty? She is one of Christ's members, and "Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, you have done it unto Me." You say you do not hate Christ. Now, look across the chapel. Don't you know a man, a member of this place, a very holy man, but somehow or other you cannot stand him because he once told you of your faults? Ah, sir, if you loved Christ you would love His members! What? Tell me you love my head, but you do not love my hands? My dear Fellow, you cannot cut my head off and let me be the same person! If you love Christ, the Head, you must love His members. But you say, "I do love His people." Very well, then, you have passed from death unto life if you love the brethren. But you say, "I am not sure that I am a changed character. I am not aware that there is any opposition in my heart to Christ and His gospel." You may not be aware of it, but it is your not being aware of it that makes your case all the sadder! Perhaps if you knew it and wept over it, you would come to Christ; but since you do not know it, and do not feel it that is a proof of your hostility. Now, listen, I must suppose you to be hostile to Christ unless you love Him! For I know there are only two opinions of Him. You must either hate Him or love Him. As for indifference with regard to Christ, it is just a clear impossibility. A man might as well say, "I am indifferent towards honesty." Why, then he is dishonest, is he not? You are indifferent to Christ? Then you hate Him. And why is it that you hate Him? Many a time you have been wooed by the gospel. You have resisted appeals, many of them—come, now—for which of Christ's works do you hate Him? Have I a persecutor here? Sinner! For what do you hate Christ? Do you curse Him? Tell me what He has done that you should be angry with Him. Point to a single fault of His in His carriage towards you: has Christ ever hurt you? "Oh," says one, "He has taken my wife and made her one of His children, and she has been baptized and comes to chapel, and I cannot bear that." Ah, sinner, is *that* why you hate Christ? Would you have hated Christ if He had snatched your wife from the flames, if He had saved her from going down to death? No, you would love Him! And He has saved your wife's soul. Ah, if He never saves you, if you love your wife, you will have enough cause to love Him, to think He has been so good to you! I tell you, if you hate Christ, you not only hate Him without a cause, but you hate Him when you have ample cause to love Him! Come, poor sinner, what have you got by hating Christ? You have stings of conscience. Many a sinner, by hating Christ, has been locked up in jail, has a ragged coat, a diseased body, a nasty

filthy house, with broken windows, a poor wife, nearly beaten to death and children that scamper out of the way as soon as father comes home. What have you got by hating Christ? Oh, if you were to estimate your gains, you would find that getting Christ would be a gain, but that hating Him is a dead loss to you!

Now, if you hate Christ and Christ's religion, I tell you that you hate Christ without a cause! And let me give you one solemn warning, which is this—if you keep on hating Christ till you die—you will not hurt Christ by it, but you will hurt yourself most awfully. Oh, may God deliver you from being haters of Christ! There is nothing to get by it, but everything to lose by it. For what cause do you hate Christ, sinner? For what cause do you hate Christ, persecutor? For what cause do you hate Christ, you carnal, ungodly men? What do you hate Christ's gospel for?—His ministers? What hurt have they done you? What hurt *can* they do you when they long to do you all the good in the world? Why is it you hate Christ? Ah, it is only because you are so desperately set on mischief—because the poison of asps is under your lips and your throat is an open sepulcher! Otherwise, you would love Christ. They hated Him “without a cause.”

And now, Christian, I must preach at you for just a moment. Surely, you have great reason to love Christ, now, for you once hated Him without a cause. Did you ever treat a friend ill and did not know it? It has been the misfortune of most of us to do it, sometimes. We had some suspicion that a friend had done us an injury. We quarreled with him for weeks and he had not done it at all! What he had done was only to warn us. Ah, there are never tears like those we shed when we have injured a friend. And should we not weep when we have injured the Savior? Did He not come to my door one cold, damp, night and I shut my door against Him? Oh, I have done what I cannot undo! I have slighted my Lord, I have insulted my friend, I have thrown dishonors upon Him whom I admire! Shall I not weep for Him? Oh, shall I not spend my very life for Him? For my sins, my own treachery spilled His blood! Monuments, ah, monuments I will build wherever I live, wherever I go. I'll pile up monuments of praise that His name may be spread. And wherever I wander, I'll tell what He did, with many a tear, that I so long have ill-treated Him and so fearfully misunderstood Him. Brothers and sisters, *we* hated Him without a cause, therefore let us love Him!

### III. Two LESSONS TO THE SAINTS.

In the first place, *if your Master was hated without a cause, do not expect to get off very easily in the world.* If your Master was subject to all this contempt and all this pain, do you suppose you will always ride

through this world in a chariot? If you do, you will be marvelously mistaken! As your Master was persecuted, you must expect to be the same. Some of you pity us when we are persecuted and despised. Ah, save your pity, keep it for those of whom the world speaks well! Keep it for those against whom the woe is pronounced, "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you." Save your pity for earth's favorites! Save your pity for this world's lords that are applauded by all men! We ask not for your pity. No, sirs, in all these things, we rejoice and "glory in tribulations, also, knowing that the things which happen unto us, happen for the furtherance of the gospel." And we count it all joy when we fall into manifold temptations for we rejoice that thus the name of Christ is known and His kingdom extended!

The other lesson is, *take care—if the world does hate you—that it hates you without a cause.* If the world is to oppose you, it is of no use *making* the world oppose you! This world is bitter enough without my putting vinegar in it. Some people seem to fancy the world will persecute them—therefore they put themselves into a fighting posture—as if they invited persecutions. Now, I do not see any good in doing that. Do not try and make other people dislike you. Really, the opposition some people meet with, is not for righteousness' sake, but for their own sin's sake, or their own nasty temper's sake! Many a Christian lives in a house—a Christian servant girl, perhaps. She says she is persecuted for righteousness' sake. But she has a bad disposition. She sometimes speaks sharply—and then her mistress reproves her. That is not being persecuted for righteousness' sake! There is another, a merchant in the city, perhaps. He is not looked upon with much esteem. He says he is persecuted for righteousness' sake, whereas it is really because he did not keep a bargain some time ago. Another man says he is persecuted for righteousness' sake. But he goes about assuming authority over everybody and, now and then, persons turn round and upbraid him! Look to it, Christian people, that if you are persecuted, it truly is for righteousness' sake, for if you get any persecution *yourself*, you must keep it yourself. The persecutions you bring on yourself for your own sins—Christ has nothing to do with them—they are chastisements on you! They hated Christ without a cause. Then fear not to be hated. They hated Christ without a cause. Then court not to be hated and give the world no cause for it.

And now may you who hate Christ, love Him! Oh that He would bring Himself to you now! Oh, that He would show Himself to you! And then surely you must love Him at once. He that believes on the Lord Jesus will be sure to love Him and He that loves Him shall be saved! Oh, that God would give you faith and give you love, for Christ Jesus' sake. Amen.

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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; sovereignty,

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 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 was not fit that the husband should live in a palace and that the wife should live in a cottage. It was 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 as comfortable as it is*. I consider that to be a Christian 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 grave clothes 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 little 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 better 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 un-humbled 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. The father asked, "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," the father said, "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!

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

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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 wilderness, 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, until, 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-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 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 that 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.”

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# PROFIT AND LOSS

## NO. 92

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 6, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

*“What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain  
the whole world and lose his own soul?”*

*Mark 8:36.*

MANY men have been made bankrupts through inattention to their books. No man ever loses anything by counting the cost, knowing his own expenditures and keeping his debts and credits pretty closely together. But many men have been ruined by attempts which have been suggested by a spirit of speculation and fostered by a negligence of their own concerns, combined with absolute ignorance of their real financial position. Spiritually, man is a great trader—he is trading for his own welfare. He is trading for time and for eternity! He keeps two shops—one shop is kept by an apprentice of his, a rough unseemly hand, of clayey mold, called the body. The other business, which is an infinitely more vast concern, is kept by one that is called, “the soul”—a spiritual being who does not baffle upon little things, but who deals with hell or heaven and trades with the mighty realities of eternity. Now, a merchant would be very unwise who should pay all attention to some small off-hand shop of his and take no account, whatever, of a large establishment! And he would, indeed, be negligent who should very carefully jot down every trade of the expenditure of his own household but should never think of reckoning the expenses of some vast concern that may be hanging on his hands. But the most of men are just as foolish—they estimate the profits (as they conceive them to be) which are gained in that small corner shop called the body—but they too seldom reckon up the awful loss which is brought about by a negligence of the soul’s concerns in the great matters of eternity. Let me beseech you, my brothers and sisters—while you are not careless of the body, as, indeed, you ought not to be—seeing that it is, in the case of Believers, the Temple of the Holy Spirit—to take more especial care of your souls! Decorate the tenement, but suffer not the inhabitant to die of starvation. Paint not the ship while you are letting the crew perish for lack of stores on board. Look to your soul, as well as to your body—to the life, as well as to that by which you live. Oh that man would take account of the soul’s vast concerns and know their own standing before God! Oh that you would examine yourselves! If men would do so—if all of you would now search within—how many of you

would be bankrupts? You are making a pretty little fortune with regard to the body. You are doing tolerably well and comfortable. You are providing for yourselves things as you desire them.

Your mortal body, perhaps, is even pampered and has no fault with its owner. But ask your poor soul how that is getting on and you will find it not a gainer, but in many instances, I fear a loser! Let me solemnly tell you that if your soul is a loser, however much your body may be a gainer, you have not profited in the least degree! Let me ask you all, this question in the name of Jesus Christ—"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

We shall divide our text and consider, in the first place, *the gain a man would get if he gained the whole world*. In the second place, *the fearful loss if a man should lose his soul*. And then, afterwards, we will try to finish up by some *practical lesson*.

**I.** In the first place, WHAT IS A MAN PROFITED IF HE SHOULD GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD? Many Christian people, who do not exactly talk common sense, sum this all up by saying that to gain the whole world is to gain nothing at all. Perhaps they are right, but I question if they believe what they assert! They sing just as we have been singing—

***"Jewels to you are gaudy toys,  
And gold is sordid dust."***

And so they are, compared with Christ; but there are some who find it unnecessary and absurd, calling jewels, "gaudy toys," and gold, "sordid dust." I have often admired some of my friends, when I have heard them talking about gold as sordid dust, for I wonder why they did not give it to the dustman the next time he came round! If they were to do that, I would not mind going round, myself, for once with the bell, particularly as it might be rather convenient to us, seeing that we need some of that sordid dust to erect a Tabernacle for the Most High! Many who affect to despise wealth are the greatest hoarders of it. I suppose they are afraid it might injure other people's hearts and, therefore, they put it away very carefully, so that others may not touch the dangerous thing! That may be all very kind of them. But we do not exactly appreciate their benevolent intention and would think it fully as kind if they were, every now and then, to distribute some of it! You hear them saying, very often, that "money is the root of all evil." Now I would like to find that text! But it is not to be found anywhere, from Genesis to Revelation. I found a text once, which said, "*The love of money is the root of all evil.*" But as for the money, itself, I can see very little evil in it! If a man will but rightly use it, I conceive that it is a talent sent from heaven, bestowed by God for holy purposes and I am quite sure God's talents are not bad ones! My brothers and sisters, it is all foolishness for a man to say that he does not really care for these things, because everyone does, in some degree. Everyone

wishes to have some of this world. And there really is, in possessing a competency in this world, something considerable with regard to profit. I am not going to deceive you by striking off all the profits and saying you are losers on every point. No, I will go the whole length which any of you like to go with regard to the profit of this world. If it is considerable, I will admit its greatness. If you think it possible to make a fine thing of this world, I will grant it, if you like. And after having admitted that, I will ask you, "Will it answer your purpose to gain the whole world, in the largest sense of that word and yet lose your own soul?"

Now, I will try, if I can, to add your bills up for you and strike a balance. We will suppose a case which must very seldom occur; in fact, which never has occurred! There never was a man who gained the whole world. Some have been monarchs of almost all the known globe. But it is remarkable, if you look at a map of the ancient world, how little their territories were, compared with the whole globe. Indeed, they have not much greater than those of modern monarchs. It is but a small portion of the world that was known to the ancients. And even then, no man possessed it all! But to put this question somewhat in a point of view wherein the thing might be possible, I think there are three or four cases, in which a man may be said, with some reservation, to have gained the whole world!

**1.** In the first place, a man who has *power over extensive empires* may be supposed, in some measure, to have gained the whole world. Take, for instance, ALEXANDER. I cannot bring you a fairer specimen of a man having possession of the whole world than he. He could say of his dominions that, although they had their limits, he did not know the nations who were able to bind his territories. He could travel thousands of miles without arriving at the boundaries. He had at his foot millions of armed men, ready to avenge his quarrels and uphold his banner. When he rose to fight, he was invincible! When he stood in his council chamber, his will was law! In his service thousands were slain, but at his summons, an equal number gathered round his standard. Alexander, I summon you! What do you think—is it worth much to gain the world? Is its scepter the wand of happiness? Is its crown the security of joy? Look at Alexander's tears! He weeps! Yes, he weeps for another world to conquer! Ambition is insatiable! The gain of the whole world is not enough. Surely to become a universal monarch is to make one's self universally miserable!

Perhaps you think there is very much pleasure in having power. I believe there is. I do not think any man who has any power over his fellow creatures will deny that it is gratifying to his fallen nature. Or else, why is it that the politician seeks for it so continually and toils for it, days without number, and wastes the sap of his life in midnight debate? There

is a pleasure in it. But mark you, that pleasure is counterbalanced by its anxiety. Popularity has its head in the clouds, but its feet are in the sands. And while the man's head is among the stars, he trembles for his feet! There is an anxiety to increase his power, or else to *maintain* it, and that anxiety takes away much of the enjoyment of it. Lord Bacon has justly compared those who move in higher spheres to those heavenly bodies in the firmament which have much admiration but little rest. And it is not necessary to invest a wise man with power to convince him that it is a garment bedizened with gold. It dazzles the beholder with its splendor, but oppresses the wearer with its weight. I do verily believe that the winning of the whole world of power is, in itself, so slight a gain that it was fair to strike the balance and say there is little left. For even Alexander, himself, envied the peasant in his cottage and thought there was more happiness on the plains, among the shepherds, than in his palace amongst his gold and silver! Oh, my friends, if I were to compare all this with the loss of the soul, you might be startled, indeed! But I leave it to strike its own balance. I say that to gain the whole world is but little—and especially when we are sinners against God. And, moreover, if an empire over the world entails that fearful responsibility which will not allow the eyes to slumber, or the heart to cease its throbbing. If it puts into the hand the power of committing gigantic crimes and, if those gigantic crimes, like ghosts haunt men's midnight slumbers, the gaining of power over the whole world is a loss instead of a gain, even considered in itself!

**2.** There is another way of gaining the whole world, not so much by power, but by something next door to it, namely—*riches*. CROESUS shall be my specimen here. He amassed a world of riches, for his wealth was beyond estimation. As for his gold and his silver, he kept little account of them and his precious stones were without number. He was rich, immensely rich. He could buy an empire and, after that, could spend another empire's worth. Perhaps you think that to be immensely rich is a great gain. But I believe that to be enormously rich is, in itself, far from desirable. Ask Croesus. Dying, he exclaimed, "O! Solon, Solon." And when they asked him what he meant, he replied that Solon had once told him that no man could be pronounced happy until death. And, therefore, he cried, "O! Solon, Solon," for the misery of his death had swept away the joys of his life! Such is the slavery of great riches. Such are its anxieties. And such, too often, is that miserly avarice which wealth does beget—that the rich man is often a loser by his wealth—even apart from the loss of his soul. Many a man would be happier if he had walked the pavement in rags, than if he rode through the streets in his chariot. "Many a heavy heart rides in a carriage," is an old saying, but a marvelously true one. Well said the poet—

***“If you are rich, you are poor,  
For like an ass, whose back with ingots bows,  
You bear your heavy riches but a journey,  
And death unloads you.”***

Suppose a man's wealth to have been gained dishonestly—then I pronounce it a terrible and infallible curse to him! In itself it constitutes a plague apart from a world to come. My friends, estimate that gold at what price you like. I say if you were to put the soul as a debt against it, you would find that there would be a fearful loss! But even apart from that, I believe that to gain a world of riches would be a loss in itself, at least to most men. There would be few men living who would be able to steer the boat of pleasure through a sea so thick with weeds. The less a man has the better, so that he comes within the moderate competence which every man may desire. Agur was right when he said, “Give me neither poverty nor riches.” Great wealth is certainly no great gain.

**3.** But there was another man who gained the world in a higher sense. His name was Solomon. His treasures were not so much those of wealth or power, (though he had both), as the treasures of wisdom and the pleasures of the body. Solomon had all things that could delight the mind, please the eye and charm the body. He had but to speak and music chanted the sweetest air that Israel's psalmody could give. He had but to lift his finger and noble armies followed him and treasures were spread beneath his feet. The wines of every vintage were quaffed from his bowl and maidens, gathered from every clime, awaited his command. He was master over men—he was lord. He enjoyed all kinds of delight, every sort of pleasure. He mingled in his cup all that flesh calls paradise, all that men dream of happiness. There was nothing which Solomon did not try. He ransacked the world to find joy. He was a wise man—he knew where to search for earth's happiness and he found it. Solomon, what did you find? O, Preacher! Open your lips and tell us—“*Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.*” Thus says the preacher! Oh, my friends, if we could have all the pleasures of the flesh we desire, I question whether they would be, in themselves, a profit. But of this I am certain—that compared with the loss of our soul, it would, indeed, be a dreadful loss! I think that if many of us could indulge all the pleasure of the body we desire, we would destroy our bodies and actually waste our happiness. Many a man has hunted his pleasures too fast to win them. Many a racer has lost the prize by overstraining in the contest. And many a man might have had more pleasure, even to the body, if he had been more moderate in seeking it. He is a fool who grills a pound of butter. He grills himself away by too fast pleasures and wastes his life till it is gone and there is nothing left of it! Ah, if you could have all the world of sensual delights and if you had all the wisdom of men, apart from the grace of God to restrain your pleasures, I believe you would find them to be a dead loss. And I will af-

firm the words of the text, "It would not profit you if you had the whole world and should lose your own soul."

Even in this world, you see, these great winnings are but little gains. They are great to look at, but they are very small when you get hold of them. This world is like the boy's butterfly—it is pretty sport to chase it—but bruise its wings by an overly earnest grasp, and it is nothing but a disappointment!

But, my friends, if there is little profit in this world by these magnificent gains I have mentioned and in these extreme cases, what shall it profit a man, if he does *not* gain the world and should lose his soul? Put the question this way—what shall it profit a man if he loses this present world and the next, too? What shall it profit a man if he gains but a small portion of this world—and this is the most that we may expect—and yet loses his soul? I have sometimes thought with regard to the rich man, "Well, such a man has a portion in this life. But with regard to the poor man, I cannot see what there is to make him happy if he has not something better to look to when he dies." I have seen the weary callous-handed sons of toil often oppressed and down-trodden as they are by their masters and I have thought, "Oh, poor souls, if you cannot look to another world, you are, of all men, the most miserable! For you do not get either world. You go trudging along, just like a pack-horse, without the hope of a secure place in which you may at last rest." The rich man, at least, makes as much as can be made of this world, little as that is, apart from divine grace. But the poor man makes the least of this world and then he goes from poverty to damnation—from his squalor to perdition—and from his poorhouse and his rags to the flames of hell! What a horrid state to have such an existence—to live in this world, a life of misery, and to find a starving existence to be only the preface and the prelude of a more doleful and fearful life hereafter! Oh, what shall it profit you, if you gain a little of this world and lose your own soul?

Now, I have only cast up accounts for this life. But what will it profit a man, *when he comes to die*, if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? There he lies dying—he has no God to console him. Bring to him his heaps of gold. What? Do they not still the throbbing of your heart? What? Cannot your bags of gold ferry you across the Jordan? What, Man? You have lived for your heaps of "glittering wealth"—will they not live with you? Will you not take them with you to heaven? No, he shakes his head—for hoarded wealth is but of little use to help a man to die. You have heard of a sailor, who, when the ship was sinking rushed into the cabin, broke open the captain's chest, extracted all the money he could—tied it in a belt round his waist—leaped into the sea and sank, thus hurrying himself before his Creator with the witness of his sins about his loins! Oh, it were a bad thing to die with gold so gained! And do you

think gold will do you much good, however you may have come by it, when you lie on your last couch? No. You must bow to inevitable death, in spite of all your riches! And if you gain the whole world's applause or fame, can that help you on your dying bed?—

***“Jesus can make a dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are.”***

But how little will the applause of man seem, when you come to die? Oh, I sometimes think, what poor fools we are to value ourselves by what our fellow creatures think of us! But oh, when we come to die, we shall not care about the din and noise which have followed us all our lives. What will fame and honor be when we are in the last article? Bubbles! Can souls feed on bubbles? No, we shall then despise such vanities! We shall say, “Fame! Cease your trumpet. Let me die alone, for alone must I hear the trumpet of the archangel. You babbling fame, I hate you, for you do but disturb my slumbers and wake me in my bed.” Oh, there will be no gain in wealth, or power, or pomp, or fame, when we come to die—they will profit a man nothing, if he loses his own soul!

And what will it profit a man in *the day of judgment*, if he has gained the whole world? Suppose he comes before God's bar clothed in purple, with a crown upon his brow? There the diadem attracts no attention. I see whole hosts of men gathered before God's white throne. But monarchs and their slaves are mixed indiscriminately. Princes and peasants stand upon a level, there, and I see no distinction. God says, “Depart, you cursed,” and the monarch is damned. Or he pronounces, “Come, you blessed,” and the monarch is saved. But the same voice speaks to each one. If they are saints, there is a voice of joy lifting them to their home! And if they are lost, the voice of denunciation sends them to their appointed doom! Ah, there will be no profit to man, in all he has achieved, when he comes before God's judgment bar! Suppose him standing up to tell his Maker, “Lord, I had a deal of fame on earth. They stuck me up on the top of a column, to bear all weathers and they called that glory, to be gazed at by fools, or to be admired by the populace. And, O Lord, will you send such a man as I am to hell?” “Oh,” says Justice, “what care I for your statue? What care I for your fame? If your soul is not saved, if you are not in Christ—with all your statues and all your fame—you shall sink to hell forever!” For these things count not in the day of judgment. Men shall stand alike there. All shall be level. If Christ has saved us, we shall be saved. But if we are out of Christ, great and mighty as we may be—the sentence shall be as impartial to the rich as to the poor!

Once more—what will it profit a man, when he gets to hell, if he has gained the whole world? Profit him, sir? Profit him? It will be the other way! In ages long ago a monarch went to hell. Whenever he had entered a city, nobles saluted him and monarchs did him reverence. When he went

to hell, it was known he was come. There, in their several dungeons, lay the monarchs whom he had chained and dragged at his chariot wheels. There were the men whom he had slaughtered and whose nations he had cut up, root and branch. And when he entered into hell—lying on their beds of fire and looking on him with scorn—a thousand voices shouted, “Aha! Aha! Have you become like one of us?” Then he found that the more glory he had on earth, the more hot was hell. And while as a common sinner, if he had received a hell, he found that as an extraordinary sinner and a great one, hells rolled on hells, like waves of the ocean over his guilty head! He found himself the worse for all his greatness. Go, wicked, rich man—heap up your gold—maybe it shall be turned to brimstone one day and you shall swallow it. Go, man of fame—blow the trumpet, or bid others blow it. The breath of fame shall fan the coals of God Almighty’s vengeance! Go, man of power and get to your dignity—the higher your flight, the greater your fall—when you shall be cast down from your loftiness and shall lie forever to howl in perdition. Having gained all this, you have gained nothing at all.

**II.** We have summed up, then, the first point—it is but little to gain the whole world. Apart from religion there is very little in it. But now we come to the contrast—that is, **THE LOSING THE SOUL.**

I shall request your attention for a brief period while I endeavor to dilate on that—to lose the soul, my friends—to lose the soul! How shall we tell what it is to lose the soul? You can conceive how fearful is the loss of the soul in three ways; first, from its intrinsic value; secondly, from its capabilities; and thirdly, from its doom, if it is lost.

**1.** You may tell how serious it is to lose the soul from *its intrinsic value*. The soul is a thing worth ten thousand worlds. In fact, a thing which worlds on worlds heaped together like sand upon the sea shore could not buy! It is more precious than if the ocean had each drop of itself turned into a golden globe—all that wealth could not buy a soul! Consider! The soul is made in the image of his Maker. “God made man,” it is said, “in His own image.” The soul is an everlasting thing like God. God has gifted it with immortality and, therefore, it is terrible to lose it. Consider how precious a soul must be when both God and the devil are after it. You never heard that the devil was after a kingdom, did you? No, he is not so foolish. He knows it would not be worth his winning. He is never after that, but he is always after souls! You never heard that God was seeking after a crown did you? No, He thinks little of dominions, but He is after souls every day—His Holy Spirit is seeking His children. And Christ came to save souls. Do you think that which hell craves for and that which God seeks for, is not precious?

The soul is precious, again, we know, by the price Christ paid for it. “Not with silver and gold,” but with His own flesh and blood did He re-

deem it! Ah, it must be precious if He gave His heart's eyes to purchase it. What must it be to lose your soul?

**2.** But it is also precious because it is everlasting. And that brings me to note—(I am running over these points, you can enlarge upon them at home)—that the soul is precious, on account of *its capabilities*. Do you see, up there, that starry crown? Do you mark, there, that throne, with the palm branch at its foot? Do you see that pearly-gated city, with its light brighter than the sun? Do you mark its golden streets and its thrice happy inhabitants? There is a paradise which eye has not seen, which outvies dreams and which imagination could not picture! But if the soul is lost, it is all lost. We see many lost things advertised. Now if a man's soul is lost, let me advertise what he has lost. He has lost a crown, he has lost a harp, he has lost a throne, he has lost a heaven, he has lost an eternity! When I consider how happy a soul may be, it appears to me to be a tremendous thing for it to be lost, even though it should gain the world. In fact, I cannot set the world in contrast. It is as though I should measure the Alps by a molehill. I cannot tell you what size the world is, if you give me for its standard a grain of dust—nor can I tell you heaven's worth, if you only allow me to value it by a world. Oh, sirs, because the soul is capable of heaven, its loss is a dreadful and terrible thing!

**3.** But consider, lastly, *where the soul must go to that is lost*. There is a place as much beneath imagination, as heaven is above it; a place of murky darkness, where only lurid flames make darkness visible; a place where beds of flame are the fearful couches upon which spirits groan; a place where God Almighty, from His mouth, pours a stream of brimstone, kindling that "pile of fire and of much wood" which God has prepared of old as a Tophet for the lost and ruined! There is a spot whose only sights are scenes of fearful woe! There is a place—I do not know where it is, it is somewhere—not in the bowels of this earth, I trust—for that were a sad thing for this world to have hell within its bowels. But somewhere, perhaps in a far off world, there is a place where the only music is the mournful symphony of damned spirits. Where howling, groaning, moaning, wailing and gnashing of teeth make up the horrid concert. There is a place where demons fly, swift as air, with whips of knotted burning wire, torturing poor souls; where tongues, on fire with agony, burn the roofs of mouths that shriek for drops of water—that water all denied. There is a place where soul and body endure as much of infinite wrath as the finite can bear—where the inflictions of justice crush the soul, where the continual flagellations of vengeance beat the flesh. A place where the perpetual pouring out of the vials of eternal wrath scald the spirit and where the cuttings of the sword strike deep into the inner man. Ah, sirs, I cannot picture this! Within an hour some of you may know it. If your curtain of life is torn in two, some of you may soon find yourselves face to face

with lost souls. Then, sirs, you will know what it is to lose your souls! But you will never know it till then, nor can I hope to set it forth to you. Vain are these words, light are the things I utter. They are but the daubing of a paint to portray and not portray a scene so dreadful, for earth has not colors black enough or fiery enough to depict it! Ah, sinners, if you knew what hell meant, then might you tell what it is to lose your own souls!

**III.** What, then, is THE PRACTICAL LESSON with which we finish? If, as most certainly is the case in the most favorable circumstances, a sinner loses fearfully by the gain of the world—if he loses his soul—then how absurd it is for a man at any time to sell his soul for a little! *There* is a man who has sold his soul for half a sovereign. “Where?” you ask. Ah, let him answer, himself. Many a man has done it: says one, “I think I should earn two shillings on Sunday by keeping just one of my shutters up in my shop, and selling a little.” Yes, fine pay, that, to damn your souls for two shillings a week! Another man says, “I think I should get a good situation if I were not one of those Calvinists,” and he leaves off going to the house of God and begins to be a more fashionable religionist. A fine thing, that—to ruin your everlasting interest for a good situation! It will bring you into a bad situation one day. It is astonishing for how little a man will sell his soul! I remember an anecdote—I believe it is true. I had almost said I hope it is. A minister, going across some fields, met a countryman and said to him, “Well, friend, it is a most delightful day.” “Yes, sir, it is.” And having spoken to him about the beauties of the scenery and so forth, he said, “How thankful we ought to be for our mercies! I hope you never come out without praying.” “*Pray*, sir?” he said. “Why, I never pray, I have got nothing to pray for.” “What a strange man,” said the minister. “Does your wife pray?” “If she likes.” “Don’t your children pray?” “If they like, they do.” “Well, you mean to say you do not pray,” said the minister, (as I think, not very rightly, no doubt he saw that the man was superstitious). “Now, I will give you half-a-crown if you will promise me not to pray as long as you live.” “Very well,” said the man, “I don’t see what I have got to pray for,” and he took the half-crown. When he went home, the thought struck him, “What have I done?” And something said to him, “Well, John, you will soon die, and you will need to pray, then. You will have to stand before your Judge and it will be a sad thing not to have prayed.” Thoughts of this kind came over him and he felt dreadfully miserable. And the more he thought, the more miserable he felt. His wife asked him what was the matter; he could hardly tell her for some time, but at last he confessed he had taken half-a-crown never to pray again, and that was preying on his mind. The poor ignorant soul thought it was the evil one that had appeared to him. “Yes, John,” she said, “sure enough it was the devil and you have sold your soul to him

for that half-crown!" The poor creature could not work for several days and he became perfectly miserable from the conviction that he had sold himself to the evil one. However, the minister knew what he was about, and there was a barn close by where he was going to preach. He guessed the man would be there to ease his terror of mind, and sure enough he was there one Sabbath evening, and he heard the same man who gave him the half-crown, take for his text, these words, "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" "Yes," he said, "what will it profit a man who sold his soul for half-a-crown?" Up gets the man, crying out, "Sir, take it back! Take it back!" "Why," said the minister, "you want the half crown, and you said you did not need to pray." "But, sir," he said, "I must pray. If I do not pray, I am lost." And after some testing by parleying, the half-crown was returned, and the man was on his knees, praying to God. And it came to pass that, that very circumstance was the means of saving his soul, and making him a changed man!

Now, I cannot do anything so eccentric as that, but I send some of you away with this on your mind—that though you think you could not do so—yet actually there are many of those whom I have here who have sold themselves to Satan by doing something for their worldly profit, which, in the end, must lead to the loss of their souls! Do any of you desire to know how your souls may be saved? Here is the answer—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptized, and you shall be saved." And whoever among you knows himself to be a sinner, let him take this for his consolation—"Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief." Go away with that, you chief of sinners, and rejoice, for Jesus Christ came to save you! May God add His blessing for Christ's sake! Amen.

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# GOD IN THE COVENANT

## NO. 93

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 3, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“I will be their God.”  
Jeremiah 31:33.***

WHAT a glorious covenant the second covenant is! Well might it be called a “better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Heb 8:6). It is so glorious that the very thought of it is enough to overwhelm the soul when it discerns the amazing condescension and infinite love of God in having framed a covenant for such unworthy creatures, for such glorious purposes, with such unselfish motives! It is better than the other covenant, the covenant of works, which was made with Adam. Or that covenant which is said to have been made with Israel, on the day when they came out of Egypt. It is better, for it is founded upon a *better principle*. The old covenant was founded on the principle of merit. It was, “Serve God and you shall be rewarded for it. If you walk perfectly in the fear of the Lord, God will walk well towards you and all the blessings of Mount Gerizim shall come upon you and you shall be exceedingly blessed in this world, and the world which is to come.” But that covenant fell to the ground, because, although it was just that man should be rewarded for his good works, or punished for his evil ones, yet man, being sure to sin, and since the fall infallibly tending towards iniquity, the covenant was not suitable for his happiness, nor could it promote his eternal welfare. But the new covenant is not founded on works at all. It is a covenant of pure unmingled grace. You may read it from its first word to its last and there is not a solitary syllable as to anything to be done by us! The whole covenant is a covenant, not so much between man and his Maker, as between Jehovah and man’s representative, the Lord Jesus Christ. The human side of the covenant has been already fulfilled by Jesus, and there remains nothing, now, but the covenant of giving, not the covenant of requirements. The whole covenant with regard to us, the people of God, now stands thus—“I will give this, I will bestow that. I will fulfill this promise. I will grant that favor.”

And there is *nothing* for us to do! He will work all our works in us. And the very graces that are sometimes represented as being stipulations of the covenant, are *promised to us*—He gives us faith. He promises to give us the law in our inward parts, and to write it on our hearts. It is a glori-

ous covenant, I say, because it is founded on simple mercy and unmixed grace—quite irrespective of creature-doings, or anything that is to be performed by man—and hence this covenant surpasses the other in *stability*. Where there is anything of man, there is always a degree of mutability. Where you have anything to do with creatures, there you have something to do with change. For creatures and change, and uncertainty always go together. But since this New covenant has now nothing whatever to do with the creature, so far as the creature has to do anything, but only so far as he is to *receive*—the idea of change is utterly and entirely gone. It is God’s covenant and, therefore, it is an unchanging covenant. If there is something which I am to do in the covenant, then is the covenant insecure. And although happy as Adam, I may yet become miserable as Satan! But if the covenant is all on God’s part, then if my name is in that covenant, my soul is as secure as if I were now walking the golden streets! And if any blessing is in the covenant, I am as certain to receive that blessing as if I already grasped it in my hands—for the promise of God is sure to be followed by fulfillment! The promise never fails. It always brings with it the whole of that which it is intended to convey and the moment I receive it by faith, I am sure of the blessing, itself! Oh, how infinitely superior is this covenant to the other in its manifest security! It is beyond the risk or hazard of the least uncertainty!

But I have been thinking for the last two or three days, that the covenant of grace excels the other covenant most marvelously in the *mighty blessings* which it confers. What does the covenant of grace convey? I had thought, this morning, of preaching a sermon upon, “The covenant of grace. What are the blessings it gives to God’s children?” But when I began to think of it, there was so much in the covenant that if I had only read a catalog of the great and glorious blessings wrapped up within its folds, I would have needed to occupy nearly the whole of the day in making a few simple observations upon each of them! Consider the great things God has given in the covenant of grace. He sums them up by saying He has given “all things.” He has given you eternal life in Christ Jesus. He has given Christ Jesus to be yours. He has made Christ heir of all things and He has made you joint-heir with Him. And hence He has given you everything! Were I to sum up that mighty mass of unutterable treasure which God has conveyed to every elect soul by that glorious covenant, time would fail me! I therefore commence with one great blessing conveyed to us by the covenant of grace and then, on other Sabbaths, I will, by divine permission, consider separately, one by one, sundry other things which the covenant conveys.

We commence, then, by the first thing, which is enough to startle us by its immense value! In fact, unless it had been written in God’s Word,

we could never have *dreamed* that such a blessing could have been ours! God, Himself, by the covenant of grace, becomes the believer's own portion and inheritance—"I will be their God."

And now we shall begin with this subject in this way. We shall show you, first, that this is a *special blessing*. God is the special possession of the elect, whose names are in the covenant of grace. Secondly, for a moment or two we shall speak of this as being an *exceedingly precious blessing*—"I will be their God." Thirdly, we shall dwell upon the *security of this blessing*—"I will be their God." And fourthly we shall endeavor to stir you up to *make good use of this blessing*, so freely and liberally conveyed to you by the everlasting covenant of grace—"I will be their God."

Stop just one moment and think it over before we start. In the covenant of grace, God, Himself, conveys Himself to you and becomes yours. Understand it—God—all that is meant by that word—eternity, infinity, omnipotence, omniscience, perfect justice, infallible rectitude, immutable love—all that is meant by God—Creator, Guardian, Preserver, Governor, Judge—all that, that great word, "GOD," can mean—all of goodness and of love, all of bounty and of grace—all that, this covenant of grace gives you, to be your absolute property as much as anything you can call your own—"I will be their God." We say, pause over that thought. If I should not preach at all, there is enough in that, if opened up and applied by the all-glorious Spirit, to excite your joy during the whole of the Sabbath—"I will be their God."

***"My God! How cheerful is the sound!  
How pleasant to repeat!  
Well may that heart with pleasure bound,  
Where God has fixed His seat."***

**I. HOW IS GOD ESPECIALLY THE GOD OF HIS OWN CHILDREN?** For God is the God of all men, of all creatures. He is the God of the worm, of the flying eagle, of the star and of the cloud. He is God everywhere. How, then, is He more my God and your God than He is God of all created things? We answer, that in some things God is the God of all His creatures. But even there, there is a special relationship existing between Himself and His chosen creatures, which He has loved with an everlasting love. And in the next place, there are certain relationships in which God does *not* exist towards the rest of His creatures, but only towards His own children.

**1.** First then, God is the God of all His creatures, *seeing that He has the right to decree to do with them as He pleases*. He is the Creator of us all—He is the potter, and has power over the clay, to make of the same lump, one vessel to honor and another to dishonor. However men may sin against God, He is still their God in that sense—that their destiny is immovably in His hands—that He can do with them *exactly* as He choos-

es. However they may resent His will, or spurn His good pleasure, yet He can make the wrath of man to praise Him and the remainder of that wrath He can restrain! He is the God of all creatures, absolutely so in the matter of predestination, seeing that He is their Creator and has an absolute right to do with them as He wills. But here again He has a special regard to His children and He is *their* God even in that sense. For to them, while He exercises the same sovereignty, He exercises it in the way of grace and grace, only. He makes them the vessels of mercy, which shall be to His honor forever. He chooses them out of the ruins of the fall and makes them heirs of everlasting life, while He allows the rest of the world to continue in sin and to consummate their guilt by well-deserved punishment. And thus, while His relationship is the same, as far as His sovereignty is concerned and His right of decree, there is something special in its loving aspect towards His people. And in that sense He is *their* God.

Again—He is the God of all His creatures *in the sense that He has a right to command obedience of all*. He is the God of every man that was ever born into this earth, in the sense that they are bound to obey Him. God can command the homage of all His creatures because He is their Creator, Governor and Preserver. And all men are, by the fact of their creation, so placed in subjection to Him, that they cannot escape the obligation of submission to His laws. But even here, there is something special in regard to the child of God. Though God is the ruler of all men, yet His rule is special towards His children, for He lays aside the sword of His rulership and in His hand He grasps the rod for His child, not the sword of punitive vengeance! While He gives the world a law upon stone, He gives to His child a law in his heart. God is my governor and yours, but if you are unregenerate, He is your governor in a different sense from what He is mine. He has ten times as much claim to my obedience as He has to yours. Seeing that He has done more for me, I am bound to do more for Him! Seeing that He has loved me more, I am bound to love Him more! But should I disobey, the vengeance on my head shall not fall so heavily as on yours, if you are out of Christ, for that vengeance incurred by me has already fallen upon Christ, my substitute. Only the *chastisement* shall remain for me—so that there, again, you see where the relationship to all men is universal, there is something special in it in reference to God's children.

Again—God has a universal power over all His creatures *in the character of a Judge*. He will “judge the world in righteousness *and His people with equity*.” He will judge all men with equity, it is true, but as if His people were not of the world, it is added afterwards, “His people with equity.” God is the God of all creatures, we repeat, in the sense that He is

their Judge. He will summon them all before His bar and condemn or acquit them all, but even there, there is something peculiar with regard to His children. For to them, the condemnation sentence shall never come, but only the acquittal. While He is Judge of all, He especially is *their* judge—because He is the judge whom they love to reverence, the judge whom they long to approach because they know His lips will confirm that which their hearts have already felt—the sentence of their full acquittal through the merits of their glorious Savior! Our loving God is the Judge who shall acquit our souls, and in that respect we can say He is *our* God! So, then, whether as Sovereign, or as Governor enforcing law, or as Judge punishing sin—although God is, in some sense, the God of all men, yet in this matter there is something special towards His people, so that they can say, “He is our God, even in those relationships.”

**2.** But now, beloved, there are points to which the rest of God’s creatures cannot come—and here the great center of the matter lies—here the very soul of this glorious promise dwells! God is our God in a sense with which the unregenerate, the unconverted, the unholy, can have no acquaintance—in which they have no share whatever! We have just considered other points with regard to what God is to man, generally. Let us now consider what He is to us, as He is to none other.

First then, God is my God, seeing that he is *the God of my election*. If I am His child, then has He loved me from before all worlds and His infinite mind has been exercised with plans for my salvation! If He is my God, He has seen me when I have wandered far from Him and when I have rebelled. His mind has determined when I shall be arrested—when I shall be turned from the error of my ways. He has been providing the means of grace for me. He has applied those means of grace in due time, but His everlasting purpose has been the basis and the foundation of it all! And thus He is my God as He is the God of none else beside His own children! He is My glorious, gracious God in eternal election, for He thought of me and chose me from before the foundation of the world, that I should be without blame before Him in love! Looking back, then, I see election’s God, and election’s God is my God if I am in election. But if I fear not God, neither regard Him, then He is another man’s God and not mine. If I have no claim and participation in election, then I am compelled to look upon Him as being, in that sense, the God of a great body of men whom He has chosen, but not *my* God. But if I can look back and see my name in life’s fair book set down, then, indeed, He is my God in election!

Furthermore, the Christian can call God His God from the fact of his *justification*. A sinner can call God, God, but he must always put in an adjective and speak of God as an *angry* God, an *incensed* God, or an *of-*

*fended* God. But the Christian can say, “*my* God,” without putting in any adjective except it is a sweet one wherewith to extol Him, for now we, who were sometime afar off, are made near by the blood of Christ. We who were enemies to God by wicked works are His friends and, looking up to Him, we can say, “*my* God,” for He is my friend, and I am His friend. Enoch could say, “my God,” for he walked with Him. Adam could not say, “my God,” when he hid himself beneath the trees of the garden; so that while I, a sinner, run from God, I cannot call Him mine. But when I have peace with God, and am brought near to Him, by His grace, then, indeed, is He my God and my friend!

Again—He is the believer’s God by *adoption*, and in that the sinner has no part. I have heard people represent God as the Father of the whole universe. It surprises me that any reader of the Bible should so talk. Paul once quoted a heathen poet who said that we are His offspring. And it is true, in some sense that we are, as having been created by Him. But in the high sense in which the term, “childhood,” is used in the Scripture to express the holy relationship of a regenerate child towards his Father—in that sense none can say, “Our father,” but those who have the, “Abba, Father,” printed on their hearts by the spirit of adoption. Well, by this spirit of adoption, God becomes my God, as He is not the God of others. The Christian has a special claim to God, because God is his Father, as He is not the Father of anyone else save his brethren. Yes, beloved, these three things are quite enough to show you that God is, in a special sense, the God of His own people. But I must leave that to your own thoughts, which will suggest 20 different ways in which God is especially the God of His own children, more than He is of the rest of His creatures. “God,” say the wicked, but, “*my* God,” say God’s children! If, then, God is so especially your God, let your clothing be according to your feeding. Be clothed with the sun—put on the Lord Jesus! The king’s daughter is (and so let all the king’s sons, be) all glorious within. Let their clothing be of worked gold. Be clothed with humility, put on love, a heart of compassion, gentleness, meekness. Put on the garments of salvation! Let your company and conversation be according to your clothing. Live among the excellent, amongst the generation of the just. Get up to the general assembly and church of the first-born, to that innumerable company of angels and the spirits of the just men made perfect. Live in the courts of the great King, behold His face, wait at His throne, bear His name; show forth His virtues! Set forth His praises, advance His honor; uphold His interest. Let vile persons and vile ways be condemned in your eyes—be of more noble spirits than to be companions with them! Regard not their societies, nor their scorns, their flatteries or their frowns. Rejoice not with their joys, fear not their fears, care not their care, feed not on their

dainties—get up from among them to your country, your city, where no unclean thing can enter or annoy! Live by faith, in the power of the Spirit, in the beauty of holiness, in the hope of the gospel, in the joy of your God, in the magnificence and yet the humility of the children of the great King!

**II.** Now, for a moment, let us consider THE EXCEEDING PRECIOUSNESS OF HIS GREAT MERCY, “I will be their God.” I conceive that God Himself could say no more than that. I do not think if the infinite were to stretch His powers and magnify His grace by some stupendous promise which could outdo every other—I do not believe that it could exceed in glory this promise, “I will be their God.” Oh, Christian, do but consider what it is to have God to be your own! Consider what it is, compared with anything else—

**“Jacob’s portion is the Lord!  
What can Jacob more require?  
What can heaven more afford —  
Or a creature more desire?”**

*Compare this portion with the lot of your fellow men!* Some of them have their portion in the field. They are rich and increased in goods and their yellow harvests are, even now, ripening in the sun. But what are harvests compared with your God, the God of harvests? Or, what are granaries compared with Him who is your husbandman and feeds you with the bread of heaven? Some have their portion in the city—their wealth is superabundant and in constant streams it flows to them until they become a very reservoir of gold! But what is gold compared with your God? You could not live on it—your spiritual life could not be sustained by it. Apply it to your aching head and would it afford you any ease? Put it on a troubled conscience—could your gold relive its pangs? Put it on your desponding heart and see if it could stop a solitary groan, or give you one less grief? But you have GOD—and in Him you have more than gold or riches ever could buy, more than heaps of brilliant ore could ever purchase for you! Some have their portion in this world, in that which most men love—applause and fame—but ask yourself, is not your God more to you than that? What if a thousand trumpets should blow your praises and if a myriad clarions should be loud with your applause? What would it all be to you if you had lost your God? Would this relieve the turmoil of a soul ill at ease with itself? Would this prepare you to pass the Jordan and to breast those stormy waves which, before long, must be forded by every man, when he is called from this world to lands unknown? Would a puff of wind serve you, then, or the clapping of the hands of your fellow creatures bless you on your dying bed? No, there are griefs, here, with which men cannot intermeddle—and there are griefs to come with which men cannot interfere to alleviate the pangs,

pains, agonies and dying strife! But when you have this—"I will be your God"—you have as much as all other men can have put together! How little we ought to estimate the treasures of this world, compared with God, when we consider that God frequently gives the most riches to the worst of His creatures! As Luther said, "God gives food to His children, and husks to His swine"—and who are the swine that get the husks? It is not often that God's people get the riches of this world—and that does but prove that riches are little worth; otherwise God would give them to us! Abraham gave the sons of Keturah a portion, and sent them away. Let me be Isaac and have my Father—and the world may take all the rest! Oh, Christian, ask for nothing in this world but that you may live on this and that you may die on this—"I will be their God." This exceeds all the world has to offer!

*But compare this with what you require, Christian.* What do you require? Is there not here all that you require? To make you happy, you wanted something that would satisfy you. And come, I ask you, is not this enough? Will not this fill your pitcher to its very brim, yes, till it runs over? If you can put this promise inside your cup, will you not be forced to say, with David, "My cup runs over; I have more than heart can wish"? When this is fulfilled, "I am your God," let your cup be ever so empty of earthly things—suppose you have not one solitary drop of creature joy—yet is not this enough to fill it until your unsteady hand cannot hold the cup by reason of its fullness? I ask you if you are not complete when God is yours? Do you need anything but God? If you think you do, it were well for you to still need, for all you need, without God, is but to gratify your lust. Oh, Christian, is not this enough to satisfy you if all else should fail?

But you want more than quiet satisfaction, you sometimes desire rapturous delight. Come, soul, is there not enough here to delight you? Put this promise to your lips—did you ever drink wine one-half as sweet as this, "I will be their God"? Did ever harp or violin sound half as sweetly as this, "I will be their God"? Not all the music blown from sweet instruments, or drawn from living strings could ever give such melody as this sweet promise, "I will be their God." Oh, here is a very sea of bliss, a very ocean of delight! Come, bathe your spirit in it—you may swim, yes, to eternity—and never find a shore! You may dive to the very infinite and never find the bottom. "*I will be their God.*" Oh, if this does not make your eyes sparkle, if this does not make your feet dance for joy and your heart beat high with bliss, then, assuredly, your soul is not in a healthy state!

But then you want something more than present delights, something concerning which you may exercise hope. And what more do you ever hope to get than the fulfillment of this great promise, "I will be their

God”? Oh, hope, you are a great-handed thing! You lay hold of mighty things which even faith has not power to grasp. But though your hand may be large, this fills it, so that you can carry nothing else! I proclaim, before God, I have not a hope beyond this promise! “O,” you say, “you have a hope of heaven.” Yes, I have a hope of heaven, but this *is* heaven—“I will be their God.” What is heaven, but to be with God, to dwell with Him, to realize that God is mine, and I am His? I say I have not a hope beyond that, there is not a promise beyond that—for all promises are couched in this, all hopes are included in this, “I will be their God.” This is the masterpiece of all promises! It is the top stone of all the great and precious things which God has provided for His children, “I will be their God.” If we could really grasp it; if it could be applied to our soul and we could understand it, we might clap our hands and say, “Oh, the glory! Oh, the glory! Oh, the glory of that promise”; it makes a heaven below and it must make a heaven above, for nothing else will be needed but that, “I will be their God.”

**III.** Now, for a moment, dwell on the CERTAINTY OF THIS PROMISE. It does not say, “I *may* be their God,” but “I *will* be their God.” Nor does the text say, “Perhaps I shall be their God.” No, it says, “I *will* be their God.” There is a sinner who says he won’t have God for His God. He will have God to be his Preserver, to take care of him and keep him from accidents. He does not object to having God to feed him, to give him his bread and water and raiment. Nor does he mind making God somewhat of a show thing, that he may take out on Sunday and bow before it—but he will not have God for his *God*—he will not take Him to be his All! He makes his belly his god, gold his god, the world his god. How, then, is this promise to be fulfilled? There is one of God’s chosen people there. He does not know that he is chosen yet and he says he will not have God. How, then, is the promise to be carried out? “Oh,” say some, “if the man won’t have God, then, of course, God cannot get him.” And we have heard it preached, and we read it, frequently, that salvation entirely depends upon man’s will—that if man stands out and resists God’s Holy Spirit, the creature can be the conqueror of the Creator, and finite power can overcome the infinite! Frequently I take up a book and I read, “Oh, Sinner, be willing, for unless you are, God cannot save you!” And sometimes we are asked, “How is it that such an one is not saved?” And the answer is, “He is not willing to be. God strived with him, but he would not be saved.” Yes, but suppose He had strived with him, as He did with those who *are* saved, would he have been saved, then? “No, he would have resisted.” No, we answer—it is not in man’s will, it is not of the will of the flesh, nor of blood—but of the power of God! And we never can entertain such an absurd idea as man can conquer Omnipotence, that the

might of man is greater than the Might of God! We believe, indeed, that certain usual influences of the Holy Spirit may be overcome. We believe that there are general operations of the Spirit in many men's hearts which are resisted and rejected, but the *effectual* working of the Holy Spirit with the determination to save cannot be resisted—unless you suppose God overcome by His creatures and the purpose of Deity frustrated by the will of man—which were to suppose something akin to blasphemy! Beloved, God has power to fulfill the promise, "I will be their God." "Oh," cries the sinner, "I will not have You for a God!" "Will you not?" He says and He gives him over to the hand of Moses! Moses takes him a little and applies the club of the law, drags him to Sinai, where the mountain totters over his head, the lightning flashes and thunders below—and then the sinner cries—"O God, save me!" "Ah! I thought you would not have Me for a God?" "O Lord, You shall be my God," says the poor trembling sinner, "I have put away my ornaments from me. O Lord, what will You do to me? Save me! I will give myself to You. Oh, take me!" "Yes," says the Lord, "I knew it. I said that I will be their God and I have made you willing in the day of My power." "I will be their God and they shall be My people."

**IV.** Now, lastly, I said we would conclude by **URGING YOU TO MAKE USE OF GOD**, if He is yours. It is strange that spiritual blessings are our only possessions that we do not employ! We get a great spiritual blessing and we let the rust get on it for many a day. There is the mercy seat, for instance. Ah, my friends, if you had the cash box as full of riches as that mercy seat is, you would go often to it! As often as your necessities require! But you do not go to the mercy seat half as often as you need to go. Most precious things God has given to us, but we never overuse them. The truth is, they cannot be overused! We cannot wear a promise thread-bare. We can never burn out the Incense of grace. We can never use up the infinite treasures of God's loving-kindness. But if the blessings God gives us are not used, perhaps God is the least used of all. Though He is our God, we apply ourselves less to Him than to any of His creatures, or any of His mercies, which He bestows upon us! Look at the poor heathen. They use their gods, though they are no gods. They put up a piece of wood or stone and call it, god—and how they use it! They need rain—the people assemble and ask for rain in the firm but foolish hope that their god can give it! There is a battle and their god is lifted up. He is brought out from the house, where he usually dwells, that he may go before them and lead them on to victory! But how seldom do *we* ask counsel at the hands of the Lord? How often do we go about our business without asking His guidance? In our troubles, how constantly do we strive to bear our burdens, instead of casting them upon the Lord, that

He may sustain us? And this is not because we may not, for the Lord seems to say, “I am yours, soul, come and make use of Me as you will. You may freely come to My store, and the oftener, the better. Welcome!”

Have you not a God lying by you to no purpose? Let not your God be as other gods, serving only for a show. Have not God in name, only. Since He allows you—having such a friend—use Him daily. My God shall supply all your needs—never need while you have a God. Never fear or faint while you have a God—go to your treasure and take whatever you need. There is bread and clothes, and health and life, and all that you need. O Christian, learn the divine skill to make God all things—to make bread of your God, and water, and health, and friends, and ease. He can supply you with all these! Or what is better, He can *be* all these—your food, your clothing, your friend, your Life. All this He has said to you in this one word, “I am your God.” And here you may say, as a heaven-born saint once did, “I have no husband and yet I am no widow. My Maker is my husband. I have no father or friend and yet I am neither fatherless nor friendless, my God is both my Father and my friend. I have no child but is not He better to me than ten children? I have no house, but yet I have a home, I have made the Most High my habitation. I am left alone, but yet I am not alone, my God is good company for me. With Him I can walk. With Him I can take sweet counsel, find sweet repose. At my lying down, at my rising up, while I am in the house, or as I walk by the way, my God is always with me. With Him I travel, I dwell, I lodge, I live and shall live forever.”

Oh, child of God, let me urge you to make use of your God! Make use of Him in prayer. I beseech you, go to Him often, because He is *your* God! If He were another man’s God, you might weary Him. But He is *your* God. If He were my God and not yours, you would have no right to approach Him, but He is *your* God! He has made Himself over to you, if we may use such an expression, (and we think we may). He has become the positive property of all His children, so that all He has and all He is, is theirs! O child, will you let your treasury lie idle, when you need it? Go! Go and draw from it by prayer—

***“To Him in every trouble flee,  
Your best, your only friend.”***

Fly to Him, tell Him all your needs! Use Him constantly by faith, at all times. Oh, I beseech you, if some dark providence has come over you, use your God as a sun, for He is a sun! If some strong enemy has come out against you, use your God for a shield, for He is a shield to protect you! If you have lost your way in the mazes of life, use Him as a guide, for the great Jehovah will direct you! If you are in storms, use Him for the God who stills the raging of the sea and says unto the waves, “Be still.” If you are a poor thing, knowing not which way to turn, use Him for

a shepherd, for the Lord is your Shepherd, and you shall not want! Whatever you are, wherever you are, remember God is just what you need, and He is just where you need. I beseech you, then, make use of your God! Do not forget Him in your trouble, but flee to Him in the midst of your distresses, and cry—

***“When all created streams are dried  
Your fullness is the same!  
May I with this be satisfied,  
And glory in Your name!  
No good in creatures can be found  
But may be found in Thee!  
I will have all things, and abound,  
While God is God to me!”***

Lastly, Christian, let me urge you again to use God to be your delight this day. If you have trial, or if you are free from it, I beseech you, make God your delight. Go from this house of prayer and be happy this day in the Lord. Remember it is a commandment, “Rejoice in the Lord, always, and again I say, rejoice.” Do not be content to be moderately happy—seek to soar to the heights of bliss and to enjoy a heaven below! Get near to God and you will get near to heaven! It is not as it is with the sun, here—the higher you go, the colder you find it—because on the mountain there is nothing to reflect the rays of the sun. But with God, the nearer you go to Him, the brighter He will shine upon you and when there are no other creatures to reflect His goodness, His light will be all the brighter! Go to God continually, importunately, confidently! “Delight yourself, also, in the Lord and He shall bring it to pass.” Commit your way unto the Lord, and He shall “guide you by His counsel and afterwards receive you to glory.”

Here is the first thing of the covenant of grace. The second is like unto it. We will consider that another Sabbath. And now may God dismiss you with His blessing. Amen.

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# TOMORROW

## NO. 94

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 25, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT MABERLEY CHAPEL, KINGSLAND,**

**On behalf of the Metropolitan Benefit Societies' Asylum,  
Ball's Pond Road, Islington.**

***“Boast not yourself of tomorrow; for you know  
not what a day may bring forth.”  
Proverbs 27:1.***

GOD'S most holy Word was principally written to inform us of the way to heaven and to guide us in our path through this world to the realms of eternal life and the light of God. But as if to teach us that God is not careless concerning our doings in the present scene, and that our benevolent Father is not inattentive to our happiness even in this state, He has furnished us with some excellent and wise maxims which we may put into practice; not only in spiritual matters but in temporal affairs also. I have always looked upon the Book of Proverbs with pleasure, as being a book not only teaching us the highest spiritual wisdom, but as more especially speaking on the “now”—the time that is present with us—giving us maxims that will make us wise for this world and instruct us in conducting our affairs while we are here among our fellow men. We need some temporal wisdom as well as spiritual illumination. It need not always be that the children of the kingdom should be more foolish than the children of darkness. It is well that we should be wise to order our common affairs aright, as well as to set our house in order for the grave and, therefore, we find in Scripture maxims and teachings for them both. Since God has been pleased, thus, to instruct us in the avocations of life, I shall not, then, be out of place if I use my text, in some degree, in a merely temporal manner and endeavor to give advice to my friends concerning the business of this life. Afterwards, I shall dwell upon it more spiritually. There is, first, the *abuse of tomorrow* forbidden in the text. In the second place, I shall mention the *right use of tomorrow*.

**I.** First, then, there is THE ABUSE OF TOMORROW mentioned in the text and we shall look upon it, first, in a worldly point of view—and yet, I trust—in a way of wisdom. “Boast not yourself of tomorrow.” Oh, my brothers and sisters, whoever you are, whether you are Christians or not, this passage has a depth of wisdom in it for you! “Boast not yourself of tomorrow,” and this, for many very wise reasons.

First of all, *because it is extremely foolish to boast at all*; boasting never makes a man any the greater in the esteem of others, nor does it improve

the real state of his body or soul. Let man brag as he will, he is none the greater for his bragging, no, he is the less, for men invariably think the worse of him! Let him boast as much as he pleases of anything that he possesses, he shall not increase its value by his glorying. He cannot multiply his wealth by boasting of it, he cannot increase his pleasures by glorying in them. True, to be content with those pleasures and feel a complacency in them, may render them very sweet—but not so with such a treasure as this—for it is a treasure which he has not, yet, and, therefore, how foolish he is to glory in it! There is an old, old proverb, which I dare not quote here. It is something to do with chickens. Perhaps you can remember it. It bears very well upon this text, for tomorrow is a thing that we have not yet obtained, and, therefore, not only if we had it would it be foolish to boast of it, but because we have it not and may never have it, it becomes the very extremity of foolishness to glory in it! glory, O man, in the harvest that may come to you next year when your seed is sown—but glory not in *tomorrow*—for you can sow no seeds of morrows! Morrows come from God—you have no right to glory in them. Glory if you will, O fowler that the birds have once flown to your net, for they may come again. But glory not too soon, for they may find another decoy that shall be better to their taste than yours, or they may fly far off from your snare! Though many a day has come to you think not that another will certainly arrive. Days are not like links of a chain—one does not ensure the other. We have one, but we may never see its fellow. Each may be the last of its kind. Each springs of a separate birth. There are no twin days! Today has no brother, it stands alone—and tomorrow must come alone—and the next and the next, also, must be born into this world without a brother. We must never look upon two days at once, nor expect that a whole herd of days shall be brought forth at one time.

We need not boast of tomorrow, for *it is one of the frailest things in all creation* and, therefore, the least to be boasted of. Boast of the bubbles on the breaker. Boast of the foam upon the sea. Boast of the clouds that skim the sky. Boast of what you will, O man, but boast not of tomorrow—for it is too unsubstantial! Tomorrow—it is a fleeting thing. You have not seen it. Why do you boast of it? Tomorrow—it is the pot of gold which the idiot dreams lies at the foot of the rainbow. It is not there, nor has he found it. Tomorrow—it is the floating island of Loch Lomond, many have talked of it, but none have seen it. Tomorrow—it is the wrecker's beacon, enticing men to the rock of destruction. Boast not yourself of tomorrow—it is the frailest and most brittle thing you can imagine! No glass is half as easily broken as your tomorrow's joys and your tomorrow's hopes! A puff of wind shall crush them, while yet they seem not to be full blown. He said, good easy man, "Full surely my greatness is a ripening," but there came a frost—a killing frost which nipped his shoot and then he fell. Boast not of tomorrow, you have it not. Boast not of tomorrow—you may never have it! Boast not of tomorrow—if you had it, it

would deceive you. Boast not of tomorrow, for tomorrow you may be where morrows will be dreadful things to tremble at!

Boast not yourself of tomorrow, not only because it is extremely foolish but *because it is exceedingly hurtful*. Boasting of tomorrow is hurtful to us in every way. It is hurtful to us now. I never knew a man who was always hoping to do great things in the future that ever did much in the present. I never knew a man who intended to make a fortune, by-and-by, whoever saved sixpence a week now! I never knew a man who had very great and grand hopes on the death of some old grandmother or the coming-in of some property from chancery, or the falling to him of something because his name was Jenyns. I never saw him very prosperous in the meantime. I have heard of a man going to be rich tomorrow and boasting of it—but I never knew him do much. Such men spend so much time in building castles in the air that they have no stones left wherewith to build so much as a cottage on the ground! They were wasting all their energies on tomorrow—consequently they had no time to reap the fields of the present, for they were waiting for the heavy harvests of the future. The heavily laden boats of today come in with abundance of fish from the depths of time—but they said of them, “They are nothing; there will be heavier draughts tomorrow, there will be greater abundance then. Go away, little ships, an argosy shall come home tomorrow—a very fleet of wealth.” And so they let today’s wealth go by because they expected the greater wealth of tomorrow—therefore, they were hurt even for the present.

And worse than that: *Some men were led into extraordinary extravagance* from their hopes of the future. They spend what they are going to have, or rather what they never will have! Many have been ruined by the idle dream of speculation—and what is that but boasting of tomorrow? They have said, “True, I cannot pay for this which I now purchase—but I shall tomorrow—for tomorrow I shall roll in wealth. Tomorrow, perhaps, I shall be the richest of men. A lucky turn of business (as they term it) will lift me off this shoal.” So they keep still and not only do they refuse to toil, to push themselves off the sand, but worse than that—they are throwing themselves away and wasting what they have—in the hope of better times coming in the future! Many a man has been made lame, blind and dumb, in the present because he hoped to be greater than a man in the future. I always laugh at those who say to me, “sir, rest a while. You will work all the longer for it. Stay a while, lest you waste your strength, for you may work tomorrow.” I bid them remember that such is not the teaching of Scripture, for that says, “Whatever your hand find to do, do it with your might,” and I would count myself worse than a fool if I should throw away my todays in the expectation of tomorrows and rest upon the couch of idleness *today*, because I thought the chariot of tomorrow would make up for all my sloth! So, beloved, if we love our God, we shall find enough to do, if we have all our tomorrows and use all our

today's, too! If we serve our God as we ought to serve Him, considering what He has done for us, we shall find that we shall have more than our hands full. Let our life be spared as long as Methuselah's—enough for every moment, enough for every hour, long as life may be. But hoping to do things in the future takes away our strength in the present, unnerves our resolution and unstrings our diligence. Let us take care that we are not hurt in the present by boasting of tomorrow!

And, remember, that if you boast of tomorrow, it will not only hurt you today, but *hurt you tomorrow*, also. Do you know why? Because, as sure as you are alive, you will be disappointed with tomorrow, if you boast of it before it comes. Tomorrows would be very good things if you did not give them such a very good character. I believe one of the very worst things a minister can possess is to have anybody to recommend him—for the people say, "Here comes a man! How he will preach, how eloquent he will be!" The poor creature cannot come up to their expectations and so they are disappointed. So with tomorrow—you give him such flattering praises—"Oh, he is everything, he is perfection." Today's—they are nothing—they are the very sweepings of the floors! But tomorrows—they are the solid gold. Today's—they are exhausted mines and we get little from them. Tomorrows—they are the very mines of wealth! We have only to get them, and we are rich, immensely rich! The tomorrows are everything—and then the tomorrows come laden with mercy and big with blessings of God—but, notwithstanding—we are disappointed because tomorrow is not what we expected it to be, even when tomorrow is marvelously abundant! But sometimes tomorrow comes with storms and clouds and darkness, when we expected it to be full of light and sunshine, and oh, how terrible is our feeling, then, from the very reason that we expected something different! It is not at all a bad beatitude, "Blessed is the man that expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed."

If we know how to practice that, and expect nothing, we shall not be disappointed! It is certain. And the less we expect and the less we boast of our expectations, the more happy will the future be—because we shall have far less likelihood of being disappointed. Let us remember, then, that if we would kill the future, if we would ruin the tomorrows, if we would boast of their hopes, if we would take away their honey—we must press them in the hand of boasting—and then we shall have done it! "Boast not yourself of tomorrow," for you spoil the tomorrow by boasting of it.

And then, remember, *what solemnly disastrous circumstances have occurred to men in this life* after tomorrow has gone, from boasting of tomorrows. Yes, there is many a man who set all his hope upon one single thing—and the tomorrow came which he did not expect—perhaps a black and dark tomorrow—and it crushed his hopes to ashes. How sad he felt afterwards! He was in his nest—he said, "Peace, peace, peace," and sudden destruction came upon his happiness and his joy. He had boasted of

his tomorrow by over-security, and look at him now—what a very wreck of a man he is because he had set his hope on that—now his joy is blasted! Oh, my friends, never boast too much of the tomorrows, because if you do, your disappointment will be tremendous when you shall find your joys have failed you and your hopes have passed away! See there that rich man—he has piled heaps on heaps of gold—but now, for a desperate venture, he is about to have more than he ever possessed before, and he reckons on that tomorrow. Nothingness is his, and why his disappointment? Because he boasted of imagined wealth! See that man? His ambition is to raise his house and perpetuate his name. See that heir of his—his joy, his life, his fullness of happiness? A handful of ashes and a coffin are left to the weeping father! Oh, if he had not boasted too much of the certainty of that son's life, he had not wept so bitterly after the tomorrow had swept over him, with all its boast and mildew of his expectations! See yonder, another—he is famous, he is great. Tomorrow comes a slander and his fame is gone and his name disgraced! Oh, had he not set his love on fame, he had not cared whether men cried, “crucify,” or, “hallelujah”—he had disregarded both alike! But believing that fame was a stable thing, whereas its foot is on the sand, he reckoned on tomorrows. And mark how sad he walks the earth, because tomorrow has brought him nothing but grief. “Boast not yourself of tomorrow.”

And I would have you remember just one more fact and that I think to be a very important one—that very often when men boast of tomorrow and are overconfident that they shall live, *they not only entail great sorrow upon themselves, but upon others*. I have, when preaching, frequently begged of my friends to be quite sure to make their wills and see to their family affairs. Many are the solemn instances which should urge you to do so. One night a minister happened to say, in the course of his sermon, that he held it to be a Christian duty for every man to have his house set in order, so that if he were taken away, he would know, that as far as possible, everything would be right. And there was one member of his church, there, who said to himself, “What my minister has said is true. I should not like to see my babes and my wife left with nothing, as they must be if I were to die.” So he went home and that night he made his will and cleared up his accounts. That night he died! It must have been a joyful thing for the widow, in the midst of her sadness, to find herself amply provided for and everything in order for her comfort. Good Whitefield said he could not lie down in bed a night, if he did not know that even his gloves were in their place. For he said he should not like to die with anything in his house out of order. And I would have every Christian very careful to be so living one day, that if he were never to see another, he might feel that he had done the utmost that he could—not only to provide for himself—but also for those who inherit his name and are dear to him. Perhaps you call this only worldly teaching; very good; you

will find it very much like heavenly teaching one of these dark days, if you do not practice it. “Boast not yourself of tomorrow.”

**II.** But now I come to dwell upon this *in a spiritual manner*, for a moment or two. “Boast not yourself of tomorrow.” Oh, my beloved friends never boast of tomorrow with regard to your soul’s salvation!

They do so, in the first place, *who think that it will be easier for them to repent tomorrow than it is today*. Felix said there would be a more convenient season and then he would again send for Paul, that he might hear him seriously. And many a sinner thinks that just now it is not easy to turn and to repent, but that by-and-by it will be. Now, is not that a very string of lies? In the first place, is it ever easy for a sinner to turn to God? Must not that be done, at any time, by *divine* power? And again, if that is not easy for him, now, how will it be easier in later life? Will not his sins bind fresh fetters to his soul, so that it will be even more impossible for him to escape from his iron bondage? If he is dead, now, will he not be corrupt before he reaches tomorrow? And when tomorrow comes, to which he looks forward as being easier for a resurrection, will not his soul be yet more corrupt and, therefore, if we may so speak, even further from the possibility of being raised? Oh, sirs, you say it is easy for you to repent tomorrow, why, then, not today? You would find the difficulty of it, if you would try it—yes, you would find your own helplessness in that matter! Possibly you dream that on a future day, repentance will be more agreeable to your feelings. But how can you suppose that a few hours will make it more pleasant? If it is vinegar to your taste, now, it shall be so, then! And if you love your sins, now, you will love them better, then, for the force of habit will have confirmed you in your course. Every moment of your lives is driving in another rivet to your eternal state. So far as we can see, it becomes less and less likely (speaking after the manner of men) that the sinner should burst his chains of each sin that he commits—for habit has bound him yet faster to his guilt and his iniquity has got another hold upon him. Let us take care, then, that we do not boast of tomorrow, by a pretense that it will be so much easier to repent tomorrow! It is one of Satan’s lies, for it will only be the more difficult.

He boasts of tomorrow, again, *who supposes that he shall have plenty of time to repent and to return to God*. Oh, there are many who say, “When I come to die, I shall be on my deathbed and then I shall say, ‘Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner.’” I remember an aged minister telling me a story of a man whom he often warned, but who always said to him, “sir, when I am dying, I shall say, ‘Lord, have mercy on me,’ and I shall go to heaven as well as anybody else.” Returning home from market one night, rather “foul” with liquor, he guided his horse with a leap right over the parapet of a bridge into the river—the last words he was heard to utter were a most fearful curse! And in the bed of the river he was found dead, killed by the fall. So it may be with you. You think you will have space for repentance, but it may be that sudden doom will devour

you! Or, perhaps, even while you are sitting there in the pew, your last moment is running out. There is your hourglass. Look! It is running. I marked another grain just then and then another fell. It fell so noiselessly, yet I thought I heard it fall. Yes! There it is! The clock's tick is the fall of that grain of dust down from your hourglass. Life is getting shorter every moment with all of you—but with some the sand is almost out—there is not a handful left; a few more grains. See, now they are less, two or three. Oh, in a moment it may be said, "There is not one left." sinner, never think that you have time to spare! You never had, man never had! God said, "Hurry you," when He bid men flee from Sodom. Lot had to hurry. And depend upon it, when the Spirit speaks in a man's heart, He does always bid him hurry! Under natural convictions, men are very prone to tarry. But the Spirit of God, when He speaks in the heart of man, always says, "Today." I never knew a truly anxious soul, yet, who was willing to put off till tomorrow! When God the Holy Spirit has dealings with a man, they are always *immediate* dealings. The sinner is impatient to get deliverance. He must have pardon, *now!* He must have present mercy, or else he fears that mercy will come too late to him! Let me beseech you, then, (and may God the Holy Spirit grant that my entreaty may become successful in your case), let me beseech everyone of you to take this into consideration—there is never time to spare—and that your thought that there is time to spare is an insinuation of Satan! When the Holy Spirit pleads with man, He pleads with him with demands of immediate attention. "*Today*, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."

"Boast not yourself of tomorrow," O sinner, as I doubt not you are doing in another fashion. "Boast not yourself of tomorrow," *in the shape of resolves to do better*. I think I have given up resolutions, now. I have enough of the *debris* and the rubbish of my resolutions to build a cathedral with, if they could but be turned into stone! Oh, the broken resolutions, the broken vows all of us have had! Oh, we have raised castles of resolutions, structures of enormous size, that out vied Babylon, itself, in all its majesty! Says one, "I know I shall be better tomorrow; I shall renounce this vice and the other; I shall forsake this lust; I shall give up that darling sin. True, I shall not do so *now*—a little more sleep and a little more slumber—but I know I shall do it *tomorrow*." Fool! You know not that you shall *see* tomorrow! Oh, greater fool! You ought to know that what you are not willing to do, today; you will not be willing to do, tomorrow! I believe there are many souls that have been lost by good intentions which were never carried out. Resolutions strangled at their birth brought on men the guilt of spiritual infanticide—and they have been lost with resolutions sticking in their mouths! Many a man has gone down to hell with a good resolution on his lip, with a pious resolve on his tongue. Oh, if he had lived another day, he said he would have been so much better! If he had lived another week, oh, then he thought he would begin

to pray! Poor soul! If he had been spared another week, he would only have sunk deeper into sin! But he did not think so and he went to hell with a choice morsel rolling under his tongue—that he would do better directly and that he meant to amend, by-and-by! There are many of you present, I dare say, who are making good resolutions. You are apprentices—well, you are not going to carry them out till you get to be journeymen! You are journeymen—well, you cannot carry them out till you get to be master! You have been breaking the Sabbath—but you intend to leave it off when you are in another job. You have been accustomed to swear—you say, “I shall not swear any more when I get out of this company, they try my temper so.” You have committed this or that petty theft—tomorrow you will renounce it, because tomorrow you will have enough and you can afford to do it. But of all the lying things—and there are many things that are deceptive—resolutions for tomorrow are the worst of all! I would not trust one of them! There is nothing stable in them. You might sooner sail to America across the Atlantic on a withered leaf than float to heaven on a resolution!

It is the frailest thing in the world, tossed about by every circumstance and wrecked with all its precious freight—wrecked to the dismay of the man who ventured his soul in it—wrecked, and wrecked forever! Take care, my dear hearers, that none of you are reckoning on tomorrows. I remember the strong but solemn words of Jonathan Edwards where he says, “Sinner, remember, you are at this moment standing over the mouth of hell upon a single plank and that plank is rotten. You are hanging over the jaws of perdition by a solitary rope, and lo! The strands of that rope are creaking—breaking now—and yet you talk of tomorrows?” If you were sick, man, would you send for your physician tomorrow? If your house were on fire, would you yell, “Fire,” tomorrow? If you were robbed in the street on your road home, would you cry, “Stop thief,” tomorrow? No, surely. But you are wiser than that in natural concerns. But man is foolish, oh, too foolish in the things that concern his soul! Unless divine and Infinite Love shall teach him to number his days, that he may apply his heart unto true wisdom, he will still go on boasting of tomorrows until his soul has been destroyed by them!

Just one hint to the child of God: Ah, my beloved brother or sister, do not, I beseech you, boast of tomorrow yourself. David did it once—he said, “My mountain stands firm, I shall never be moved.” Do not boast of your tomorrows! You have feathered your nest pretty well, yes, but you may have a thorn in it before the sun has gone down and you will be glad enough to fly aloft. You are very happy and joyful, but do not say you will always have as much faith as you have now—do not be sure you will always be as blessed. The next cloud that sweeps the skies may drive many of your joys away. Do not say you have been kept, up to now, and you are quite sure you will be preserved from sin tomorrow. Take care of tomorrows! Many Christians go tumbling on without a bit of thought,

and then, all of a sudden, they tumble down and make a mighty mess of their profession! If they would only look sharp after the tomorrows—if they would only watch their paths instead of star-gazing and boasting about them, their feet would be a great deal surer! True, God's child need not think of tomorrow as regards his soul's eternal security, for that is in the hands of Christ and safe, forever, but as far as his profession, comfort, and happiness are concerned, it will well become him to take care of his feet every day! Do not get to boasting! If you get to boasting of tomorrow, you know the Lord's rule is always to send a canker where we put our pride. And so if you boast of tomorrow, you will have a moth in it before long! As sure as ever we glory in our wealth, it becomes cankered, or it takes to itself wings and flies away! As certainly as we boast of tomorrow, the worm will gnaw its root, as it did Jonah's gourd—and the tomorrow under which we rested shall, with drooping leaves—only stand a monument of our disappointment! Let us take care, Christian brothers and sisters that we do not waste the present time with hopes of tomorrow—that we do not get proud, and so off our guard by boasting of what we most assuredly shall be, then, as we imagine.

**III.** And now, in the last place, if tomorrows are not to be boasted of, are they good for nothing? No! Blessed be God! There are a great many things we may do with tomorrows. We may not boast of them, but I will tell you what we may do with them if we are the children of God. We may always look forward to them with *patience and confidence* that they will work together for our good. We may say of the tomorrows, "I do not boast of them, but I am not frightened of them. I would not glory in them, but I will not tremble about them"—

***"What may be my future lot,  
Well I know concerns me not!  
This does set my heart at rest,  
What my God appoints, is best."***

We may be very easy and very comfortable about tomorrow. We may remember that all our times are in His hands, that all events are at His command. And though we know not all the windings of the path of providence, yet *He* knows them all. They are all settled in His book, and our times are all ordered by His wisdom. Whether they are—

***"Times of trial and of grief  
Times of triumph and relief  
Times the tempter's power to prove,  
Times to taste a Savior's love—  
All must come, and last, and end,  
As shall please my heavenly friend."***

And, therefore, we may look upon the tomorrows as we see them in the rough bullion of time, about to be minted into every day's expenditure—and we may say of them all—"They shall all be gold, they shall all be stamped with the King's impress and, therefore, let them come. They will not make me worse—they will work together for my good."

More, a Christian may rightly look forward to his tomorrows, not simply with resignation, but also with *joy*. Tomorrow to a Christian is a happy thing; it is one stage nearer glory! Tomorrow! It is one step nearer heaven to a believer! It is just one knot more that he has sailed across the dangerous sea of life and he is so much the nearer to his eternal port—his blissful heaven! Tomorrow—it is a fresh lamp of fulfilled promises that God has placed in His firmament—that the Christian may hail it as a guiding star, in the future, or at least as a light to cheer his path. Tomorrow—the Christian may rejoice at it. He may say of today, “O day, you may be black, but I shall bid you good-by, for lo, I see the morrow coming and I shall mount upon its wings, and shall fly away and leave you and your sorrows far behind me.”

And, moreover the Christian may wait for tomorrow with even more than simple hope and joy. He may look forward to it with *ecstasy* in some measure, for he does not know but that tomorrow his Lord may come! Tomorrow Christ may be upon this earth, “for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man comes.” Tomorrow all the glories of millennial splendor may be revealed. Tomorrow, the thrones of judgment may be set and the King may summon the people to judgment! Tomorrow, we may be in heaven! Tomorrow we may be on the breast of Christ. Tomorrow, yes, before then, this head may wear a crown, this hand may wave the palm, these lips may sing the song, these feet may tread the streets of gold, and this heart may be full of immortal bliss! Be of good cheer, oh, fellow Christian—tomorrow can have nothing black in it for you, for it must work for your good! And it may have in it a precious, precious jewel. It is an earthen pitcher and it may have in it some dark black waters, but their bitterness is taken away by the cross. But, also, it may have in it the precious jewel of eternity, for wrapt up within tomorrow may be all the glories of immortality! Anoint your head with fresh oil of gladness at the prospect of each coming day! Boast not of tomorrow, but often comfort yourself with it. You have a right to do so. It cannot be a bad tomorrow for you. It may be the best day of your life, for it may be your last!

And yet, another hint: Tomorrow ought to be observed by Christians in the way of providence. Though we may not boast of tomorrow, yet we may seek to provide for the morrow. On one occasion I pleaded for a benefit society and not knowing a more appropriate text, I selected this, “Take no thought for the morrow, for tomorrow shall take thought for the things of itself.” Some of my hearers, when I announced my text, feared the principle of it was altogether hostile to anything like an insurance, or providing for the future, but I just showed them that it was not, as I looked upon it. It is a positive command that we are to take no anxious thought concerning tomorrow. Now, how can I do that? How can I put myself into such a position that I can carry out this commandment of taking no thought for the morrow? If I were a man struggling in life and had it in my power to insure for something which would take care of wife

and family in later days, if I did not do it, you might preach to me to all eternity about not taking thought for the morrow. But I could not help doing it when I saw those I loved, around me, unprovided for! Let it be in God's Word, I could not practice it! I would still be, at some time or other, taking thought for the morrow. But let me go to one of the many excellent institutions which exist and let me see that all is provided for, I come home and say, "Now, I know how to practice Christ's command of taking no thought for the morrow. I pay the policy-money once a year and I take no further thought about it, for I have no occasion to do so now, and have obeyed the very spirit and letter of Christ's command." Our Lord meant that we were to get rid of cares—now it is apparent that those distressing cares are removed—and we are able to live above anxiety by that single process!

Now, if that is so, if there is anything that enables us to carry out Christ's commands, is it not in the very heart of the commandments to do that? If God has pleased to put into the hearts of wise men to devise something that would, in some way, improve the misfortunes of their kind and relieve them from the distresses and casualties of God's providence, how can it but be our duty to avail ourselves of that wisdom which, doubtless, God gave to men that we might, thereby, in these times be enabled to carry out in the fullest extent the meaning of that passage, "Take no thought for the morrow"? Why, if a man says, "I shall take no thought for the morrow, I will just spend all I get and not think of doing anything or taking any thought for the morrow," how is he going to pay his rent? Why, the text could not be carried out if it meant what some people think. It cannot mean that we should carelessly live by the day, or else a man would spend all his money on Monday and have nothing left for the rest of the week! That would be simple folly. It means that we should have no anxious, distressing thought about it. I am preaching about benefit societies—I would not attempt to recommend many of them and I do not believe in the principles of half of them! I believe a great deal of mischief is done by their gatherings in alehouses and taverns. But wherever there is a *Christian society*, I must endeavor to promote its welfare, for I look on the principle as the best means of carrying out the command of Christ, "Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for itself." Allow me to recommend this Asylum to your liberality as a refuge in adversity for those who were careful in prosperity. It is a quiet retreat for decayed members of Benefit Societies and I am sorry to inform you that many of its rooms are vacant, not from lack of candidates, but from a lack of funds. It is a pity that so much public property should lie unemployed. Help the committee, then, to use the houses!

And, now, in concluding, let me remind the Christian that there is one thing he has not to do and that is, he has not to provide salvation, or divine grace, or sustenance, nor promises for the morrow. No, beloved, but

we often talk as if we had. We say, "How shall I persevere through such-and-such a trial?" "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." You must not boast of today's grace as though it were enough for tomorrow. But you need not be afraid. With tomorrow's difficulties, there will be tomorrow's help! With tomorrow's foes, there will be tomorrow's friends! With tomorrow's dangers, there will be tomorrow's preservations! Let us look forward, then, to tomorrow as a thing we have not to provide for in spiritual matters, for the atonement is finished, the covenant ratified and, therefore, every promise shall be fulfilled and be, "yes and amen" to us, not only in one tomorrow, but in fifty thousand tomorrows, if so many could run over our heads!

And now just let us utter the words of the text again, very solemnly and earnestly. O young men in all your glory! O maidens in all your beauty! "Boast not yourselves of tomorrow." The worm may be at your cheeks very soon. O strong men, whose bones are full of marrow, O you mighty men, whose nerves seem of brass and your sinews of steel, "Boast not of tomorrow." "Howl, fir tree," for cedars have fallen before now—and though you think yourselves great—God can pull you down. Above all, you gray-heads, "Boast not yourselves of tomorrow," with one foot hanging over the unfathomable gulf of eternity and the other just tottering on the edge of time! I beseech you do not boast yourselves of tomorrow! In truth I do believe that gray-heads are not less foolish on this point than very childhood. I remember reading a story of a man who wanted to buy his neighbor's farm next to him and he went to him and asked him whether he would sell it. He said, "No, I will not," so he went home and said, "Never mind, farmer So-and-So is an old man! When he is dead, I shall buy it." The man was 70 and his neighbor sixty-eight—he thought the other would be sure to die before him! It is often so with men. They are making schemes that will only walk over their graves when they will not feel them! The winds shall soon howl across the green turf that covers their tomb, but they shall not hear its wailing. Take care of the "to-days." Look not through the glass of futurity, but look at the things of today! "Boast not yourself of tomorrow; for you know not what a day may bring forth."

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# THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

## NO. 95

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 10, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“This shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement  
for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year.”  
Leviticus 16:34.***

THE Jews had many striking ceremonies which marvelously set forth the death of Jesus Christ as the great expiation of our guilt and the salvation of our souls. one of the chief of these was the day of atonement, which I believe was pre-eminently intended to typify that great day of vengeance of our God, which was also the great day of acceptance of our souls, when Jesus Christ “died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.” That day of atonement happened only *once a year* to teach us that only once should Jesus Christ die and, that though He would come a second time, yet it would be without a sin offering unto salvation. The lambs were perpetually slaughtered—morning and evening they offered sacrifice to God—to remind the people that they always needed a sacrifice. But the day of atonement, being the type of the one great propitiation, it was but once a year that the high priest entered within the veil with blood as the atonement for the sins of the people. And this was on a certain set and *appointed time*. It was not left to the choice of Moses, or to the convenience of Aaron, or to any other circumstance which might affect the date—it was appointed to be on a peculiar set day—as you find at the 29th verse—“In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month.” And at no other time was the day of atonement to be, to show us that God’s great day of atonement was appointed and predestinated by Himself. Christ’s expiation occurred but once and then not by any chance. God had settled it from before the foundation of the world and at that hour when God had predestinated, on that very day that God had decreed that Christ should die, was He led like a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers He was dumb! It was but once a year, because the sacrifice should be once. It was at an appointed time in the year, because in the fullness of time, Jesus Christ should come into the world to die for us.

Now, I shall invite your attention to the ceremonies of this solemn day, taking the different parts in detail. First, we shall consider the *person who made the atonement*; secondly, *the sacrifice whereby the atonement was typically made*; thirdly, *the effects of the atonement*; and fourthly,

*our behavior on the recollection of the atonement*, as well set forth by the conduct prescribed to the Israelites on that day.

**I.** First, THE PERSON WHO WAS TO MAKE THE ATONEMENT. And at the outset, we remark that *Aaron, the high priest*, did it. “Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place; with a young bullock for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.” Inferior priests slaughtered lambs. Other priests, at other times, did almost all the work of the sanctuary—but on this day, nothing was done by anyone, as a part of the business of the great day of atonement—except by the high priest. Old rabbinical traditions tell us that everything on that day was done by him, even the lighting of the candles and the fires and the incense and all the offices that were required. We are told that for a fortnight beforehand, the high priest was obliged to go into the tabernacle to slaughter the bullocks and assist in the work of the priests and Levites that he might be prepared to do the work which was unusual to him. All the labor was left to him.

So, beloved, Jesus Christ, the High Priest, and He, only, works the atonement. There are other priests, for, “He has made us priests and kings unto God.” Every Christian is a priest to offer sacrifice of prayer and praise unto God, but none save the high priest must offer atonement. He and He alone, must go within the veil. He must slaughter the goat and sprinkle the blood—for though thanksgiving is shared in by all of Christ’s elect body, atonement remains alone to Jesus Christ, the High Priest.

Then it is interesting to notice that the high priest on this day was a *humbled priest*. You read in the 4<sup>th</sup> verse, “He shall put on the holy *linen* coat and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen belt and with the linen miter shall he be attired: these are holy garments.” On other days he wore what the people were accustomed to call the golden garments. He had the miter with a plate of pure gold around his brow, tied with brilliant blue. The splendid breastplate, studded with gems, adorned with pure gold, and set with precious stones; the glorious ephod, the tinkling bells, and all the other ornaments wherewith he came before the people as the accepted high priest. But on this day he had none of them! The golden miter was laid aside, the embroidered vest was put away, the breastplate was taken off and he came out simply with the holy linen coat, the linen breeches, the linen miter and girded with a linen belt. On that day he humbled himself, just as the people humbled themselves. Now that is a notable circumstance! You will see sundry other passages in the references which will bear this out—that the priest’s dress on this day was different. As Mayer tells us, he wore garments and glorious ones, on other days, but on this day he wore four humble ones. Jesus Christ, then, when He made atonement, was a humbled priest. He did not make atonement arrayed in all the glo-

ries of His ancient throne in heaven. Upon His brow there was no diadem, save the crown of thorns. Around Him was cast no purple robe, save that which He wore for a time in mockery. In His hand was no scepter, save the reed which they thrust in cruel contempt upon Him. He had no sandals of pure gold, neither was He dressed as king. He had none of those splendors about Him which would make Him mighty and distinguished among men! He came out in His simple body, yes, in His naked body, for they stripped off even the common robe from Him! And they made Him hang before God's sun, and God's universe, naked, to His shame and to the disgrace of those who chose to do so cruel and dastardly a deed! Oh, my soul, adore your Jesus, who when He made atonement, humbled Himself and wrapped around Him a garb of your inferior clay! Oh, angels, you can understand what were the glories that He laid aside! Oh, thrones, principalities, and powers, you can tell what was the diadem with which He dispensed and what the robes He laid aside to wrap Himself in earthly garbs. But, men, you can scarcely tell how glorious is your High Priest now! You can scarcely tell how glorious He was before! But oh, adore Him, for on that day it was the simple clean linen of His own body, of His own humanity in which He made atonement for your sins!

In the next place, the high priest who offered the atonement must be a *spotless high priest*—and because there were none such to be found, Aaron, being a sinner, himself, as well as the people—had to sanctify himself and make atonement for his own sin before he could go in to make an atonement for the sins of the people. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse you read, “Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.” These were for him. In the 6<sup>th</sup> verse it is said, “And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for him, and make an atonement for himself and for his house.” Yes, more—before he went within the veil with the blood of the goat which was the atonement for the people, he had to go within the veil to make atonement there for him. In the 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> verses, it is said, “And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for him, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself. And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not. And he shall take of the blood of the bullock (that is, the bullock that he killed for himself) and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.” This was before he killed the goat, for

it says, "Then shall he kill the goat." Before he took the blood which was a type of Christ within the veil, he took the blood (which was a type of Christ in another sense), wherewith he purified himself. Aaron must not go within the veil until by the bullock his sins had been typically expiated, nor even then without the burning smoking incense before his face, lest God should look on him and he should die, being an impure mortal. Moreover, the Jews tell us that Aaron had to wash himself, I think, five times in the day and it is said in this chapter that he had to wash himself many times. We read in the 4<sup>th</sup> verse, "These are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water and so put them on." And at the 24<sup>th</sup> verse, "He shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place and put on his garments." So you see it was strictly provided for that Aaron, on that day, should be a spotless priest. He could not be so as to *nature*, but, ceremonially, care was taken that he should be clean. He was washed over and over again in the sacred bath. And besides that, there was the blood of the bullock and the smoke of the incense, that he might be acceptable before God. Ah, beloved, we have a spotless High Priest! We have one who needed no washing, for He had no filth to wash away! We have one who needed no atonement for Himself for He, forever, might have sat down at the right hand of God and never have come on earth at all! He was pure and spotless. He needed no incense to wave before the mercy seat to hide the angry face of justice. He needed nothing to hide and shelter Him, He was all pure and clean! Oh, bow down and adore Him, for if He had not been a holy High Priest, He could never have taken your sins upon Himself and never have made intercession for you! Oh, reverence Him, that spotless as He was, He should come into this world and say, "For this cause I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." Adore and love Him, the spotless High Priest, who, on the day of atonement took away your guilt!

Again, the atonement was made by a *solitary high priest*—alone and unassisted. You read in the 17<sup>th</sup> verse, "And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goes in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he comes out and has made an atonement for himself and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel." No other man was to be present, so that the people might be quite certain that everything was done by the high priest, alone. It is remarkable, as Matthew Henry observes, that no disciple died with Christ. When He was put to death, His disciples forsook Him and fled. They crucified none of His followers with Him, lest any should suppose that the disciple shared the honor of atonement. Thieves were crucified with Him because none would suspect that they could assist Him—but if a disciple had died, it might have been imagined that he had shared the atonement. God kept that holy circle of Calvary select to Christ, and none of His disciples must

go to die there with Him. O glorious High Priest, You have done it all alone! O, glorious antitype of Aaron, no son of Yours stood with You—no Eliezer, no Phineas burned incense—there was no priest, no Levite save, Himself. “I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Me.” Then give all the glory unto His holy name, for alone and unassisted He made atonement for your guilt! The bath of His blood is your only washing. The stream of water from His side is your perfect purification! None but Jesus, none but Jesus, has worked out the work of our salvation!

Again it was a *laborious high priest* who did the work on that day. It is astonishing how, after comparative rest, he should be so accustomed to his work as to be able to perform all that he had to do on that day. I have endeavored to count up how many creatures he had to kill and I find that there were 15 beasts which he slaughtered at different times, besides the other offices, which were all left to him. In the first place, there were the two lambs, one offered in the morning, and the other in the evening—they were never omitted, being a perpetual ordinance. On this day the high priest killed those two lambs. Further, if you will turn to Numbers 29:7-11, “And you shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and you shall afflict your souls: you shall not do any work therein: But you shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord for a sweet savor; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish: And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock, and two tenth deals to one ram. A several tenth deal for one lamb throughout the seven lambs: one kid of the goats for a sin offering: besides the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and their drink offerings.” Here, then, was one bullock, a ram, seven lambs, and a kid of the goats, making ten. The two lambs made twelve. And in the chapter we have been studying, it is said in the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse: “Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering,” which makes the number fourteen. Then after that, we find there were two goats but only one of them was killed, the other being allowed to go away. Thus, there were 15 beasts to be slaughtered, besides the burnt offerings of thanksgiving which were offered by way of showing that the people now desired to dedicate themselves to the Lord from gratitude, that the atonement of sin offering had been accepted.

He who was ordained priest in Jeshurun, for that day, toiled like a common Levite, worked as laboriously as priest could do and far more so than on any ordinary day! Just so with our Lord Jesus Christ! Oh, what a labor the atonement was to Him! It was a work that all the hands of the universe could not have accomplished—yet He completed it alone! It was

a work more laborious than the treading of the winepress and His frame, unless sustained by the divinity within, could scarcely have borne such stupendous labor. There was the bloody sweat in Gethsemane. There was the watching all night—just as the high priest did—for fear that uncleanness might touch Him. There was the hooting and the scorn which He suffered every day before—something like the continual offering of the Lamb. Then there came the shame, the spitting, and the cruel flagellations in Pilate's Hall; then there was the *via dolorosa* through Jerusalem's sad streets; then came the hanging on the cross, with the weight of His people's sins on His shoulders. Yes, it was a Divine labor that our great High Priest did on that day—a labor mightier than the making of the world—it was the making new of a world, the taking of its sins upon His Almighty shoulders, and casting them into the depths of the sea! The atonement was made by a toilsome laborious High Priest who worked, indeed, that day; and Jesus, though He had toiled before, yet never worked as He did on that wondrous day of atonement!

**II.** Thus have I led you to consider the person who made the atonement; let us now consider for a moment or two, THE MEANS WHEREBY THIS ATONEMENT WAS MADE. You read at the 5<sup>th</sup> verse, "And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel, two kids of the goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering"; and at the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> verses, "And he shall take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness." The first goat I considered to be the great type of Jesus Christ the atonement—*such as I do not consider the scapegoat to be*. The first is the type of the means whereby the atonement was made, and we shall keep to that first.

Notice that this goat, of course, answered all the prerequisites of every other thing that was sacrificed—it must be *a perfect, unblemished goat of the first year*. Even so was our Lord, a perfect man, in the prime and vigor of His manhood. And further, this goat was an eminent type of Christ from the fact that *it was taken of the congregation of the children of Israel*, as we are told at the 5<sup>th</sup> verse. The public treasury furnished the goat. So, beloved, Jesus Christ was, first of all, purchased by the public treasury of the Jewish people before He died—thirty pieces of silver they had valued Him—a goodly price. And as they had been accustomed to bring the goat, so they brought Him to be offered—not, indeed, with the intention that He should be their sacrifice—but unwittingly they fulfilled this

when they brought Him to Pilate and cried, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” Oh, beloved! Indeed, Jesus Christ came out from the midst of the people, and the people brought Him! Strange that it should be so. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” His own led Him forth to slaughter! His own dragged Him before the mercy seat!

Note, again, that though this goat, like the scapegoat, was brought by the people, *God’s decision* was still in it. Mark, it is said, “Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat.” I conceive this mention of lots is to teach that although the Jews brought Jesus Christ of their own will to die, yet, Christ had been *appointed* to die—and even the very man who sold Him was appointed to it—so says the Scripture. Christ’s death was foreordained, and there was not only man’s hand in it, but God’s. “The lot is cast into the lap but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.” So it is true that man put Christ to death, but it was of the Lord’s disposal that Jesus Christ was slaughtered, “the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.”

Next, behold the goat that destiny has marked out to make the atonement. Come and *see it die*. The priest stabs it. Mark it in its agonies. Behold it struggling for a moment. Observe the blood as it gushes forth. Christians, you have here your Savior! See His Father’s vengeful sword sheathed in His heart? Behold His death agonies. See the clammy sweat upon His brow? Mark His tongue cleaving to the roof of His mouth! Hear His sighs and groans upon the cross. Listen to His shriek, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani.” And you have more, now, to think of than you could have if you only stood to see the death of a goat for your atonement. Mark the blood as from His wounded hands it flows and from His feet it finds a channel to the earth. From His open side in one great river see it gush! As the blood of the goat made the atonement typically, so, Christian, your Savior dying for you made the great atonement for your sins and you may go free!

But mark, this goat’s blood was not only shed for many for the remission of sins as a type of Christ, but that blood was *taken within the veil* and there it was sprinkled. So with Jesus’ blood: “Sprinkled now with blood, the throne.” The blood of other beasts (save only of the bullock) was offered before the Lord and was not brought into the most holy place. But this goat’s blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat, to make an atonement. So, O child of God, your Savior’s blood has made atonement within the veil. He has taken it there Himself; His own merits and His own agonies are now within the veil of glory, sprinkled now before the throne of God! O glorious sacrifice, as well as High Priest, we would adore You, for by Your one offering, You have made atonement forever, even as this one slaughtered goat made atonement once in a year for the sins of all the people!

### III. We now come to the EFFECTS.

One of the first effects of the death of this goat was *the sanctification of the holy things which had been made unholy*. You read at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> verse, “He shall sprinkle it upon the mercy seat: and he shall make an atonement for the holy place because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness.” The holy place was made unholy by the people. Where God dwelt should be holy—but where man comes, there must be some degree of unholiness. This blood of the goat made the unholy place holy. It was a sweet reflection to me as I came here, this morning. I thought, “I am going to the House of God and that house is a holy place.” But when I thought how many sinners had trodden its floors, how many unholy ones had joined in its songs, I thought, “Ah, it has been made defiled, but oh, there is no fear, for the blood of Jesus has made it holy again!” “Ah,” I thought, “there is our poor prayer that we shall offer—it is a holy prayer—for God the Holy Spirit dictates it. But then it is an unholy prayer, for *we* have uttered it and that which comes out of unholy lips like ours, must be tainted.” “But ah,” I thought again, “it is a prayer that has been sprinkled with blood and therefore it must be a holy prayer.” And as I looked on all the harps of this sanctuary, typical of your praises and on all the censers of this tabernacle, typical of your prayers, I thought within myself, “There is blood on them all, our holy service this day has been sprinkled with the blood of the great Jesus and as such it will be accepted through Him.” Oh, beloved, is it not sweet to reflect that our holy things are now really holy—that though sin is mixed with them all and we think them defiled—yet they are not, for the blood has washed out every stain? And the service this day is as holy in God’s sight as the service of the cherubim and is acceptable as the psalms of the glorified. We have washed our worship in the blood of the Lamb and it is accepted through Him!

But observe, the second great fact was that *their sins were taken away*. This was set forth by the scapegoat. You read at the 20<sup>th</sup> verse, “And when he has made an end of reconciling the holy place and the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.” When that was done, you see, the great and wonderful atonement was finished and the effects of it were set forth to the people. Now, I do not know how many

opinions there are about this scapegoat. One of the strangest opinions to me is that which is held by a very large portion of learned men and I see it is put in the margin of my Bible. Many learned men think that this word, scapegoat, Azazel, was the name of the devil who was worshipped by the heathen in the form of a goat. And they tell us that the first goat was offered to God as an atonement for sin and the other went away to be tormented by the devil and was called Azazel, just as Jesus was tormented by Satan in the wilderness. To this opinion, it is enough to object that it is difficult to conceive when the other goat was offered to God, this should be sent among demons. Indeed, the opinion is too gross for belief! It needs only to be mentioned to be refuted! Now the first goat is the Lord Jesus Christ making atonement by His death for the sins of the people. The second is sent away into the wilderness and nothing is heard of it any more, forever—and here a difficulty suggests itself—“Did Jesus Christ go where He was never heard of any more, forever?” That is what we have not to consider at all! The first goat was a type of the atonement—the second is the type of the *effect* of the atonement. The second goat went away, after the first was slaughtered, carrying the sins of the people on its head. And so it sets forth, as a scapegoat, how our sins are carried away into the depth of the wilderness. There was this year exhibited in the Art Union, a fine picture of the scapegoat dying in the wilderness. It was represented with a burning sky above it, its feet sticking in the mire, surrounded by hundreds of skeletons and there dying a doleful and miserable death.

Now, that was just a piece of gratuitous nonsense, for there is nothing in the Scripture that warrants it in the least degree! The rabbis tell us that this goat was taken by a man into the wilderness and there tumbled down a high rock to die, but, as an excellent commentator says, if the man did push it down the rock he did more than God ever told him to do! God told him to take a goat and let it go. As to what became of it, neither you nor I know anything—that is purposely left out. Our Lord Jesus Christ has taken away our sins upon His head, just as the scapegoat, and it is gone from us—that is all—the goat was not a type in its dying, or in regard to its subsequent fate. God has only told us that it should be taken by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. The most correct account seems to be that of one rabbi Jarchi who says that they generally took the goat twelve miles out of Jerusalem and at each mile there was a booth provided where the man who took it, might refresh himself till he came to the tenth mile. Then there was no more rest for him till he had seen the goat go. When he had come to the last mile, he stood and looked at the goat till it was gone and he could see it no more. Then the people's sins were all gone, too. Now, what a fine type that is if you do not inquire any further! But if you will get to meddling where God intended you to be

in ignorance, you will get nothing by it. This scapegoat was not designed to show us the victim or the sacrifice, but simply what became of the sins. The sins of the people are confessed upon that head. The goat is going. The people lose sight of it. A fit man goes with it. The sins are going from them and now the man has arrived at his destination. The man sees the goat in the distance skipping here and there over the mountains, glad of its liberty. It is not quite gone—a little farther—and now it is lost to sight. The man returns and says he can no longer see it—then the people clap their hands, for their sins are all gone, too! Oh, soul, can you see your sins all gone? We may have to take a long journey and carry our sins with us. But oh, how we watch and watch till they are utterly cast into the wilderness of forgetfulness where they shall never be found any more against us! But mark, this goat did not sacrificially *make* the atonement—it was a *type* of the *sins* going away—and so it was a *type* of the atonement. For you know, since our sins are thereby lost, it is the *fruit* of the atonement—but the sacrifice is the means of making it. So we have this great and glorious thought before us—that by the death of Christ, there was full, free, perfect remission for all those whose sins are laid upon His head, for I would have you notice that on this day all sins were laid on the scapegoat's head—sins of presumption, sins of ignorance, sins of uncleanness, little sins and great sins, few sins and many sins, sins against the law, sins against morality, sins against ceremonies, sins of all kinds were taken away on that great day of atonement. Sinner, oh, that you had a share in my Master's atonement! Oh, that you could see Him slaughtered on the cross! Then might you see Him go away leading captivity captive, and taking your sins where they might never be found!

I have now an interesting fact to tell you, and I am sure you will think it worth mentioning. Turn to Leviticus 25:9, and you will read—“Then shall you cause the trumpet of *the jubilee* to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall you make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.” So we see that one of the effects of the atonement was set forth to us in the fact that when the year of jubilee came, it was not on the first day of the year that it was proclaimed, but “on the tenth day of the seventh month.” Yes, I think that was the best part of it! The scapegoat is gone, and the sins are gone—and no sooner are they gone than the silver trumpet sounds—

***“The year of jubilee is come!***

***Return, you ransomed sinners, home.”***

On that day sinners go free; on that day our poor mortgaged lands are liberated, and our poor estates which have been forfeited by our spiritual bankruptcy are all returned to us! So when Jesus dies, slaves win their liberty, and lost ones receive spiritual life again! When He dies, heaven,

the long lost inheritance is ours! Blessed day! Atonement and jubilee ought to go together. Have you ever had a jubilee, my friends, in your hearts? If you have not, I can tell you it is because you have not had a day of atonement!

One more thought concerning the effects of this great day of atonement and you will observe that it runs throughout the whole of the chapter—*entrance within the veil*. Only on one day in the year might the high priest enter within the veil and then it must be for the great purposes of the atonement. Now, beloved, the atonement is finished and *you* may enter within the veil—“Having boldness, therefore, to enter into the holiest, let us come with boldness unto the throne of the heavenly grace.” The veil of the temple is rent by the atonement of Christ, and access to the throne of God is now ours! O child of God, I know not of any privilege which you have, save fellowship with Christ, which is more valuable than access to the throne! Access to the mercy seat is one of the greatest blessings mortals can enjoy. Precious throne of grace! I never would have had any right to come there if it had not been for the day of atonement! I never would have been able to come there if the throne had not been sprinkled with the blood!

**IV.** Now we come to notice, in the fourth place, what is our PROPER BEHAVIOR WHEN WE CONSIDER THE DAY OF ATONEMENT? You read at the 29<sup>th</sup> verse, “And this shall be a statute forever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall *afflict your souls*.” That is one thing that we ought to do when we remember the atonement. Surely, sinner, there is nothing that should move you to repentance like the thought of that great sacrifice of Christ which is necessary to wash away your guilt. “Law and terrors do but harden,” but I think the thought that Jesus died is enough to make us melt. It is well, when we hear the name of Calvary, always to shed a tear, for there is nothing that ought to make a sinner weep like the mention of the death of Jesus. On that day “you shall afflict your souls.” And even you, you Christians, when you think that your Savior died, should afflict your souls—you should say,

**“Alas! And did my Savior bleed?  
And did my Sovereign die?  
Would He devote that sacred head  
For such a worm as I?”**

Drops of grief ought to flow—yes, streams of sympathy with Him—to show our grief for what we did to pierce the Savior. “Afflict your souls,” O you children of Israel, for the day of atonement is come! Weep over your Jesus! Weep for Him who died; weep for Him who was murdered by your sins! “Afflict your souls.”

Then, better still, we are to “*do no work at all,*” as you find in the same verse, the 29<sup>th</sup>. When we consider the atonement, we should rest, and “do no work at all.” Rest from your works as God did from His on the great Sabbath of the world! Rest from your own righteousness, rest from your toilsome duties—rest in Him. “We that believe do enter into rest.” As soon as you see the atonement finished, say, “It is done, it is done! Now will I serve my God with zeal; now I will no longer seek to save myself—it is done, it is done forever!”

Then there was another thing which always happened. When the priest had made the atonement, it was usual for him, after he had washed himself, *to come out, again, in his glorious garments.* When the people saw him, they attended him to his house with joy and they offered burnt offerings of praise on that day—he being thankful that his life was spared, (having been allowed to go into the holy place and to come out of it)—and they being thankful that the atonement was accepted. Both of them offering burnt offerings as a type that they now desired to be “a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.” beloved, let us go into our houses with joy; let us go into our gates with praise. The atonement is finished! The High Priest is gone within the veil—salvation is now complete! He has laid aside the linen garments, and He stands before you with His breastplate, and His miter, and His embroidered vest, in all His glory! Hear how He rejoices over us, for He has redeemed His people, and ransomed them out of the hands of His enemies! Come, let us go home with the High Priest—let us clap our hands with joy, for He lives, He lives! The atonement is accepted and we are accepted, too! The scapegoat is gone; our sins are gone with it! Let us then go to our houses with thankfulness, and let us come up to His gates with praise, for He has loved His people, He has blessed His children and given unto us a day of atonement, and a day of acceptance, and a year of jubilee! Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

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

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# THE CHRISTIAN—A DEBTOR

## NO. 96

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING,  
AUGUST 10, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

*“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors.”*  
*Romans 8:12.*

OBSERVE the title whereby he addressed the Church—“brethren.” It was the gospel which taught Paul how to say *brother*. If he had not been a Christian, his Jewish dignity would never have condescended to call a Roman, “brother”—for a Jew sneered at the Gentile—and called him, “dog.” But now in the heart of this “Hebrew of the Hebrews,” there is the holy recognition of Christian fraternity without reserve or hypocrisy! The gospel softened the heart of Paul and made him forget all national animosities. Otherwise, one of the down-trodden race would not have called his oppressor, “brother.” The Roman had his iron foot on the Jew, yet Paul addresses those who subjugated his race, “brethren.” We repeat, a third time, it was the gospel which implanted in the soul of Paul the feeling of brotherhood and removed every wall of partition which divided him from any of the Lord’s elect. “So then,” he said, “we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God.” He proclaimed the doctrine of the “one blood” and gloried in the fact of “one family” in Christ. He felt within him affinities with the entire blood-bought race and loved them all. He had not seen many of those whom he addressed—yet they were known to him in the Spirit as partakers of one glorious and blessed hope. And, therefore, he called them, “brethren.” My friends, there is a cementing power in the grace of God which can scarcely be overestimated! It resets the dislocated bones of society, rivets the bonds of friendship and welds the broken metal of manhood into one united mass. It makes all, brothers and sisters, who feel its power. Grace links mankind in a common brotherhood; grace makes the great man give his hand to the poor, and confess a heavenly relationship; grace compels the intellectual, the learned, and the polite to stoop from their dignity to take hold of the ignorant and unlettered, and call them friends! Grace weaves the threads of our separate individualities into one undivided unity.

Let the gospel be really felt in the mind and it will toll the death-knell of selfishness, it will bring down the proud from their elevated solitude

and it will restore the down-trodden to the rights of our common manhood! We need only the gospel thoroughly preached to bring about “liberty, equality and fraternity,” in the highest and best sense of these words! Not the “liberty, equality and fraternity” which the democrat seeks for, which is frequently another name for *his own superiority*, but that which is true and real—that which will make us all free in the Spirit, make us all equal in the person of Christ Jesus and give us all this fraternity of brothers and sisters, seeing that we are all one with our Lord in the common bond of gospel relationship! Let the truths of Christianity work out their perfect work—and pride, bitterness, wrath, envy and malice must see their graves. This and this, alone, can restore the peace of divided families and unite disputing relatives. Only let the gospel be preached and there shall be an end of war—let it thoroughly pervade all ranks of society and saturate the mind of nations—and there shall be no more lifting of the spears. They shall be used for pruning hooks! No bathing of swords in blood, for they shall be turned into the peaceful plowshares of the soil. We shall then have no hosts encountering hosts. We shall have no millions slain for widows to deplore—but every man shall meet every other man and call him, “brother.” And men of every kindred and of every tribe shall see in the face of every man a *relative* allied to them by ties of blood. I am sure I feel myself the force of this word, “brother,” and, “sister,” with regard to many of you. If you are partakers of that glorious hope; if you are believers in our glorious Redeemer; if you have put your trust under the shadow of His wings—my hand and my heart with it—there is that word, “brothers and sisters,” for you!

And so, addressing you who love the Lord under that title, I come at once to the text, “Brethren, we are *debtors*.” We are all of us under obligations—let us consider the fact in the following manner—First, *how are we to understand this?* And secondly, *how ought it to affect us?*

**I. HOW ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND THIS, “Brethren, we are debtors”?** We may understand it in a thousand senses, for indeed we are debtors. Brothers and sisters, we who know and love the Lord, are debtors, not to one creditor, but to many!

We are debtors *to the past*. I think I see the fathers at their midnight lamps, the ancient saints in their much frequented closets, the thrice brave preachers in their pulpits denouncing error and the faithful pastors reproving wrong. To such who have preceded us, we owe the purity of the Church, and to them we are debtors! I think I see the martyrs and confessors rising from their tombs—I mark their hands still stained with blood and their bodies scarred with the wounds of persecution. They tell me that they of old maintained the truth of God and preached it in the midst of fire and sword—that they bore death in defense of the cause of

God—that they might hand down His holy word inviolate to us! I look on them and see among their glorious ranks some whose names are celebrated in every Christian land as the bold “lions of God,” the immovable pillars of truth! I see men of whom the world was not worthy, whose praise is in all the churches and who are now nearest the eternal throne of God. And as I look on them and they on me, I turn to you all and say, “brothers and sisters, we are debtors.” We are debtors to the men who crossed the sea and laughed at the fury of the storm, who risked the journeying and the weariness and all the various perils to which they were exposed, by reason of robbers and false brethren. We are debtors to each stake at Smithfield. We are debtors to the sacred ashes of the thousands who have there followed Jesus even unto death! We are debtors to the headless bodies of those who were beheaded for Christ Jesus. We are debtors to those who dared the lions in the amphitheatre and fought with wild beasts at Ephesus. We are debtors to the massacred thousands at the hands of the bloody Church of Rome and the murdered myriads of her pagan predecessors. We are debtors to them all! Remember the bloody day of St. Bartholomew, the valleys of Piedmont and the mountains of Switzerland! Let the sacred mounds of our fathers’ sepulchers speak to us. Is not this Bible opened and read by us, all, the gift of their self-denying faithfulness? Is not the free air we breathe, the purchase of their death? Did not they, by bitter suffering, achieve our liberty for us? And are we not debtors to them? Shall we not, in some degree, repay the immense debt of our obligation by seeking to make the future, debtors to *us*, that our descendants may look back and acknowledge that they owe us thanks for preserving the Scriptures, for maintaining liberty, for glorifying God? Brethren, we are debtors to the past!

And I am quite sure we are debtors *to the present*. Wherever we go, we gather fresh proofs of the common observation that we are living in a most marvelous age! It is an oft-repeated truth and one which, perhaps, has almost lost its meaning from being so often repeated, that this is the very crisis. The world has always been in a crisis, but this seems to us to be a peculiar one. We have around us appliances for doing good such as men never possessed before. We behold around us machinery for doing evil, such as never was at work even in earth’s worst days! Good men are laboring, at least with usual zeal, and evil men are strenuously plying their craft of evil! Infidelity, popery and every other phase of anti-Christ are now straining every nerve. The tug of war is now with us. Look around you and learn your duty. The work is not yet done; the time of folding of hands has not yet arrived! Our swords must not yet see their scabbards, for the foe is not yet slain. We see, in many a land, the proudest dynasties and tyrannies still crushing, with their mountain

weight, every free motion of the consciences and hearts of men. We see, on the other hand, the truest heroism for the right and the greatest devotion to the truth of God in hearts that God has touched. We have a work to do, as great as our forefathers and, perhaps, far greater! The enemies of truth are more numerous and subtle than ever and the needs of the Church are greater than at any preceding time! If we are not debtors to the present, then men were never debtors to their age and their time. Brothers and sisters, we are debtors to the hour in which we live! Oh, that we might stamp it with truth, and that God might help us to impress upon its wings some proof that it has not flown by neglected and unheeded!

And, brethren, we are debtors *to the future*. If we, the children of God, are not valiant for truth, now—if we maintain not the great standard of God's omnipotent truth—we shall be traitors to our liege Lord! Who can tell the fearful consequences to future generations if we now betray our trust? If we suffer orthodoxy to fail, or God's truth to be dishonored, future generations will despise and curse our name! If we now allow the good vessel of gospel truth to be drifted by adverse winds upon the rock; if we keep not good watch to her helm, and cry not well to her great Master that she may be led to a prosperous end, surely those who are to succeed us will look on us with scorn, and say, "Shame on the men who had so great and glorious a mission and neglected it! They handed down to us a beclouded gospel and an impure Church!" Stand up, you warriors of the truth; stand up firmly, for you are debtors to the future, even as you are debtors to the past! Sow well, for others must reap; you are fountains for coming generations. O, be careful that your streams are pure. May the Spirit of God enable you so to live that you can bequeath your example as a legacy to the future!

And as we are debtors to all times, so we are all debtors *to all classes*. But there are some that always get well paid for what they do and, therefore, I shall not mention them, since I am not aware that their claims need my advocacy. We may be remarkably indebted to members of parliament, but for the little they do, they are tolerably well rewarded. At least we take it that the place is more an honor to some of them than they are to their place! It may be true that we owe a great deal to the higher ranks of society. We may possibly, in some mysterious way, be under much obligation to the sacred personages who are styled lords and bishops—but it is not necessary that I should stand up for their claims, for I have no doubt they will take good care of themselves! At any rate, they have usually done so and have not allowed themselves to be robbed of much of their deservings. (Who would wish that they should? But it is possible to pay too dearly, especially when you could get on as well with-

out them as with them). I shall not refer to any class of society and say of them, we are debtors, except to one and that is the poor. My brothers and sisters, we are debtors to the poor. “What?” someone says, “I, debtor to the *poor*?” Yes, My Lady, you are a debtor to the poorest man that ever walked the earth. The beggar shivering in his rags may owe you something, if you give him alms—but you owe him something more. Charity to the poor is a debt! We are not at liberty to give or to refuse. God requires us to remember the poor—and their poverty is a claim upon our generosity. But in the case of the believing poor, their claim upon us is far more binding and I beseech you do not neglect it! O how much we owe them! When I think how the poor toil, day after day, and receive barely enough to keep their souls within their bodies. When I think how frequently they serve their Church, unhonored and unrewarded. I know some of them who perform the hardest deeds of service for our common Christianity—and are yet passed by with neglect and scorn. When I remember how many of them are toiling in the Sunday school, having neither salary nor reward. When I consider how many of the lower classes are as prayerful, as careful, as honest, as upright, as devout, as spiritual as others are—and frequently more so—I cannot but say that we are debtors to all God’s poor in a very large degree! We little know how many a blessing the poor man’s prayer brings down upon us. I beseech you, then, beloved, wherever you see a poor saint, wherever you behold an aged Christian, remember he cannot be so much in debt to you as you are to him, for you have much and he has but little and he cannot be in debt for what he has not!

Many of you will not feel the force of Christian reasons. Let me remind you that even you are obliged to the laboring poor. The rich man hoards wealth, the poor man makes it. Great men get the blessing, but poor men bring it down from heaven. Some men are the cisterns that hold God’s rain—other men are those who pray the rain from heaven, like very Elijahs—and many of these are to be found in the lower ranks of society. “Brethren, we are debtors.” What I have is not my own, but God’s. And if it is God’s, then it belongs to God’s poor! What the wealthiest man has is not his own, but God’s. And if it is God’s, then it is Christ’s, and if Christ’s, then His children’s. And Christ’s children are often those who are hungry, thirsty, destitute, afflicted and tormented. Take care, then of that class, brothers and sisters, for we are debtors to them!

But while I have thus mentioned some of the different classes to whom we are debtors, I have not yet come to the point on which I desire to press your attention. Brothers and sisters, we are debtors *to our covenant God*. That is the point which swallows up all! I owe nothing to the past, I owe nothing to the future, I owe nothing to the rich and nothing to the

poor, compared with what I owe to my God! I am mainly indebted to these because I owe so much to my God. Now, Christian, consider how you are a debtor to your God. Remember you are not debtor to God in a *legal* sense, as you were in Adam. You are no longer a debtor to God's *justice* as you once were. We are all born God's creatures and as such we are debtors to Him—to obey Him with all our body, soul and strength. When we have broken His commandments, as we, all of us, have, we are debtors to His *justice* and we owe to Him a vast amount of punishment which we are not able to pay. But of the Christian it can be said that he does not owe God's justice a solitary farthing, for Christ has paid the debt His people owed! I am a debtor to God's love, I am a debtor to God's grace, I am a debtor to God's power, I am a debtor to God's forgiving mercy—but I am no debtor to His justice—for He, Himself, will never accuse me of a debt once paid! It was said, "It is finished!" And by that was meant that whatever His people owed was wiped away forever from the book of remembrance! Christ, to the uttermost, has satisfied divine justice. The debt is paid, the hand-writing is nailed to the cross, the receipt is given and we are debtors to God's justice no longer! But then, because we are not debtors to God in that sense, we become ten times more debtors to God than we would have been otherwise! Because He has remitted all our debt of sin, we are all the more indebted to Him in another sense. Oh, Christian, stop and ponder for a moment, what a debtor you are to *Divine Sovereignty*! You are not as some who say that you did choose yourself to be saved—you believe that God could have destroyed you, if He had pleased—and that it is entirely of His own good pleasure that you are made one of His, while others are suffered to perish. Consider, then, how much you owe to His Sovereignty! If He had willed it, you would have been among the damned! If He had not willed your salvation, *all you could do* would have been utterly powerless to deliver you from hell! Remember how much you owe to His unselfish love which tore His own Son from His bosom that He might die for you! Let the cross and bloody sweat remind you of your obligation. Consider how much you owe to His forgiving *grace*, that after ten thousand affronts, He loves you as infinitely as ever! And after myriad sins His Spirit still resides within you! Consider what you owe to His *power*—how He has raised you from your death in sin. How He has preserved your spiritual life, how He has kept you from falling and how, though a thousand enemies have beset your path, you have been able to hold on your way! Consider what you owe to His *immortality*. Though *you* have changed a thousand times, He has not changed once. Though you have shifted your intentions and your will, yet He has not once swerved from His eternal purpose but still has held you fast. Consider you are as deep in debt as you can be to every attribute of

God. To God, you owe yourself and all you have. “Brethren, we are debtors.”

We are not only debtors to God in the light of gratitude for all these things but because of *our relationship to Him*. Are we not His sons and daughters and is there not a debt the son owes to the father which a lifetime of obedience can never remove? I feel that to the knee that held me and the breast that gave me sustenance, I owe more than I can ever pay. And to him who taught me and led me in the paths of truth I owe so much that I dare not speak of the tremendous weight of obligation due to him. Beloved, if God is a Father, where is His honor? And if we are His children, are we not thereby bound to love, serve and obey Him? Sonship towards an earthly parent brings with it a host of duties and shall the Everlasting Father be unregarded? No! The true son of God will never blush to acknowledge that he is in subjection to the Father of Spirits. He will rather glory in his high connection and, with reverence, obey the commands of his Heavenly Parent. Remember again, we are Christ's *brothers and sisters* and there is a debt in brotherhood. Brother owes to brother what he cannot pay until he dies. It is more than some men think to have been rocked in the same cradle and held on the same knee. Some esteem it nothing. Alas, it is a well-known truth that if you need help, you must go anywhere for it, save to your brother's house! Go not into your brother's house in the day of your adversity. Go to the greatest stranger, and he shall help you; go to your brother, and he shall often upbraid you. But this should not be so. Brotherhood has its ties of debt, and to my brother I owe what I shall not yet pay him. Beloved, are you brothers and sisters of Christ and do you think that you owe Him no love? Are you brothers and sisters of the saints, and think you that you ought not to love and serve them, even to the washing of their feet? Oh yes, I am sure you ought! I am afraid none of us feel enough how much we are debtors to God. Yes, I am certain that we do not. It is astonishing how much gratitude a man will feel to you if you have been only the instrument of doing him good. But how little gratitude he feels to God, the first cause of all! There have been many who have been won from drunkenness by hearing the preaching of God's Word even under myself—and those persons have been ready to carry me on their shoulders, from very gratitude, for joy! But I would be bound to say they make a far more feeble display of their thankfulness to my Master. At least, they seem to have lost their first love to Him far sooner than they did to His servant! We remember to be grateful to all except our God! Our little debts we can pay. Debts of honor, as we call them—which are no debts in some men's eyes—we can discharge. But the great and solemn debt we owe to God is

oftentimes passed by—neglected and forgotten. “Brethren, we are debtors.”

**II.** In the second place, very briefly, WHAT OUGHT WE TO DRAW FROM THIS DOCTRINE, that we are debtors?

First, we think we should learn *a lesson of humility*. If we are debtors, we never ought to be proud. All we can do for God is but a trifling acknowledgment of an infinite obligation! No, less—even our good works are gifts of His grace and do but put us under greater debt to the Author of them. Stop, then, you who are puffed up by your achievements! Consider you have but poorly performed, not a deed of supererogation, but of ordinary duty. How much have you done after all, young man? I thought I saw you the other day looking amazingly great because on such an occasion you really had done some little service to Christ’s Church. And you looked astonishingly proud about it. Young man, did you do more than you ought to have done? “No, I did not,” you say, “I was a debtor.” Then who should be proud of having paid only a part of his debt, when, after all, he owes a great deal more than he is worth? Is there anything to be proud of in having paid a farthing in the pound? I take it there is not. Let us do what we may; it is but a farthing in the pound that we shall ever be able to pay of the debt of gratitude we owe to God. It is curious to see how some men are proud of being greater debtors than others. One man has ten talents and oh, how proud he is; how he looks down upon another who has but one! He says, “Ah, you are a mean man. I have ten talents.” Well, then, you *owe* ten talents and your brother owes only one—why should you be proud that you owe more than he does? It would be a foolish pride, indeed, if two prisoners in the Queen’s Bench were to boast, one saying, “I owe a hundred pounds,” and the other replying, “I am a greater gentleman than you are, for I owe a thousand.” I have heard that in the Marshalsea of old, they did take rank according to the greatness of their debts. It is often so on earth—we take rank, at times, according to the greatness of our talents. But the greatness of our talents is only the amount of our debt—for the more we have, the more we owe. If a man walks the streets sticking his bill upon his breast, and proclaiming with pride that he is a debtor, you would say, “Surely he must be a madman! Lock him up!” And so if a man walks through the earth and lifts up his head because of what God has given him and says, “I am not to notice the poor, I am not to shake hands with the ignorant because I am so great and mighty,” you may, with equal reason, say, “Take that poor creature away! His pride is his insanity! Put him in safe custody and let him learn that all he has is his debt and that he has no cause for pride.”

Then again, *how zealous we should be for our Master!* Though we cannot pay all, we can at least acknowledge the debt. It is something on the part of a debtor if he will but acknowledge the claim of his creditor. Oh, how ought we, day by day to seek, by living unto God, to acknowledge the debt we owe to Him! And, if we cannot pay Him the principal, yet to give Him some little interest upon the talent which He has lent to us—and upon those stupendous mercies which He has granted to us! I beseech you, my dear friends, take this thought with you wherever you go—"I am a debtor, I must serve my God. It is not left to my pleasure whether I will do it or not. I am a debtor and I must serve Him."

If we all believed this, how much easier it would be to get our churches into good order! I go to one brother and I say, "Brother, there is such-and-such an office in the Sunday school; will you take it?" "Well, sir, you know how much I love the cause, and how earnest I am in doing everything that I can to serve my Maker, but (now comes the end of it all) I really work so hard all the week that I cannot afford to go out on the Sabbath to Sunday schools." There, you see, that man does not know that he is a debtor! I take him a bill tomorrow morning and he says, "Do you come begging?" I say, "No. I have brought a bill. Look at it." "Oh yes," he says, "I see. Here is the cash." Now that is the way to act—to feel and acknowledge that you are a debtor! When there is a thing to be done, do it and say, "Do not thank me for it, I have only done what I ought to have done. I have only paid the debt that I owed."

Then let me give you just one piece of homely advice before I send you away—be just before you are generous and especially before you are generous to yourselves! Take care that you pay your debts before you spend money upon your pleasures. I would recommend that to many Christians. Now, there are some of you, here, troubling us tonight and making us very hot. You have been very generous to yourselves by coming here, but not very just to your ministers in neglecting the places of worship where you ought to have gone. You said to yourselves, "We have no doubt we ought to be there—that is our debt—nevertheless we should like to gratify our curiosity for once, by hearing this preacher who will be sure to say something extravagant that will furnish the occasion for a joke for the next fortnight." Now, why did you come here before you had paid your debt? You should have rallied around your own minister and strengthened his hands in the work of the Lord. Again—how many a man is there who says, "I want such-and-such a luxury. I know the cause of God demands of me more than I give it, but I must have that luxury. That shilling shall go to me and not to God." Now, if you had a debtor who owed you more than he could pay, and you saw him going off on pleasure in a horse and gig tomorrow, you would say, "It is all very well

his having that fine horse and gig and going down to Greenwich—but I would rather that he should pay me the ten-pound note I lent him the other day. If he cannot afford to pay, he ought to stay home till he can.” So in regard to God: We come and spend our time and our money upon our pleasures before we pay our just and fair debts. Now what is not right towards man is not right towards God! If it is robbing man to spend the money in pleasure wherewith we ought to pay our debts, it is robbing God if we employ our time, our talents, or our money in anything but His service until we feel we have done our share in that service! I beseech you, members of churches—deacons, or whatever you may be—lay this to heart! To God’s cause you are debtors! Do not expect to get thanked at last for doing much, for, after all you have done, you will only have done what is your duty.

Now, farewell to such of you as are debtors in that sense; but just one word to those who are debtors in the other sense. Sinner, you who owe to God’s justice, you who have never been pardoned—what will you do when it is time to pay up? My friend over there, you who have run up a score of black sins—what will you do when that day comes with no Christ to pay your debts for you? What will you do if you are out of God and out of Christ at the last day, when the whole roll of your debts to God shall be opened, and you have no Christ to give you a discharge? I beseech you, “Agree with your creditor quickly, while you are in the way with him, lest he delivers you to the judge and the judge delivers you to the officer to cast you into prison: verily I say unto you, you shall not come out till you have paid the uttermost farthing.” But if you agree with your creditor, He will, for Jesus’ sake, blot out all your debts, and set you at liberty so that you shall never be responsible for your iniquities!

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# PRIDE AND HUMILITY

## NO. 97

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING,  
AUGUST 17, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Before destruction the heart of man is haughty,  
and before honor is humility.”  
Proverbs 18:12.***

ALMOST every event has its prophetic prelude. It is an old and common saying, that, “Coming events cast their shadows before them.” The wise man teaches us the same lesson in the verse before us. When destruction walks through the land, it casts its shadow—it is in the shape of pride. When honor visits a man’s house, it casts its shadow before it—it is in the fashion of humility. “Before destruction the heart of man is haughty.” Pride is as surely the sign of destruction as the change of mercury in the weatherglass is the sign of rain! And far more infallibly so than that, “Before honor is humility,” even as before the summer, sweet birds return to sing in our land! Everything has its prelude. The prelude of destruction is pride and of honor, humility. There is nothing into which the heart of man so easily falls as pride; and there is no vice which is more frequently, more emphatically and more eloquently condemned in Scripture! Against pride prophets have lifted up their voices, evangelists have spoken and teachers have discoursed. Yes, more—the everlasting God has mounted to the very heights of eloquence when He would condemn the pride of man! The full gushing of the Eternal’s mighty language has been most gloriously displayed in the condemnation of the pride of human nature. Perhaps the most eloquent passage of God’s Word is to be found towards the conclusion of the book of Job, where, in most splendid strains of unanswerable eloquence, God hides pride from man by utterly confounding him! And there is another very eloquent passage in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of Isaiah where the Lord’s holy anger seems to have risen up and it waxes hot against the pride of man, when He would utterly and effectually condemn it. He says concerning the great and mighty king of Babylon, “Hell from beneath is moved for you to meet you at your coming. It stirs up the dead for you, even all the chief ones of the earth. It has raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto you, Are you also become weak as we? Are you become like unto us? Your pomp is brought down to the grave and

the noise of your viols: the worm is spread under you and the worms cover you. How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How are you cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations! For you have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet you shall be brought down to hell to the sides of the pit. They that see you shall narrowly look upon you, and consider you, saying, is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?"

Mark how God addresses him, describing hell, itself, as being astonished at his fall, seeing that he had mounted so high. And yet declaring, assuredly, that his height and greatness were nothing to the Almighty, that He would put him down, even though, like an eagle he had built his nest among the stars. I say there is nothing more eloquently condemned in Scripture than pride—and yet there is no trap into which we poor silly birds so easily flee, no pitfall into which like foolish beasts of the earth we so continually run! On the other hand, humility is a divine grace that has many promises given to it in the Scripture. Perhaps more promises are given to faith and love which are often considered to be the brightest of the train of virtues—yet humility holds by no means an inferior place in God's Word, and there are hundreds of promises linked to it. Every grace seems to be like a nail on which precious blessings hang and humility has many a mercy suspended from it. "He that exalts himself shall be abased and he that humbles himself shall be exalted." "Blessed are the poor in spirit," and in multitudes of other passages, we are reminded that God loves the humble but that He "brings down the mighty from their seats and exalts the humble and meek." Now, this morning, we shall have a word to say concerning *pride and humility*. May the Holy Spirit preserve us from the one and produce in our hearts the other!

**I.** In the first place, we shall have something to say concerning the vice of PRIDE. "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty." Pride, *what is it?* Pride, *where is its seat?* The heart of man; and pride, *what is its consequence?* Destruction!

**1.** In the first place, I must try to *describe* pride to you. I might paint it as being the worst malformation of all the monstrous things in creation! It has nothing lovely in it, nothing in proportion but everything in disorder. It is altogether the very reverse of the creatures which God has made, which are pure and holy. Pride, the first-born son of hell, is, indeed, like its parent—all unclean and vile—and in it there is neither form, fashion, nor comeliness.

In the first place, pride is a *groundless thing*. It stands on the sands. Or worse than that, it puts its foot on the billows which yield beneath its tread. Or worse still, it stands on bubbles which soon must burst beneath its feet. Of all things, pride has the worst foothold. It has no solid rock on earth whereon to place itself. We have reasons for almost everything, but we have no reasons for pride! Pride is a thing which should be unnatural to us, for we have nothing to be proud of. What is there in man of which he should glory? Our very creation is enough to humble us—what are we but creatures of today? Our frailty should be sufficient to lay us low for we shall be gone tomorrow. Our ignorance should tend to keep pride from our lips. What are we, but like the wild ass's colt which knows nothing? And our sins ought effectually to stop our mouths and lay us in the dust. Of all things in the world, pride towards God is that which has the very least excuse. It has neither stick nor stone whereon to build. Yet like the spider, it carries its own web in its bowels and can, of itself, spin that wherewith to catch its prey. It seems to stand upon itself, for it has nothing besides where it can rest. Oh, man, learn to reject pride, seeing that you have no reason for it! Whatever you are, you have nothing to make you proud. The more you have, the more you are in debt to God—and you should not be proud of that which renders you a debtor. Consider your origin—look back to the hole of the pit from where you were dug. Consider what you would have been, even now, if it were not for divine grace. And consider that you will yet be lost in hell if grace does not hold you up! Consider that among the damned, there are none that would have been more damned than yourself, if grace had not kept you from destruction. Let this consideration humble you, that you have nothing whereon to ground your pride.

Again, it is a *brainless thing* as well as a groundless thing for it brings no profit with it. There is no wisdom in a self-exaltation. Other vices have some excuse, for men seem to gain by them. Avarice, pleasure, lust have some plea. But the man who is proud sells his soul cheaply! He opens wide the floodgates of his heart to let men see how deep is the flood within his soul. Then suddenly it flows out and all is gone—and all is nothing—or one puff of empty wind, one word of sweet applause—the soul is gone and not a drop is left! In almost every other sin, we gather up the ashes when the fire is gone—but here, what is left? The covetous man has his shining gold, but what has the proud man? He has less than he would have had without his pride and is no gainer whatever! Oh, man, if you were as mighty as Gabriel and had all his holiness, still you would be a complete fool to be proud, for pride would sink you from your angel station to the rank of devils and bring you from the place where Lucifer, son of the morning, once dwelt, to take up your abode with hideous

fiends in perdition! Pride exalts its head and seeks to honor itself, but it is, of all things, most despised. It sought to plant crowns upon its brow and so it has done—but its head was hot and it put an ice crown there—and it melted all away. Poor pride has sometimes decked itself out finely. It has put on its most gaudy apparel and said to others, “How brilliant I appear!” But, ah, pride, like a harlequin dressed in your colors, you are all the more fool for that—you are but a gazing stock for fools less foolish than yourself! You have no crown, as you think you have, nothing solid and real—all is empty and vain. If you, O man, desire shame, be proud! A monarch has waded through slaughter to a throne and shut the gates of mercy on mankind to win a little glory. But when he has exalted himself and has been proud, worms have devoured him, like Herod, or have devoured his empire till it passed away—with all its pride and glory! Pride wins no crown. Men never honor it, not even the menial slaves of earth, for all men look down on the proud man, and think him less than they are.

Again, pride is the *maddest thing* that can exist. It feeds upon its own vitals. It will take away its own life so that with its blood it may make a purple cape for its shoulders! It saps and undermines its own house that it may build its pinnacles a little higher—and then the whole structure tumbles down! Nothing proves men as mad as pride! For this they have given up rest and ease and repose to find rank and power among men. For this they have dared to risk their hope of salvation, to leave the gentle yoke of Jesus and go toiling wearily along the way of life, seeking to save themselves by their own works! And at last they stagger into the mire of fell despair. Oh, man, hate pride—flee from it, abhor it, let it not dwell within you! If you want to have a madman in your heart, embrace pride, for you shall never find one madder than he!

Then pride is a *flexible thing*. It changes its shape. It is all forms in the world. You may find it in any fashion you choose. You may see it in the beggar’s rags as well as in the rich man’s garment. It dwells with the rich and with the poor. The man without a shoe to his foot may be as proud as if he were riding in a chariot! Pride can be found in every rank of society—among all classes of men. Sometimes it is an Arminian and talks about the power of the creature. Then it turns Calvinist and boasts of its fancied security—forgetful of the Maker—who alone can keep our faith alive! Pride can profess any form of religion. It may be a Quaker and wear no collar to its coat. It may be a Churchman and worship God in splendid cathedrals. It may be a Dissenter and go to the common meeting house. It is one of the most universal things in the world! It attends all kinds of chapels and churches. Go where you will, you will see pride. It comes up with us to the house of God. It goes with us to our houses. It is

found in the market and the exchange, in the streets and everywhere! Let me hint at one or two of the forms which it assumes. Sometimes pride takes the doctrinal shape. It teaches the doctrine of self-sufficiency. It tells us what man can do and will not acknowledge that we are lost, fallen, debased and ruined creatures, as we are. It hates divine sovereignty and rails at election. Then if it is driven from that, it takes another form—agrees that the doctrine of free grace is true, but does not feel it! It acknowledges that salvation is of the Lord, alone, but still it prompts men to seek heaven by their own works, even by the deeds of the law! And when driven from that, it will persuade men to join something *with* Christ in the matter of salvation. And when that is all torn up and the poor rag of our righteousness is all burned, pride will get into the Christian's heart as well as the sinner's—it will flourish under the name of self-sufficiency, teaching the Christian that he is “rich and increased in goods, having need of nothing.” It will tell him that he does not need daily grace, that past experience will do for tomorrow—that he knows enough, does enough, prays enough. It will make him forget that he has “not yet attained.” It will not allow him to press forward to the things that are before, forgetting the things that are behind. It enters into his heart and tempts the believer to set up an independent business for himself. And until the Lord brings about a spiritual bankruptcy, pride will keep him from going to God! Pride has ten thousand shapes. It is not always that stiff and starched gentleman that you picture it. It is a vile, creeping, insinuating thing that will twist itself like a serpent into our hearts! It will talk of humility and prate about being dust and ashes. I have known men talk about their corruption most marvelously, pretending to be all humility, while at the same time they were the most proud wretches that could be found this side the gulf of separation! Oh, my friends, you cannot tell how many shapes pride will assume—look sharp about you, or you will be deceived by it and when you think you are entertaining angels, you will find you have been receiving devils unawares!

**2.** Now, I have to speak of *the seat of pride*—the heart. The true throne of pride is the heart of man. If, my dear friends, we desire, by God's grace, to put down pride, the only way is to begin with the heart. Now let me tell you a parable, in the form of an eastern story which will set this truth of God in its proper light. A wise man in the East, called a dervish, in his wanderings came suddenly upon a mountain. And he saw beneath his feet a smiling valley, in the midst of which there flowed a river. The sun was shining on the stream and the water, as it reflected the sunlight, looked pure and beautiful. When he descended, he found it was muddy and the water utterly unfit for drinking. Hard by, he saw a young man, in the dress of a shepherd, who was, with much diligence, filtering the wa-

ter for his flocks. At one moment he placed some water into a pitcher and then allowed it to stand. After it had settled, he poured the clean fluid into a cistern. Then, in another place, he would be seen turning aside the current for a little and letting it ripple over the sand and stones that it might be filtered and the impurities removed. The dervish watched the young man endeavoring to fill a large cistern with clear water and said to him, "My son, why all this toil?—what purpose do you answer by it?" The young man replied, "Father, I am a shepherd. This water is so filthy that my flock will not drink of it and, therefore, I am obliged to purify it, little by little, so I collect enough in this way that they may drink, but it is hard work." So saying, he wiped the sweat from his brow, for he was exhausted with his toil. "Right well have you labored," said the wise man, "but do you know your toil is not well applied? With half the labor you might attain a better end. I should conceive that the source of this stream must be impure and polluted. Let us take a pilgrimage together and see." They then walked some miles, climbing their way over many a rock, until they came to a spot where the stream took its rise. When they came near to it, they saw flocks of wild fowls flying away and wild beasts of the earth rushing into the forest—these had come to drink and had soiled the water with their feet. They found an open well which kept continually flowing, but by reason of these creatures, which perpetually disturbed it, the stream was always turbid and muddy. "My son," said the wise man, "set to work, now, to protect the fountain and guard the well which is the source of this stream. And when you have done that, if you can keep these wild beasts and fowls away, the stream will flow of itself, all pure and clear and you will have no longer need for your toil." The young man did it and as he labored the wise man said to him, "My son, hear the word of wisdom—if you are wrong, seek not to correct your outward life, but seek first to get your heart correct, for out of it are the issues of life and your life shall be pure when once your heart is so."

So if we would get rid of pride, we should not proceed to arrange our dress by adopting some special costume. Or to qualify our language by using an outlandish tongue—but let us seek of God that He would purify our hearts from pride and then assuredly, if pride is purged from the heart, our life, also, shall be humble. Make the tree good and then the fruit will be good. Make the fountain pure and the stream will be sweet. Oh that God might grant us all, by His grace, that our hearts may be kept with diligence, so that pride may never enter there lest we be haughty in our hearts and find that afterwards comes wrath!

**3.** This brings me to the other point, which is the *consequence of pride*—destruction—a fact which we can prove by hundreds of instances in Scripture. When men have become proud, destruction has come upon

them. See you yon bright angel chanting the loud anthem of praise before his Maker's throne? Can anything tarnish that angel's glory, rob him of his harp, and despoil him of his crown? Yes, see there enters a destroyer whose name is pride. He assaults the angel and his harp strings are snapped in two. His crown is taken from his brow and his glory is departed—and yon falling spirit descending into hell is he who once was Lucifer, son of the morning! He has now become father of nights, even the lord of darkness, Satan, the fallen one. See you again that happy pair walking in the midst of luscious fruits and flowery walks and bowers of paradise? Can anything spoil Eden and ruin those happy beings? Yes, pride comes in the shape of a serpent and asks them to seek to be as gods. They eat of the forbidden fruit and pride withers their paradise and blasts their Eden! Out they go to till the ground, whence they were taken to beget and to bring forth us who are their children—sons of toil and sorrow! Do you see that man after God's own heart, continually singing his Maker's praise? Can anything make him sad? Can you suppose that he shall ever be laid prostrate on the earth, groaning, and crying and asking, "That the bones which God has broken may rejoice?" Yes, pride can do that! It will put into his heart that he will number his people, that he will count the tribes of Israel to show how great and mighty is his empire. It is done and a terrible pestilence sweeps over his land on account of his pride. Let David's aching heart show how destruction comes to a man's glory when he once begins to make a god of it! See that other good and holy man who, like David, was much after God's own heart? He is rich and increased in goods. The Babylonian ambassadors have come and he shows them all he has. Do you not hear that threat, "Your treasures shall be carried away and your sons and your daughters shall be servants to the king of Babylon"? The destruction of Hezekiah's wealth must come because he is proud! But for the most notable instance of all, let me show you yonder palace, perhaps the most magnificent which has even yet been built. In it there walks one who, lifting up his head on high, as if he were more than mortal man, exclaims, "See you this great Babylon that I have built?" Oh, pride, what have you done? You have more power than a wizard's wand! Mark the mighty builder of Babylon creeping on the earth. Like oxen, he is devouring grass—his nails have grown like birds' claws, his hair like eagles' feathers and his heart has gone from him. Pride did all that—that it might be fulfilled which God has written—"Before destruction the heart of man is haughty."

Is your heart haughty, *sinner*, this morning? Do you despise God's sovereignty? Will you not submit yourself to Christ's yoke? Do you seek to weave a righteousness of your own? Are you seeking to be or to do something? Are you desirous of being great and mighty in your own es-

teem? Hear me then, sinner—destruction is coming upon you! As truly as ever you exalt yourself, you shall be abased! Your destruction, in the fullest and blackest sense of the word, is hurrying on to overwhelm you. And oh, Christian is your heart haughty this morning? Are you come here glorying in your graces? Are you proud of yourself, that you have had such high frames and such sweet experiences? Mark you, brother, or sister, there is a destruction coming to you, also! Some of your proud things will be pulled up by the roots, some of your graces will be shattered and your good works, perhaps, will become loathsome to you and you will abhor yourself in dust and ashes! As truly as ever you exalt yourself, there will be a destruction come to you! O saint—the destruction of your joys and of your comforts—though, by His grace, there can be no destruction of your soul!

Pride, you know, is most likely to meet with destruction because it is too tall to walk upright. It is most likely to tumble down because it is always looking upward in its ambition and never looks to its feet. If there is a pitfall in the way, or even a stone—down it goes! It is sure to tumble because it is never contented with being where it is. It is always seeking to be climbing—and boys who will climb must expect to fall. Pride is foolhardy and will venture upon scaling any rock. Sometimes it holds on by a brier and that pricks it. Sometimes by a flint and that cuts it. There it goes, toiling and laboring on, till it gets as high as it can and then, from its very height, it is likely to fall. Nature, itself, tells us to avoid high things. Who is he that can stand upon a high hill without a reeling brain and without a temptation to cast him down? Pride, when most successful, stands in slippery places. Who would choose to dwell on a pinnacle of the temple? That is where pride has built its house and truly, it seems but natural that pride should fall down if pride will go up! God will carry out this saying, “Before destruction, the heart of man is haughty.” Yet beloved, I am persuaded that all I can say to you, or to myself, can never keep pride from us! The Lord, alone, can bolt the door of the heart against pride! Pride is like the flies of Egypt—all Pharaoh’s soldiers could not keep them out—and I am sure all the strong resolutions and devout aspirations we may have cannot keep pride out unless the Lord God Almighty sends a strong wind of His Holy Spirit to sweep it away!

**II.** Now, let us consider briefly the last part of the text, “BEFORE HONOR IS HUMILITY.” So then, you see our heavenly Father does not say that we are not to have honor! He has not forbidden it. He has only forbidden us to be *proud of it*. A good man may have honor in this life. Daniel had honor before the people. Joseph rode in the second chariot and the people bowed the knee before him. God often clothes His children with honor in the face of their adversaries and makes the wicked

confess that the Lord is with them in deed and in truth. But God forbids our making that honor a cloak for pride and bids us seek humility which always accompanies as well as precedes true honor.

1. Now let us briefly inquire, in the first place, *what is humility?* The best definition I have ever met with is, “to think rightly of ourselves.” Humility is to make a right estimate of one’s self. It is no humility for a man to think less of himself than he ought, though it might rather puzzle him to do that. Some persons, when they know they can do a thing, tell you they cannot—but do you call that humility? A man is asked to take part in some meeting. “No,” he says, “I have no ability.” Yet, if you were to say so, yourself, he would be offended at you. It is not humility for a man to stand up and depreciate himself and say he cannot do this, that, or the other, when he knows that he is lying! If God gives a man a talent, do you think the man does not know it? If a man has ten talents, he has no right to be dishonest to his Maker and to say, “Lord, you have only given me five.” It is not humility to underrate yourself; humility is to think of yourself, if you can, as God thinks of you. It is to feel that if we have talents, God has given them to us and let it be seen that, like freight in a vessel, they tend to sink us low. The more we have, the lower we ought to lie. Humility is not to say, “I have not this gift,” but it is to say, “I have the gift and I must use it for my Master’s glory. I must never seek any honor for myself for what have I that I have not received?” But, beloved, humility is to feel ourselves lost, ruined and undone. To be killed by the same hand which, afterwards, makes us alive. To be ground to pieces as to our own doings and willings, to know and trust in none but Jesus, to be brought to feel and sing —

**“Nothing in my hands I bring,  
Simply to Your cross I cling.”**

Humility is to feel that we have no power of ourselves, but that it all comes from God. Humility is to lean on our Beloved, to believe that He has trod the winepress alone, to lie on His bosom and slumber sweetly there. It is to exalt Him and think less than nothing of ourselves. It is, in fact, to annihilate self and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ as all-in-all.

2. Now, what is *the seat or throne of humility?* The throne of humility must be the heart. I do hate, of all things, that humility which lives in the face. There are some persons who always seem to be so very humble when you are with them. But you can discover there is something underneath it all—and when they are in some other society—they will brag and say how you told them your whole heart. Take heed of the men who allow you to lay your head in their lap, and betray you into the hands of the Philistines! I have met with such persons. I remember a man who used to pray with great apparent humility—and then would go and abuse

his servants and make a noise with all his farming men. He was the stiffest and most proud man in the church, yet he invariably used to tell the Lord, in prayer, that he was nothing but dust and ashes—he would lay his hand on his lips and his mouth in the dust and cry, “Unclean, unclean.” Indeed he talked of himself in the most despairing way, but I am sure if God had spoken to him, He must have said, “O, you that lie before My throne, you say this, but you do not feel it, for you will go your way and take your brother by the throat, exalt yourself above all your fellow creatures, and be a very Diotrephes in the church and a Herod in the world.” I dislike that humility which rests in outward things. That is a kind of oily, sanctimonious, proud humility which is not the genuine article, though it is sometimes extremely like it. You may be deceived by it, once or twice, but by-and-by you discover that it is a wolf dexterously covered with sheep’s clothing! It arrays itself in the simplest dress in the world. It talks in the gentlest and humblest style. It says, “We must not intrude our own peculiar sentiments but must always walk in love and charity.” But after all, what is it? It is charitable to all except those who hold God’s truth and it is humble to all when it is forced to be humble! It is like one of whom, I dare say, you have read in your childish books—

**“So, stooping down, as needs he must  
Who cannot stand upright.”**

True humility does not continually talk about, “dust and ashes,” and prate about its infirmities, but it *feels* all that which others say, for it possesses an inwrought feeling of its own nothingness.

Very likely the most humble man in the world won’t bend to anybody. John Knox was a truly humble man, yet if you had seen him march before Queen Mary with the Bible in his hand, to reprove her, you would have rashly said, “What a proud man!”

Cringing men that bow before everybody are truly proud men, but humble men are those who think themselves so little, they do not think it worth while to stoop to serve themselves. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were humble men, for they did not think their lives were worth enough to save them by a sin. Daniel was a humble man—he did not think his place, his station, his whole self—worth enough to save them by leaving off prayer! Humility is a thing which must be genuine. The imitation of it is the nearest thing in the world to pride. Seek of God, dear friends, the gift of true humility. Seek to have that breaking in pieces by the Holy Spirit, that breaking in the mortar with the pestle which God Himself gives to His children! Seek that every twig of His rod may drive pride out of you so that by the blueness of your wound, your soul may be made better! Seek of Christ—that He may take you to Calvary and that He may show you His brightness and His glory—that you may be humble

before Him. Never ask to be a mean, cringing, fawning thing. Ask God to make you a man—those are scarce things nowadays—a man who only fears God, who knows no fear of any other kind. Do not give yourselves up to any man’s power, or guidance, or rule—but ask of God that you may have that humility towards Him which gives you the noble bearing of a Christian before others. Some think that ministers are proud when they resent any interference with their ministry. I consider they would be proud if they allowed it for the sake of peace, which is only another word for their own self-seeking. It is a great mercy when God gives a man freedom from everybody—when he can go into his pulpit careless of what others may think of him. I conceive that a minister should be like a lighthouse keeper—he is out at sea and nobody can suggest to him that he had better light his candles a little later, or anything of the kind. He knows his duty and he keeps his lamps burning—if he were to follow the opinions of the people on shore, his light might be extinguished altogether! It is a merciful providence that they cannot get to him, so he goes on easily, obeys his regulations as he reads them and cares little for other people’s interpretation. So a minister should not be a weathercock that is turned by the wind, but he should be one who turns the wind. He should not be one who is ruled by others, but one who knows how to stand firm and fast and keep his light burning, trusting always in God—believing that if God has raised him up, He will not desert him, but will teach him, by His Holy Spirit, without the ever-changing advice of men!

**3.** Now, in the last place, *what comes of humility?* “Before honor is humility.” Humility is the herald which ushers in the great king. It walks before honor and he who has humility will have honor afterwards. I will only apply this spiritually. Have you been brought, today, to feel that in yourself you are less than nothing? Are you humbled in the sight of God, to know your own unworthiness, your fallen estate in Adam and the ruin you have brought upon yourself by your own sins? Have you been brought to feel yourself incapable of working out your own salvation, unless God shall work in you, to will and to do of His own good pleasure? Have you been brought to say, “Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner”? Well, then, as true as the text is in the Bible, you shall have honor, by-and-by! “Such honor have all the saints.” You shall soon have honor to be washed from all your guilt. You shall soon have honor to be clothed in the robes of Jesus, in the royal garments of the King! You shall soon have honor to be adopted into His family, to be received among the blood-washed ones who have been justified by faith. You shall have honor to be borne, as on eagles’ wings, to be carried across the river, and at last, to sing His praise, who has been the “death of deaths, and hell’s destruction.” You shall have honor to wear the crown and wave the palm,

one day, for you now have that humility which comes from God! You may fear that because you are now humbled by God, you must perish. I beseech you do not think so! As truly as ever the Lord has humbled you, He will exalt you! And the more you are brought low, the less hope you have of mercy, the more you are in the dust—so much the more reason you have to hope! So far from the bottom of the sea being a place over which we cannot be carried to heaven, it is one of the nearest places to heaven's gate! And if you are brought to the very lowest place to which even Jonah descended, you are so much the nearer being accepted. The more you know your vileness—remember the blacker, the filthier, the more unworthy you are in your own esteem—so much the more right have you to expect that you will be saved! Verily, honor shall come after humility! Humble souls, rejoice!

Proud souls, go on in your proud ways, but know that your end is destruction! Climb up the ladder of your pride—you shall fall over on the other side and be dashed to pieces. Ascend the steep hill of your glory—the higher you climb, the more terrible will be your fall. For know you this, that against none has the Lord Almighty bent His bow more often, and against none has He shot His arrows more furiously than against the proud and mighty man that exalts himself! Bow down, O man, bow down! “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 who put their trust in Him.”

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# MAKING LIGHT OF CHRIST

## NO. 98

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, AUGUST 17, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“But they made light of it and went their ways,  
one to his farm, another to his merchandise.”  
Matthew 22:5.***

MAN is not much changed since the days of Adam. In his bodily frame he appears to be exactly similar, for skeletons many hundred years old are the exact counterparts of ours. And sure enough, that which was recorded in history as having been done by man centuries ago, might be written again, for, “there is nothing new under the sun.” The same class of men is still to be discovered (although, perhaps, differently dressed) as that which existed ages long gone by. There are still men who answer the character given to others, in His day, by the Savior, “They go their way, one to his farm, another to his merchandise,” making light of the glorious things of the gospel. I am certain I have many such characters here, tonight, and I pray the Lord that I may be enabled to preach to them very solemnly and very pointedly. And I must ask all you who understand the heavenly art of prayer, to pray that God would be pleased to send home every thought into the breast where He intends it to lodge, that it may bring forth the comfortable fruit of righteousness in the salvation of many souls. They made light of it. So do too many in this day! And so will a large portion of my hearers, tonight. I believe that to think lightly of Christ is a sin. And at all risks of being falsely called legalist, or free-willer by those who are wise above what is written, I shall charge it upon you as such, for I hope I shall never belong to that class of Calvinists who do the devil’s work by excusing sinners in their sins!

In the first place, we shall have a few words with you concerning *what it is that the sinner makes light of*; secondly, *how it is that he makes light of it*; and thirdly, *why it is that he makes light of it*? Then a general observation or two, and we shall not weary you.

**I.** In the first place, WHAT IS IT THAT THE SINNER MAKES LIGHT OF? According to the parable, the person alluded to made light of a marriage banquet which a king had provided, with all kinds of dainties, to which they were freely invited and from which they willfully absented themselves. The spiritual meaning of this is easy to discover. sinners who

make light of Christ, express their contempt of a glorious banquet which God has provided at the marriage of His Son. This is solemn ground to tread upon. Oh, for the teachings of the Holy Spirit!

Taking this parable as the basis of our remarks, we may observe, first, that the sinner makes light of the *messenger who brings him the news that the marriage supper is prepared*. These men refused to come. They went—"One to his farm, another to his merchandise"—and so made light of the messenger. Every sinner who neglects the great salvation of Jesus Christ makes light of the gospel minister, which is no little insult in God's esteem. It is never reckoned a small offense by our great nation if our ambassador is treated with indifference. And take it for a truth of God, it is no light thing with God if you despise the ambassadors He sends to you! But this is comparatively little—the ambassadors are men like yourselves—who can well afford to be condemned, if that were all. In fact, we would be glad enough to forgive you if it were in our power to do so and if this were all your guilt.

But these people *despised the feast*. Some of them fancied that the fat-lings and other provisions that would be upon the table would be no better than what they had at home. They thought that the royal banquet would be no very great thing for which to give up their merchandise for a day, or to renounce their farming even for an hour. They scorned the banquet—at least it appears so—because they did not go to it! Oh, sinner, when you neglect the great salvation, remember what you despise! When you make light of God's gospel, you make light of justification by faith—you make light of washing in the blood of Jesus—you make light of the Holy Spirit! You make light of the road to heaven—and then you make light of faith, hope and love. You make light of all the promises of the everlasting covenant—of all the glorious things that God has laid up for them who love Him and of everything which He has revealed in His Word as being the promised gift to those who come unto Him. It is a solemn thing to make light of the gospel, for in that Word is summed up all that human nature can require and all that even the saints in bliss can receive. Oh, to despise the gospel of the blessed God—how mad—how worse than folly! Despise the stars and you are a fool. Despise God's earth, with its glorious mountains, with its flowing rivers and its fair meadows and you are a maniac. But despise God's gospel and you are ten thousand maniacs in one! Make light of that and you are far more foolish than he who sees no light in the sun, who beholds no fairness in the moon and no brilliance in the starry firmament. Trample, if you please, His lower works, but oh, remember, when you make light of the *gospel* you are making light of the masterpiece of your great Creator—

that which cost Him more than to create myriad worlds—the bloody purchase of our Savior’s agonies!

And, again—these people *made light of the King’s Son*. It was *His* marriage and inasmuch as they absented themselves, they did dishonor to that glorious One in whose honor the supper was prepared! They slighted Him whom His Father loved. Ah, sinner, when you make light of the gospel you make light of Christ—of that Christ before whom glorious cherubs bow themselves—of that Christ at whose feet the high archangel thinks it happiness to cast his crown. You make light of Him with whose praise the vault of heaven rings. You make light of Him whom God makes much of, for He has called Him, “God over all, blessed forever.” Ah, it is a solemn thing to make light of Christ! Despise a prince and you shall have little honor at the king’s hand for it. But despise the Son of God and the Father will have vengeance on you for His slighted Son! Oh, my dear friends, it seems to me to be a sin, not unpardonable, I know, but still most heinous—that men should ever despise my blessed Lord Jesus Christ and treat Him with cruel scorn! Make light of You, sweet Jesus? Oh, when I see You with Your shirt of gore, wrestling in Gethsemane, I bow myself over You and I say, “O, Redeemer, bleeding for sin, can any sinner make light of YOU?” When I behold Him with a river of blood rolling down His shoulders, beneath the cursed flagellation of Pilate’s whip, I ask, “Can a sinner make light of such a Savior as this?” And when I see Him yonder, covered with His blood, nailed to a tree, expiring in torture, shrieking, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani,” I ask myself, “Can any make light of *this*?” Yes, if they do, then, indeed, it were sin enough to damn them if they have no other sin—that they have lightly esteemed the Prince of Peace, who is glorious and altogether lovely! Oh, my friend, if you make light of Christ, you have insulted the only one who can save you—the only one who can bear you across the Jordan—the only one who can unbolt the gates of heaven and give you welcome! Let no preacher of smooth things persuade you that this is not a crime! O, sinner, think of your sin if you are making light of Him—for then you are making light of the King’s only Son!

And yet, again, these people *made light, also, of the King* who had prepared the banquet. Ah, little do you know, O sinner, when you do trifle with the gospel, that you are insulting God. I have heard some say, “sir, I do not believe in Christ, but I am still sure I try to reverence God. I do not care about the gospel. I do not wish to be washed in Jesus’ blood, nor to be saved in free grace fashion, but I do not despise God. I am a natural religionist!” No, sir, but you do insult the Almighty, inasmuch as you deny His Son! Despise a man’s offspring and you have insulted the

man, himself. Reject the only-begotten Son of God and you have rejected the eternal one Himself! There is no such thing as true natural religion apart from Christ! It is a lie and a falsehood! It is the refuge of a man who is not brave enough to say he hates God. It is only a refuge of lies, for he who denies Christ in that act, offends God and shuts up heaven's gates against himself! There is no loving the Father except through the Son—and there is no acceptable worship of the Father except through the Great High Priest, the Mediator, Jesus Christ! Oh, my friend, remember, you have not merely despised the gospel, but you have despised the gospel's God! In laughing at the doctrines of revelation, you have laughed at God. In reviling the truth of the gospel, you have reviled God Himself. You have bent your fist in the face of the Eternal, your oaths have not fallen upon the church—they have fallen upon God, Himself! O remember, you who mock at the message of Christ! O remember, you who turn away from the ministry of truth! God is a mighty one—remember how severely He *can* punish! God is a jealous God—oh, how severely *will* He punish! Make light of God, sinner? Why, this, above all things, is a damning sin and in committing it, it may be you will one day sign your own death warrant! Making light of God, of Christ and of His holy gospel is destroying one's own soul and rushing headlong to hell! Ah, unhappy souls, most unhappy must you be if you live and die making light of Christ and preferring your farms and your merchandise to the treasures of the gospel!

Again—I think you, my poor, pitiable friend, when you make light of all the things I have mentioned, *are making light of the great solemnities of eternity*. The man who lightly esteems the gospel makes light of hell. He thinks its fires are not hot, and its flames not such as Christ has described them! He makes light of the burning tears that scald despairing cheeks forever. He makes light of the yells and shrieks that must be the doleful songs and terrible music of perishing souls. Ah, it is no wise thing to make light of hell!

Consider again—you make light of heaven—that place to which the blessed ones long to go, where Glory reigns without a cloud and bliss without a sigh. You put the crown of everlasting life beneath your feet. You tread the palm branch beneath your unhallowed foot and you think it little to be saved and little to be glorified. “Ah, poor soul, when you are once in hell, and when the iron key is turned forever in the lock of inevitable destiny, you will find hell to be a something not so easy to despise! And when you have lost heaven and all its bliss and can only hear the song of the blessed, sounding faintly in the distance, increasing your misery by contrast with their joy—then you will find it no little thing to

have made light of heaven! Every man who makes light of religion makes light of these things. He misjudges the value of his own soul and the importance of its eternal state.

This is what men make light of. “Oh, sir,” says one, “I never indulge in any words hostile to God’s truth. I never laugh at the minister, nor do I despise the Sabbath.” Stop, my friend, I will acquit you of all that—and yet I will solemnly lay to your charge this great sin of making light of the gospel! Hear me, then!

## II. HOW IS IT THAT MEN MAKE LIGHT OF IT?

In the first place, it is making light of the gospel and of the whole of God’s glorious things, *when men go to hear and yet do not attend*. How many frequent churches and chapels to indulge in a comfortable nap! Think what a fearful insult that is to the King of heaven. Would they enter into Her Majesty’s palace, ask an audience and then go to sleep before her face? And yet the sin of sleeping in Her Majesty’s presence would not be so great, even against her laws, as the sin of willfully slumbering in God’s sanctuary! How many go to our houses of worship who do not sleep, but who sit with vacant stares, listening, as they would, to a man who could not play a lively tune upon a good instrument? What goes in one ear goes out the other! Whatever enters the brain goes out without ever affecting the heart. Ah, my hearers, you are guilty of making light of God’s gospel when you sit under a sermon without attending to it! Oh, what would lost souls give to hear another sermon? What would yonder dying wretch who is just now nearing the grave, give for another Sabbath? And what will *you* give, one of these days, when you shall be hard by Jordan’s brink, that you might have one more warning and listen once more to the wooing voice of God’s minister? We make light of the gospel when we hear it without solemn and close attention to it.

But some say they *do* attend. Well, it is possible to attend to the gospel and yet to make light of it. I have seen some men weep beneath a powerful sermon. I have marked the tears chase each other—tears, blessed telltales of emotions within. I have sometimes said to myself, it is marvelous to see these people weep under some telling word from God which is alarming them, as if Sinai itself were thundering in their ears! But there is something more amazing than men’s weeping under the word. It is the fact that they soon, too soon, wipe all their tears away! But ah, my dear hearer, remember that if you hear of these things and shake off a solemn impression, you are, in doing that, slighting God and making light of His truth! And take heed how you do that, lest your own garments become red with the blood of your soul and it be said, “Oh, Israel, you have destroyed yourself.”

But there are others who make light of it in a different fashion. They hear the word and attend to it, but alas, they *attend to something else with it*.

Oh, my hearer, you make light of Christ if you put Him anywhere except in the center of your heart! He who gives Christ a little of his affections makes light of Christ, for Christ will have the whole heart, or none at all. He who gives Christ a portion and the world a portion, despises Christ—for he seems to think that Christ does not deserve to have the whole. And inasmuch as he says that, or thinks that, he has mean and unholy thoughts of Christ! Oh, carnal man or woman, you who are half religious and half profane, you who are sometimes serious, but as often frivolous—sometimes apparently pious but yet so often unholy—you make light of Christ! And you who weep on Sunday, and then go back to your sins on Monday; you who set the world and its pleasures before Christ—you think less of Him than He deserves—and what is that but to make light of Him? Oh, I charge you, ask yourself, this night, my hearer, are you not the one? Do you not make light of Christ? The self-righteous man who sets himself up as a partner with Christ in the matter of salvation, notwithstanding all his trumpery good works, is such a ringleader among despisers that I would hang him in the very middle of them and bid all like him, tremble, lest they, also, be found slights of Jesus!

He makes light of Christ, again, *who makes a profession of religion, and yet does not live up to it*. Ah, church members, you need a great deal of sifting. We have an immense quantity of chaff now mixed with the wheat—and sometimes I think we have something worse than that! We have some in our churches who are not as good as chaff, for they do not seem to have been near the wheat at all. They are nothing better than tares. They have come into our churches, just as they would into a trade-association, because they think it will improve their business! It gives respectability to their name to take the sacrament. It makes them esteemed to have been baptized, or to be a member of a Christian church. And so they come in by shoals after the loaves and fishes, but not after Jesus Christ! Ah, hypocrite! You make light of Christ if you think that He is a stalking-horse to get you wealth. If you dream that you are to saddle and bridle Christ, and ride to wealth upon Him, you make a grand mistake, for He was never meant to carry men anywhere except to heaven! If you suppose that religion was intended to gild your homes, to carpet your floors, and line your purses, you have greatly erred. It was intended to be profitable to the *soul*. And he who thinks to use religion to his own personal advantage thinks lightly of Christ—and at the last day this crime shall be laid to his charge—that “he has made light of it,” and the

King shall send His armies to cut him in pieces among those who have despised His Majesty and would not obey His laws!

**III.** And now, in the third place, I will tell YOU WHY THEY MADE LIGHT OF IT. They did so from different reasons.

Some of them made light of it *because they were ignorant*. They did not know how good the feast was. They did not know how gracious the King was. They did not know how fair the Prince was, or else they might have thought differently. Now there are many present tonight, I dare say, who think lightly of the gospel because they do not understand it. I have often heard people laugh at religion. But ask them what it is and they know no more about religion than a horse does—and worse than that—for they believe untruths about it and a horse does not do that! They laugh at it simply because they do not understand it. It is a thing beyond them. We have heard of a foolish man who, whenever he heard a piece of Latin mentioned, laughed at it because he thought it was a joke—at any rate it was a very outlandish way of talking—and so he laughed! So it is with many when they hear the gospel. They do not know what it is and so they laugh at it. “Oh,” they say, “the man is mad.” But why is he mad? Is it because you do not understand him? Are you so conceited as to suppose that all wisdom and all learning must rest with you? I would hint to you that the madness is on the other side. And though you may say of him, “Much learning has made you mad,” we would reply, “It is quite as easy to be made mad with none at all.” And those who have none—and especially those who have no knowledge of Christ, are the most likely to despise Him. Well did Watts say—

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

Oh, dear friends, if you once knew what a blessed Master, Christ is. If you once knew what a blessed thing the gospel is. If you could once be brought to believe what a blessed God our God is. If you could only have one hour’s enjoyment such as the Christian experiences. If you could only have one promise applied to your heart, you would never make light of the gospel again! Oh, you say you do not like it. Why, you have never tried it! Should a man despise the wine of which he has never sipped? It may be sweeter than he dreams! Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good and, as sure as ever you taste, you will see His goodness! I will venture to say, again, that there are many who make light of the gospel simply through ignorance. And if that is so, I am somewhat in hopes that when they are a little enlightened by sitting under the Word, the Lord may be graciously pleased to bring them to Himself—and then I know they will never make light of Christ again! Oh, do not be ignorant, “for that the

soul to be without knowledge is not good.” Seek to know Him whom to know aright is life eternal—and when you know Him, you will never make light of Him!

Other people make light of it *because of pride*. “What is the good,” said one, “of bringing me that invitation? Step into my house, my man, I will show you a feast quite as good as any you can tell me of. Look here! There is good cheer for you. My table is as well spread as any man’s. Begging his Majesty’s pardon, the King cannot give a better feast than I. I do not see why I should drag my bones about to get nothing better than I can get at home.” So he would not go out, for pride; and so with some of you. *You* want to be washed? No—you were never filthy, were you? *You* need to be forgiven? Oh, no—you are rather too good for that! Why, you are so awfully pious in your own conceit that if it were all true, you would make even the angel Gabriel blush to think of you. You do not even think an angel capable of holding a candle to you. What? *You* seek for mercy? It is an insult to you. “Go and tell the drunkard,” you say. “Go and fetch the harlot. But *I* am a respectable man, I always go to church or chapel, I am a very good sort of fellow. I may frolic, now and then, but I make it up some other day. I am sometimes a little slack, but then I rein the horses in and make up the distance afterwards. And I dare say I shall get to heaven as soon as anybody else. I am a very good sort!” Well, my friend, I do not wonder that you despise the gospel, for the gospel tells you that you are entirely lost. It tells you that your very righteousness is full of sin! That as for any hope of your being saved by it, you might as well try to sail across the Atlantic on a withered leaf as try to get to heaven by your righteousness. And as for it being a garment fit to cover you, you might as well get a spider’s web to go to court in, and think it a dress fit to appear before her Majesty. Ah, my hearer, I know why you despise Christ—it is because of your Satanic pride! May the Lord pull the pride out of you, for if He does not, it will be the fire wood that shall roast your soul forever! Take heed of pride—by pride, the angels fell—how can men, then, though the image of their Maker, hope to win by it? Shun it, flee from it—for as sure as you are proud, you will incur the guilt of making light of Christ!

Perhaps quite as many made light of the good news because *they did not believe the messenger*. “Oh,” they said, “stop a moment. What? A dinner to be given away? I do not believe it! What? The young Prince going to be married? Tell that to fools—we do not believe any such thing! What? We are all invited? We do not believe it, the story is incredible.” The poor messenger went home and told his Master that they would not believe him. That is just another reason why many men make light of the

gospel—because they do not believe it. “What?” they say “Jesus Christ died to wash men from their sins? We do not believe it! What? A heaven? Who ever saw it? A hell? Who ever heard its groans? What? Eternity? Who ever returned from that last hope of every spirit? What? Blessedness in religion? We do not believe it—it is a moping, miserable thing! What? Sweetness in the promises? No there is not—we believe there is sweetness in the world, but we do not believe there is any in the wells the Lord has dug.” And so they despise the gospel because they do not believe it. But I am sure that when a man once believes it, he never thinks lightly of it. Once let me have the solemn conviction in my heart by the Holy Spirit that if unsaved, there is a gaping gulf that shall devour me—do you think I can go to rest till I have trembled from head to foot? Once let me heartily believe that there is a heaven provided for those who believe on Christ—do you think I could give sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eyelids, till I have wept because it is not mine? I believe not! But damnable unbelief thrusts his hand into the mouth of man and plucks up his heart and so destroys him, for it will not let him believe! And, therefore, he cannot feel, because he believes not. Oh, my friends, it is unbelief that makes men think lightly of Christ! But unbelief will not do so, by-and-by. There are no infidels in hell—they are all believers there! There are many that were infidels, here, but they are not so now! The flames are too hot to make them doubt their existence! It is hard for a man, tormented in the flame, to doubt the existence of the fire! It would be difficult for a man, standing before the burning eyes of a God, to doubt the existence of a God after all that! Ah, unbelievers, turn, or rather, may the Lord turn you from your unbelief, for this makes you think lightly of Christ and this it is that is taking away your life and destroying your souls!

Another set of people thought lightly of this feast because *they were so worldly*—they had so much to do. I have heard of a rich merchant who was waited on one day by a godly man and when he stopped him, he said to him, “Well, sir, what is the state of your soul?” “Soul!” he said. “I have no time to take care of my soul. I have enough to do to take care of my ships.” About a week after, it so happened that he had to find time to die, for God took him away. We fear He said to him, “You fool! This night your soul shall be required of you—then whose shall those things be which you have hoarded up for yourself?” You merchants of London, there are many of you who read your ledgers more than your Bibles! Perhaps you must. But you do not read your Bibles at all, while you read your ledgers every day. In America, it is said they worship the almighty dollar. I believe that in London many men worship the almighty sovereign. They have the greatest possible respect for an almighty bank note—that is the

god which many men adore! The prayer book they carry so religiously in their hands is their cash book. Even on Sunday, there is a gentleman over there—he does not think his foreman knows it—but he was sitting indoors all this morning because it was wet, casting up his accounts. And now he comes here in the evening, because he is a very pious man—extraordinarily so! He would shut the parks up on a Sunday, he would—he would not let a soul get a breath of fresh air because he is so pious. But he, himself, may sit half-a-day in the counting house and yet think it no sin! But many are too busy to think of these things. “Pray!” they say, “I have no time for that! I have to pray? What? Read the Bible? No I cannot. I have to be looking over this thing and that thing and seeing how the markets go. I find time to read the Times, but I could not think of reading the Bible,” It will be marvelously unfortunate for some of you that you will find the lease of your lives rather shorter than you expected! If you had taken a lease of your lives for 88 years from this date, you would be foolish enough, perhaps, to spend 44 in sin. But considering that you are a tenant at will and liable to be turned out any day, it is the height of folly, the very climax of absurdity, excelling all that the fool with his cap and bells ever did—to be living just to gather up the wealth of this world and not for things to come! Worldliness is a demon that has wrung the neck of many souls. God grant that we may not perish through our worldliness!

There is another class of people that I can only characterize in this way—*they are altogether thoughtless*. If you ask them concerning religion, they have no opinion at all about it. They do not positively detest it, they do not mock at it, but they have not a thought about it! The fact of it is they intend thinking about it, by-and-by. Theirs is a kind of butterfly existence—they are always moving about, never doing anything—neither for others or themselves. And these are very amiable people who are always ready to give a guinea for a charity, they never refuse anybody! And they would give their guinea, all the same, whether it was for a cricket match or a church! Now, if I were forced to go back to the world and had to choose the character I would wish to be, the last position I would wish to occupy would be that of the thoughtless man. I believe thoughtless persons are in the most danger of being lost of any class. I know I like, sometimes, to get under the Word a thoroughly stout, stiff, hater of the gospel for his heart is like a flint. And when it is struck with the hammer of the gospel, the flint goes to pieces in a moment! But these thoughtless people have thick rubber hearts—you hit them and they give way. You strike them again and they give way. If they are sick and you visit them, they say, “Yes.” You talk to them about the importance of religion, they

say, "Yes." You talk to them about escaping from hell and entering heaven, they say, "Yes." You preach a sermon to them when they are better and remind them of the vows they made in their sickness. "It is quite right, sir," they say. And they say the same whatever you may tell them. They are always very polite to you, but whatever you say to them is put aside. If you begin talking to them about drunkards, oh, they are not drunkards—they may have accidentally got drunk, once—but that was a little thing out of the usual way. And bring whatever sin you like to them, you may hit them and hit them, but it is no good, for they are not half as easily broken (speaking after the manner of men) as the real stout-hearted hater of the gospel! Why, there is a sailor comes rolling home from sea, swearing, blaspheming, cursing. He comes into the house of God and almost the first word is applied by the Spirit for the breaking of Jack's heart! Another young man says, "I know as much as any minister can tell me, for my own mother taught me and my old father used to read the Bible for me till, I believe, I have got every bit of it in my head. I go to chapel out of respect to his memory, but I really don't care at all about it. It is very good for old people. It is quite right for old women and those who are dying. And in time of cholera, it is a very good thing, but I don't care anything about it just now." Now, I tell you, you careless people, most solemnly, that you are the very devil's lifeguards! You are his reserve—he keeps you away from the battle—he does not send you out like he does a blasphemer, for he fears that a shot may haply light upon you and you may be saved. But he says, "Stand by here and if you have to go out I will give you an impenetrable coat of mail." The arrows go rattling against you—they all hit you—but alas—there is not one of them that penetrates your heart, for that is left elsewhere. You are only an empty chrysalis and when you come to God's house and His Word is preached, you make light of it because it is your habit to be thoughtless about everything.

Very briefly I must touch another case and then I must dismiss you. You may make light of the gospel *out of sheer presumption*. They are like the foolish man who goes on and is punished—not like the prudent man, who, "foresees the evil and hides himself." They go on, that step is safe—they take it. The next step is safe—they take it. Their foot hangs over a gulf of darkness. But they will try one step and as that is safe, they think they will try the next. And as the last has been safe and as for many years they have been safe, they suppose they always shall be! And because they have not died yet, they think they will never die! And so, out of sheer presumption they think, "all men mortal but themselves." And

so they go on making light of Christ. Tremble, you presumptuous, you will not always be able to do that!

And, lastly, I fear there are a great many who make light of Christ *because of the commonness of the gospel*. It is preached everywhere and that is why you make light of it. You can hear it at the corner of every street. You can read it in this widely circulated Bible and because the gospel is so common, therefore, you don't care for it. Ah, my dear friends, if there were only one gospel minister in London that could tell you the truth. If there were only one Bible in London, I believe you would be rushed to hear that Bible read! And the man who had the message would have no easy go of it—he would be obliged to work from morning to night—to proclaim it to you. But now, because you have so many Bibles, you forget to read them! Because you have so many tracts, you pack up any article in them. Because you have so many sermons, you do not think anything at all of them. Why is that? Do you think the less of the sun because he scatters his beams abroad? Do you think the less of bread because it is the food which God gives to all His children? Do you think the less of water, when you are thirsty, because every brook will afford it to you? No. If you were thirsty after Christ, you would love Him all the better because He is preached everywhere—and you would not think lightly of Him because of that.

“They made light of it.” How many of my hearers, tonight, I ask again, are making light of Christ? Many of you are, no doubt. I will give you, then, just one warning, and then farewell. Make light of Christ, sinner? Let me say, again to you—you will rue the day when you come on your deathbed! It will go hard with you when the bony monster has got the grip of you and when he is bringing you down the river, to steep you in the lake of death. It will go hard with you when your eye-strings break, and when your death sweat stands upon your brow. Remember last time you had a fever? Ah, how you did shake! Remember, last night, how you did quake in your bed when flash after flash of lightning came through your window—and how you did tremble when the deep-mouthed thunder spoke out the voice of God? Ah, sinner, you will tremble worse, then, when you shall see death for yourself, and when the bony rider, on his white horse shall grasp his dart and plunge it in your heart! It will go hard with you, then, if you have no Christ to shelter you—no blood wherein to wash your soul! Remember, moreover, after death comes the judgment! It will go hard with you if you have despised Christ, and shall die a despiser. See that flying angel? His wings are made of flame, and in his hand he grasps a sharp two-edged sword. O angel, where do you

wing your speedy flight? “Hark,” he says, “this trumpet shall tell you.” And he puts a trumpet to his lips and—

***“Blows a blast so loud and dread,  
Never were prophetic sounds so full of woe!”***

Look! The sheeted dead have started from their graves! Behold, the cloudy chariot is wheeled along by cherub’s hands. Mark! There upon the throne sits the King—the Prince. O angel, what in this terrible day must become of the man who has thought lightly of Christ? See there, he unsheathes his sword! “This blade,” he says, “shall find and pierce him through. This blade, like a sickle, shall reap each tare from the wheat, and this strong arm shall bind him up in his bundle to be burned. And this great arm of mine shall grasp him, and hurl him down, down, down, where flames forever burn, and hell forever howls!” It will go hard with you, then! Mark this man’s word, tonight, go away and laugh at it, but remember, I say to you again—it will be a solemn thing for you when Christ shall come to judge, if you have made light of Him. And worse than all, if you should ever be locked up in the caverns of despair; if you should ever hear it said, “Depart you cursed”; if you should ever mingle your awful shrieks with the doleful howls of lost myriads; if you should see the pit that is bottomless, and the gulf that has walls of fire—it will be a fearful thing to find yourself in there—and to know that you can never get out!

Sinner, this night I preach the gospel to you. Wherever you go, hear it and believe it! May God grant you grace to receive it, so you shall be saved. “He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved. He that believes not,” so says the Scripture, “shall be damned.” To believe is to put your trust in Christ. To be baptized is to be plunged in water in the name of the Lord Jesus, as a profession that you are already saved, and that you love Christ. “He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be damned.” O may you never know, by His grace, the meaning of that last word. Farewell!

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# THE DUTY OF REMEMBERING THE POOR

## NO. 99

A SERMON DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING,  
SEPTEMBER 25, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

PREACHED ON BEHALF OF THE AGED PILGRIMS' FRIEND SOCIETY.

*“Only they would that we should remember the poor;  
the same which I also was forward to do.”*  
*Galatians 2:10.*

POVERTY is no virtue. Wealth is no sin. On the other hand, wealth is not morally good and poverty is not morally evil. A man may be a good man and a rich man. It is quite certain that very frequently good men are poor men. Virtue is a plant which depends not upon the atmosphere which surrounds it, but upon the hand which waters it and upon the divine grace which sustains it. We draw no support for grace from our circumstances whether they are good or evil. Our circumstances may sometimes militate against the gracious work in our breast, but it is quite certain that no position in life is a sustaining cause of the life of grace in the soul. That must always be maintained by divine power which can work as well in poverty as in riches—for we see some of the finest specimens of the full development of Christianity in those who are the very meanest in temporal circumstances—far outshining those whom we would have imagined, from their position in society, would have had many things to assist their virtues and sustain their graces. Grace is a plant which draws no nourishment from the wilderness in which it grows. It finds nothing to feed upon in the heart of man—all it lives upon, it receives *supernaturally*. It sends all its roots upwards, none downwards. It draws no support from poverty and none from riches. Gold cannot sustain grace—on the other hand—rags cannot make it flourish. Grace is a plant which derives the whole of its support from God, the Holy Spirit, and is, therefore, entirely independent of the circumstances of man. But yet, mark you—it is an undeniable fact that God has been pleased, for the most part, to plant His grace in the soil of poverty. He has not chosen many great, nor many mighty men of this world but He has “chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the kingdom of God.” We should wonder why, were we not quite sure that God is wise in His choice! We cannot dispute a fact which Scripture

teaches and which our own observation supports, that the Lord's people are, to a very large extent, the poor of this world! Very few of them wear crowns. Very few ride in carriages. Only a proportion of them have a competence. A very large multitude of His family are destitute, afflicted, tormented and are kept leaning, day by day, upon the daily provisions of God and trusting Him from meal to meal, believing that He will supply their needs out of the riches of His fullness.

Now, tonight, we shall, first of all, mention *the fact* that God *has a poor people*; secondly, the duty—*we should remember the poor*; and then, thirdly, *the obligation for us to perform this duty*—for there are sundry reasons why we ought to be especially mindful of the poor of the Lord's flock.

**I.** First, then, THE LORD HAS A POOR PEOPLE—a fact notorious to us all—which daily observation confirms. Why does the Lord have a poor people? This is a question that might suggest itself to us and we might not, at all times, find it easy to answer if we were poor, ourselves. God could make them all rich if He pleased. He could lay bags of gold at their doors. He could send whole rivers of supplies where now it is a desert! He could scatter round their houses abundance of provisions—as once He made the quails lie in very heaps round the camp of Israel—so now He could rain bread out of heaven to feed them! There is no necessity that they should be poor, only as it pleases His sovereign will. “The cattle upon a thousand hills are His,” He could supply them. He could make the rich men of this world give up all their wealth, if He so pleased to turn their minds. He could make the richest, the greatest and the mightiest bring all their power and riches to the feet of His children, for the hearts of all men are in His control! But He does not choose to do so. He allows them to suffer need. He allows them to pine in penury and obscurity. Why is this? I believe that is a question we should not find easy to answer, if we were in the circumstances, but seeing that many of us are out of the affliction, we may, perhaps, hint at one or two reasons why the Lord God has had—has and always will have—a poor people in this world!

**1.** I think one reason is to teach us *how grateful we should be for all the comforts He bestows on many of us*. One of the sweetest meals I think I have ever eaten was after beholding a spectacle of penury which had made me weep. When we see others needing daily bread, does not our loaf at once taste very sweet? It may have been very dry—but we saw someone begging for bread in the streets—and we thanked God for what we had that day, when we knew that others wanted. When we take our walks abroad and see the poor, he must be but a very poor Christian who does not lift up his eyes to heaven and thank his God thus—

**“Not more than others I deserve,**

***But God has given me more.”***

If we were all made rich, alike, if God had given us all abundance, we would never know the value of His mercies—but He puts the poor side by side with us—to make their trials, like a dark shadow, set forth the brightness which He is pleased to give to us in temporal matters. Oh, you would never thank God half as much if you did not see your cause for thankfulness by marking the needs of others! Oh, you dainty ones who can scarcely eat the food that is put before you, it would do you good if you could sit down at the table of the poor! Oh, you discontented ones who are always murmuring at your households because all kinds of delicacies are not provided for you—it would do you good if you could sit down for a while to workhouse fare and sometimes eat a little less than that and fast a day or two, to find your appetites! Yes, you who never sing a song of praise to God, it would be no small benefit to you if you were, for once, made to need His bounties! Then you might be led to thank God for all His abundant supplies. Even Christians need a spur to their thankfulness. God gives us a great many mercies we never thank Him for. Day by day His mercies come, but day by day we forget them! His mercies lie—

***“Forgotten in unthankfulness,  
And without praises die.”***

Put you out in the cold some winter’s night and would you not thank God for the fire, afterwards? Make you thirst for a little while and how grateful would be the cup of water! Now, if God has not exposed us in this way, it is at least an instance of His wisdom that He has placed others in that position, to teach those of His family who are more highly favored in temporal matters how thankful they ought to be for the gifts of His providence!

2. That, however, I take it, is but a very low view of the matter. There are other and higher and better reasons! God is pleased to always have a poor people that *He may display His sovereignty* in all He does. If there were no poor saints, we would not so strongly believe the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. Or, at least, if the saints believed it as they always must and will, yet the wicked and those who despise it would not have so clear an evidence of it. Then they would not sin against such great Light of God which shines upon their poor, dark, blind eyeballs from evident displays of sovereignty in salvation! Those who deny divine sovereignty, deny it in the face of all testimony—certainly in the teeth of Scripture, for it is positively affirmed there! And God, in order that there may be something besides Scripture, has made His providence bear out the written Word and has caused many of His children to be the despised among the people. “I take whom I please,” says God. “You would have Me

choose kings and queens, first—I choose their humble servants in their kitchens before I choose their masters and mistresses in their banqueting halls! You would have Me take the counselor and the wise man—I take the fool, first, that I may teach you to despise the wisdom of man! I take the poor before the rich, that I may humble all your pride and teach you there is nothing in man that makes Me choose him—but that it is My sovereign will, alone, which creates men, heirs of grace.” I bless God that there are poor saints, for they teach me this lesson—that God will do as He pleases with His own. They show me manifestly that however much men may deny the sovereignty of God, they cannot rob Him of it—that He will still exert it to the very last—as long as this earth shall stand and may find ways of exerting it, even in future ages! Certainly the existence of a poor people in the world is proof positive in the mind of the saint and a plain and bold affirmation to the most obtuse intellect of the sinner, that there is a sovereignty of God in the choice of men.

**3.** Again—God has a poor people, I take it, *that He may display more the power of His comforting promises and the supports of the gospel.* If all God’s saints were well-to-do in this world and never lacked, we would scarcely realize the value of the gospel half as much, oh, my brothers and sisters, when we find some that have not where to lay their heads, who yet can say, “Still will I trust in the Lord.” When we see some who have nothing but bread and water who still glory in Jesus—when we see them “wondering where the scene shall end,” seeing that, “every day new straits attend,” and yet having faith in Christ, oh, what honor it reflects on the gospel! Let my rich friend, there, stand up and say, “I have faith in God for tomorrow with regard to my daily bread.” You would say, “My dear friend, I do not at all wonder at it, for you have plenty of money at home to buy your bread with and a salary coming in on such a day. There is not much opportunity for faith in your case.” But when some poor Habakkuk rises and exclaims, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall there be fruit in the vine,” and so on, “Yet will I trust in the Lord.” Ah, then that shows the power of all-supporting grace! You know we hear of a great many different inventions that will never stand a trial. One man advertises a swimming belt. A fine thing it would be for dry land, but when it is tried at sea, I fear it will not exactly answer the purpose and really we cannot know the value of an invention unless we test it and put it through all the trials which it is supposed to be able to endure. Now, grace is tested in the poverty of believers—that they are still, in a great degree, an uncomplaining and uncomplaining race—that they bear up under every discouragement, believing that all things work together for their good and that out of all their apparent evils, some good

shall ultimately spring! That their God will either speedily work a deliverance for them, or most assuredly support them in the trouble, as long as He is pleased to keep them there. Beloved, this is, no doubt, one reason why God puts His people in poor circumstances. “There,” says the architect, “this building is strong.” Yes, sir, but it must be tested! Let the wind blow against it. There is a lighthouse out at sea—it is a calm night—I cannot tell whether the edifice is firm. The tempest must howl about it and *then* I shall know whether it will stand. So with religion: If it were not, on many occasions, surrounded with tempestuous waters, we would not know that the ship was strong. If the winds did not blow upon it, as they do on our poor tried brothers and sisters, we would not know how firm and secure it is. The masterworks of God are those that stand in the midst of difficulties—when all things oppose them, yet maintain their stand. These are His all-glorious works and so His best children, those who honor Him the most, are those who have grace to sustain them amidst the heaviest load of tribulations and trials. God puts His people into such circumstances, then, to show us the power of His divine grace.

**4.** Then, again—God often allows His people to be a tried and a poor people, just *to plague the devil*. The devil was never more plagued in his life, I think, than he was with Job. As long as Job was rich, Job caused much envy in Satan—but he never made him as angry as when he was poor! It was then that Satan was the most incensed against him because, after all his trials, he would not curse God and die. You know, if a man thinks he can do a thing, he will always wrap himself up in his self-complacency till he tries to do it and then fails. So Satan thinks he may overthrow one or other of God’s children. “Now, Satan,” says God, “I will give you an opportunity of trying your skill. One of My children is very poor. I will cut off his bread and water. I will give him the water of affliction to drink and the bread of bitterness to eat. He shall be exceedingly tried. Take him, Satan, drag him through fire and water and see what you can do with him.” So Satan tries to starve out the divine Life from his soul—but he cannot do it—and he finds, after all he has done, that he is defeated and he goes away plagued, vexed and feeling another hell within himself, though miserable enough before, because he was foiled in all his attempts to tread out the spark of life in the heart of God’s child. God often allows Satan to test the Lord’s work. It is marvelous that the crafty devil should continue to work when it all tends to the glory of God, after all. But he is a devil all over and will always continue so. He always will keep on meddling with God’s children—he will persevere even to the last moment—till every saint is safe across the Jordan, he will still be plaguing and vexing God’s beloved children. Ah,

then let us rejoice! God will deliver us and bring us off safe at last, yes, “more than conquerors, through Him that loved us.”

**5.** Furthermore, the design of our heavenly Father in allowing a poor people in this world and keeping His people poor, when He might make them rich, is possibly *to give us some living glimpse of Christ*. A poor man is the image of Jesus Christ, if he is a Christian. All Christians are the image of Jesus Christ, for the sanctifying influence of Christ exerted on them has made them, in some degree, like their Master. But the poor man is like his Master not only in his character, but in his circumstances, too. When you look on a poor saint, you have a better picture of Jesus than you have in a rich saint. The rich saint is a member of Christ. He has the image of his Master stamped upon him and that image shall be perfected when he shall arrive in heaven. But the poor saint has something else—he has not only the most prominent feature—but the background and the foreground all in the picture! He has the circumstances of it! Look at his brown hands, hardened by toil—such were his Savior’s once. Look at his weary feet, blistered with his journeying—such were his Savior’s many a time. He sits upon a well from weariness, as his Lord once did. He has nowhere to rest, nor had his Master—foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but He had nowhere to lay His head. He is fed by charity, so was his Master—others supplied His needs. Look! He sits down at an invited table, so did his Master—He had not one of His own! You see Christ, then. You see as much of Christ as you will see just yet—until you are taken up where you shall be like He is—and see Him as He is. He would have us always remember the Savior’s poverty—“How He was rich and yet, for our sakes, became poor.” And just as, on some memorable day, they strike medals which bear the impress of its hero, so I look upon every poor saint as being a medal struck from the divine Mint, to be a memento of the existence of our Lord Jesus Christ! He is to make me remember my Lord, to bid me meditate upon that wondrous depth of poverty into which He stooped, that He might lift me up to light and glory. Oh, blessed Jesus, this is wise, for we often forget You—wise that You have given us some opportunity to remember You!

**6.** But now one more reason and I have done with this part of the subject. The Lord has a poor people in the midst of us for this reason—that He *determines to give us opportunities of showing our love to Him*. Now we show our love to Christ when we sing of Him, and when we pray to Him, but if there were no poor people in the world, we would often say within ourselves, “Oh, how I wish there was one of Christ’s brethren that I could help. I would like to give Christ something. I would like to show my Master that I love Him, not by words, only, but by deeds, too.” But if

all the poor saints were taken clean away, and we were all well-to-do and had abundance, there would be none to require any assistance. And then, I think, we might begin to weep because there were no poor saints to help. It is one of the healthiest things in the world to help a saint! It is a great blessing to our own souls. It is a healthy exercise of the mind to visit the poor of the Lord's flock and distribute, as we are able, of our substance to their necessities. Let us look upon it not as a mere duty but as a delight and privilege—for if we were not able to give something of our substance to Christ, we would have to go down on our knees to ask Him to give us some opportunity of showing our love to Him. Take away the saints and one channel wherein our love might flow is withdrawn at once! But that shall never be, for the poor we always shall have with us and these are some of the reasons why we will always have them.

**II.** The second thing we shall endeavor to speak of is THE DUTY here alluded to—“*They would that we should remember the poor.*” “Remember the poor.” That word, “remember,” is a very comprehensive word.

We ought to remember the poor in our *prayers*. I need not remind you to offer supplication for the rich, but remember the poor. Remember them and pray that God would comfort and cheer them in all the trials of their penury, that He would supply their needs out of the riches of His fullness! Let the angel touch you on the arm when you have nearly finished your prayers and say, “Remember the poor. Remember the poor of the flock.” Let your prayers always go up to heaven for them.

Remember the poor, too, in your *conversation*. It is remarkable that all of us remember the rich. We talk about all men being equal, but I do not believe there is an Englishman who is not silly enough to boast if he has happened to be with a lord in his lifetime! To have seen a live lord is a most marvelous thing and there is scarcely one of us that could resist the temptation of talking about it! We may say what we like about believing in the equality of mankind—so we do, till we happen to get a little elevated—then we don't believe it any longer! We are all ready enough to pull others down when we are in humble circumstances—but when we get a little elevated—we foolishly think it only a child's fancy that we indulged in and that, after all, there are more differences than we imagined. We always remember the rich. You see a respectable man in church. You always know him, don't you? You are on the exchange, or walking down the street—you never find any difficulty in recognizing him! Somehow or other, your memory is very treacherous in remembering the poor, but very strong in remembering a rich man. Let me remind you to, “Remember the poor.” It is singular enough that there is no command to remember the rich. I suppose because there is no necessity for it, for we usually remember them. But there is a command for us to remember the

poor! Now the next time you see a poor brother coal miner, bricklayer, herdsman, or whatever he may be, talk to him, if you please. And if you see him in all his dirty garments—still talk to him! Do not forget him. Try and remember him. Next sacrament Sunday look him in the face as though you remembered him—for the last 20 times you have seen him, you have appeared as if you did not remember him and the poor man's mind has been hurt as much as if it were some slight on your part because he was a poor brother! I will not say that it was so, but I am rather afraid it was, in some degree. Now, when you see him in the street, say, "Well, brother, I know you." And if he comes up to speak to you, do not think it will lower you to be seen speaking to him in the street. If he is your brother, acknowledge him! If he is not, tell no lie about it, but leave the church and make no false professions. But if you believe it, carry it out.

Now, often, when you are walking home from the house of God, you do not remember the poor, do you? If they should require to speak to you, however important their errand, they would not get attended to very frequently. If Mr. So-and-So, who is a respectable gentleman, wanted you, "Oh, yes, sir, I can stop a moment and have a little conversation with you." But if a poor person wants you, "Oh, I am in such a hurry. I must go home." And you are sure to go off at once! Now, in the future, just reverse your habit—when you see a rich man, do just what you like about attending to him. I know what you will like to do. But when you see a poor man, just make it a point of conscience that you attend to him. I was very much pleased with the conduct of a brother who is here. He may remember the circumstance and bless God that He gave him grace to act as he did. A short time ago there stood in the aisle near his pew door a gentleman and a poor fellow in a smock frock. I thought to myself, "He will let one in, I know, but I wonder which it will be?" I did not wait long before out he came and in went the smock frock! He thought very rightly, that the gentlemen would stand a chance of getting a seat out of some of you but he thought it best to remember the poor. And it was likely that the poor man was the most tired, for he had, no doubt, had a hard week's work and probably a long walk, for there are not many smock frocks near London! Therefore he gave in reality to the most needy. I say, again, "Remember the poor." There is no necessity to tell you to remember the rich—to be very respectful and to speak very kindly and lovingly to those who are above you—you will take care of yourselves on that point—but it is the poor you are disposed not to attend to and, therefore, I will press on you this commandment—that you remember the poor.

But this especially means, I think, that *in the provision for their necessities*, we ought to remember the poor. Some of us have pretty good need to remember the poor. I am sure I have, for I have about ten times as many poor people come to me every day as I can possibly relieve. If I were as rich as the Mayor of London, or Her Majesty the Queen, I could scarcely accede to the immense requests sometimes made to me! There is scarcely a poor man that is hard run by his creditors, or a poor woman that cannot make up her rent, but they write to the minister. All the poor souls come to him. And I think to myself, "What can I do with you? I have really done as much as I can, and here are three or four more coming." So I am obliged to send them away and can only pity—but cannot assist—and this will be the case, unless someone shot a wagon load of gold before my door! Still, we must "remember the poor." Some think it very hard to have so many calls on them. I do not. I only think it hard when I cannot help them. If I could, I would think it a great blessing to assist them all. If I were put in possession of great wealth, I do not say what I would do, for very frequently people's hearts get smaller when their means get greater. But where God has given us wealth—and where there are needy children of God—we ought to remember them directly! How much of the superfluities might be given to their necessities! How many of our lavished luxuries might be bestowed on that which they crave for their very existence! You know not how poor this world is. You ride through one part of this magnificent city and you say, "Talk of poverty—there is no such thing!" You ride through another part and you say, "Talk of riches—here is no such thing! The world is poor." Some of you should, now and then, go and search out poverty. Place you above it and your movements in life seldom bring you into contact with it. If you would have your hearts enlarged, visit the poor! Follow them into their dens, for they are but little better in some cases. Go up their creaking staircases. See the straw in the corner of the room where they sleep, yes, see worse than that—see a chair whereon a man has been for the last five years, not able to sit without being propped, obliged to be fed by others and yet living on four or five shillings a week—with nothing to support him properly—or give him sufficient bodily nutriment. Go and see such cases and if you do not put your hands in your pockets and help the aged pilgrims, I am afraid there is not much Christianity in you! Or if you do not help the one that you see has the greatest need, I am afraid the love of God dwells not in you! It is a duty we owe to the poor of the Lord's flock—and we reap many advantages we would not have if we had not to remember the poor!

**III.** Now, allow me to press home THIS OBLIGATION—*why should we remember the poor?* I shall not urge it upon the ground of common

philanthropy and charity—that were a too mean and low way of addressing Christians, although even they, perhaps, might be benefited by it. I shall urge it in another way.

“Remember the poor,” because they are your Lord’s brethren. What? Do you not feel, like David, that you would do anything for Jonathan’s sake? And if he has some poor sick son, some Mephibosheth, lame in his feet, will you not seat him at your table, or give him a maintenance, if you can, seeing that Jonathan’s blood is in his veins? Remember, beloved, the *blood of Jesus* runs in the veins of poor saints! They are His relatives! They are His friends and if that moves you not, remember they are your friends, too! They are your brethren if you are a child of God. They are allied to you. If they are sons of God, so are you, and they are brethren of yours. What? Let your brother starve? If you can, will you not relieve your brother’s necessity, shield him from the cold, ward off hunger, provide for his needs? Oh, I know you love Jesus. I know you love the friends of Jesus and I know you love your own family and, therefore, you will love your poor brethren, will you not? I know you will, you will relieve them. Remember, too, that you, yourself, may be like your poor brother before long. Therefore take heed that you despise him not, for someone will despise you. Oh, remember that all you have, God has lent you! He may take it all from you if He pleases. And if He sees that you make an ill use of it, perhaps He will take it from you now! Full many a man has lost his wealth by God’s righteous judgment for his misuse of it. You are God’s steward, will you cheat Him? He has given you His wealth to distribute to the poor. Will you not supply their needs out of what He has given you? Yes, surely you will! I cannot believe you will turn them away, as long as you have anything wherewith to relieve them, but will share what you have with them. Remember, if you do not relieve them, you give great and grave suspicion that you love not Christ! If you love not Christ’s people, how can it be that you are His disciples, since it is the mark, “By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you love one another”? And how can you love, when you have and give not where God has made you rich and yet you do not bestow? Gravely you give cause to doubt that the love of God is in you, if the love of the brethren is not in you, also! Oh, remember, when you give, God can give you more. You have lost nothing! You have put it in another purse and God may hand it back to you in larger measure, yet. Men lose nothing by what they give to God’s saints. It would often be a heavenly investment if they bestowed it upon God’s family. But if they retain it, God has other means to make them poor, if they will not give to His cause.

John Bunyan tells of a man who had a roll of cloth, and the more he cut from it, the more he had. And he says, in his rhyming way—

***“A man there was, though some did count him mad,  
The more he cast away, the more he had.”***

He was not much of a madman; after all, if he had more, the more he gave away! But that is a very selfish view. Remember, if you never get it back, it is no small honor to give it to Christ! And remember, what you give to His children, you put into His palm. If Christ, Himself, should stand at the door as you pass the plate—how you would put your money in to please Him! Remember, His poor believing family are His hand—give into His hand, then, as you can, at all times and seasons! Remember the poor—you shall always have the poor to remember.

Well, now, I beg leave to commend to your attention and notice tonight the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society as being an especially excellent institution because it will enable you to remember the poor! Those who are relieved by it are, in the first place, all Christians, as far as man can judge. They are all examined beforehand as to their experience of a change of heart and the existence of a divine Life within them. And none are received into the society but those who are really the members of Christ's mystical body and give evidence of the work of grace in their hearts. In the next place, the funds which are given to them are distributed by Christian men who visit them once a month. And when they visit them, I do not suppose they leave them without praying with them and endeavoring to cheer their hearts. I know they do. They often spend a season of prayer and have a kind conversation with them concerning their souls. And, last of all, they are all over sixty. They have a double claim on us because they are the Lord's aged people, as well as the Lord's poor people. And none of them have anything unless they absolutely and really require it. I will just read you this very short paper to tell you what they have done—

“The Society was established in 1807 for the relief of the aged Christian poor, above 60 years, irrespective of denominational distinction, both male and female in town and country. It has extended its valuable aid to 1650 aged disciples of the Lord Jesus, among whom have been distributed upwards of £50,000. The following is a brief account of its present state, in reference both to the number relieved and the amount of income and expenditure. There are—45 Pensioners who receive 10 guineas per annum, or 17s. 6d. per month. 245 ditto 5 ditto or 8s. 9d. ditto. 130 Approved Candidates who receive 4s. per month. Total 420 among whom are distributed, monthly, at their own habitations, £172.

“The income arising from Annual Subscriptions, etc., does not exceed £1550 while the expenditure is upwards of £2000, leaving a deficiency, annually, of £450 and upwards, which the Committee has to make up by obtaining collections in various churches and chapels, wherever they can. Donations and Annual Subscriptions will be thankfully received by the Treasurers or Secretaries at any time. Every department is filled *gratuitously*. Also, legacies will, at any time, be very thankfully received.”

Our friends had no business to have said anything about legacies, for we do not wish you to die just yet. We always wish to have your subscriptions! We are very thankful to receive legacies, but do not keep the money to leave us in the shape of legacies. We would rather have your annual subscriptions for ten years—for then we would have your *living* prayers, your *living* sympathy and your *living* help! Well, if you do not think this a good society, do not give anything; but if you do, just put it on its merits. People very often give to an object just what others give, because there is a collection. But just put this upon its own merits and your ability—and give as you think the Society deserves to receive, and as you believe yourselves able to bestow. May God give a blessing to you in remembering the poor!

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# THE COMER'S CONFLICT WITH SATAN

## NO. 100

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 18, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“And as he was still coming, the devil threw him down, and tore him.  
And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child,  
and delivered him again to his father.”  
Luke 9:42.***

THIS child, possessed with an evil spirit, is a most fitting emblem of every ungodly and unconverted man. Though we are not possessed with devils, yet by nature we are possessed with devilish vices and lusts which, if they do not distress and vex our bodies, will most certainly destroy our souls! Never was a creature possessed with an evil spirit in a worse plight than the man without God, without Christ and without hope in the world! The casting out of the unclean spirit was, moreover, a thing that was impossible to man and only possible to God. And so is the conversion of an ungodly sinner a thing beyond the reach of human ability and only to be accomplished by the might of the Most High! The dreadful bellowing, foaming and tearing caused in this unhappy child by the unclean spirit are pictures of the sins, iniquities and vices into which ungodly men are continually and impetuously hurried—and a type of that sad and terrible suffering which remorse will, by-and-by, bring to their conscience and which the vengeance of God will soon cause to occupy their hearts. The bringing of this child to the Savior by his parents teaches us a lesson that those of us to whom the care of youth is entrusted, either as parents or teachers, should be anxious to bring our children to Jesus Christ that He may graciously save them! The devout desire and compassion of the father for his child is but a pattern of what every parent ought to feel for his offspring. Like Abraham, he should pray, “O that Ishmael might live before You!” And he should not only put up prayer, but also strive in the use of the means to bring his child to the Pool of Siloam, that haply the angel may stir the stream and his son may step into the water and be made whole! The parent should place his offspring where the Savior walks, that He may look upon him and heal him. The coming of the child to Christ is a picture of saving faith, for faith is *coming to Christ*—simply believing in the power of His atonement. And lastly, the casting down and tearing which is mentioned in my text is a picture

of the comer's conflict with the enemy of souls. "As he was still coming, the devil threw him down and tore him."

Our subject this morning will be the well known fact that coming sinners, when they approach the Savior, are often thrown down by Satan and torn, so that they suffer exceedingly in their minds, and are well-nigh ready to give up in despair! There are four points for our consideration this morning. That you may easily remember them, I have made them alliterative: the devil's *doings, designs, discovery and defeat*.

**I. First, THE DEVIL'S DOINGS.** When this child came to Christ to be healed, the devil threw him down and tore him. Now this is an illustration of what Satan does with most, if not all sinners. When they come to Jesus to seek light and life through Him, Satan throws them down and tears them. Allow me to point out how it is that the devil causes those extraordinary pangs and agonies which attend conversion. He has a multitude of devices, for he is cunning and crafty—and he has many different ways of accomplishing that end.

**1.** First of all he does this by *perverting the truth of God* for the destruction of the soul's hope and comfort. The devil is very sound in divinity. I never suspected him of heterodoxy yet! I believe him to be one of the most orthodox individuals in creation. Other people may disbelieve the doctrines of revelation, but the devil cannot, for he knows the truth of God and though he will often belie it, he is so crafty that he understands that with the soul convinced of sin, his best method is not to contradict the truth, but to pervert it. Now I will mention the five great doctrines which we hold to be most prominent in Scripture—by the perversion of each of which the devil tries to keep the soul in bondage, darkness and despair.

First, there is the great doctrine of *election*—that God has chosen to Himself a number that no man can number, who shall be holy, since they are ordained to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Now the devil agitates the coming soul upon that doctrine. "Oh," he says, "perhaps you are not elect. It is of no use your coming and struggling and striving. You may sit still and do nothing and yet be saved, if you are to be saved. But if your name is written among the lost, all your praying, seeking and believing cannot save you!" Thus the devil begins preaching sovereignty in the sinner's ear, to make him believe that the Lord will assuredly cut him off. He asks, "How can you suppose that such a wretch as you can be elect? You deserve to be damned, and you know it! Your brother is a good moral man, but as for you, you are the chief of sinners! Do you think God would choose you?" Then if the tempted one is instructed that election is not according to merit, but of God's free will, Satan opens another battery and insinuates, "You would not feel like this if

you were one of God's elect. You would not be allowed to come into all this suffering and pray so long in vain." And again he whispers, "You are not one of His," and thus attempts to throw the soul down and tear it in pieces. I would just like to have a blow at his schemes, this morning, by reminding our friends that when they come to Christ, they never need puzzle themselves about the doctrine of election! No one, in teaching a child the alphabet, makes him learn Z before he has learned A. So a sinner must not expect to learn election until he knows faith. The text with which he has to understand is this—"He who believes on the Lord Jesus shall be saved." And when the Lord has enabled him to learn and believe that, he may go on to this—"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." But if he cannot shake off the subject from his mind, he need not do it, for he may remember that every penitent is elect, every believer is elect! However great the sinner, if he does but repent, that is a *proof* that he is elect! If he does but believe on Christ, he is as certainly elect as his faith is genuine! I cannot tell that I am elect before I know whether I believe in God. I cannot tell a thing unless I see its effects. I cannot tell whether there is a seed in the ground unless you enable me to stir up the soil, or to wait till I see the blade shooting from under the earth—so I cannot tell whether your name is written in the Lamb's book of life until I see God's love manifested in you in the stretching out of your hearts towards God! I cannot disembowel the deep rocks of obscurity to find out hidden things unless evidences and effects furnish me with spade and mattock. There is a newspaper in Glasgow called the *Christian News*, alias, the *Un-Christian News* or *Christian Wasp*—and the editor says of me, that I am not fit to preach God's Word because I do not know (can you guess what it is?) who God's elect are! He writes words to this effect—"According to his own confession, the young man does not know who God's elect are until he has asked them questions and knows their character." Well, if I did, I would be marvelously wise, indeed! Who can know them apart from those signs, marks and evidences in the heart and life which God always vouchsafes to His elect in due time? Shall I unlock the archives of heaven and read the rolls, or, with presumptuous hands, unfold the Lamb's book of life, to know who are God's elect? No! I leave that for the editor of the *Christian News* to do—and when he publishes a full and correct list of the elect—no doubt it will be bought up tremendously, and the printer will speedily make a fortune by it! Let not the soul be distressed about election, for all who repent and believe do so as the effect of their election!

The next doctrine is that of *our depravity*—*the total depravity of man*—that all men are fallen in Adam, that they are all gone aside from the

truth and that, moreover, by their practice they have become full of sin. That in them dwells no good thing and that if any good thing shall ever come there, it shall be put there by God, for there is not even the *seed* of goodness in the heart, much less the flower of it. The devil torments the soul with that doctrine. He says, "See what a depraved creature you are? You know how dreadfully you have sinned against God! You have gone astray ten thousand times. See," he says, "there are your old sins still crying after you." And he waves his wand and gives a resurrection to past iniquities which rise up like ghosts and terrify the soul! "There, look at that midnight scene! Remember that deed of ingratitude? Listen! Do you not hear that oath echoed back from the walls of the past? Look at your heart, can that ever be washed? Why, it is full of blackness! You know you tried to pray, yesterday, and your mind roved to your business before you were half through your prayer! And since you have been seeking God, you have only been half in earnest, knocking at the door, sometimes, and then afterwards giving it up. It is impossible you should ever be forgiven! You have gone too far astray for the Shepherd to find you—you are altogether filthy—your heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked and you cannot be saved." Many a poor soul has had a most terrible tearing with that doctrine. I have felt something of it, myself, when I have verily thought that I must be torn in pieces by the dread remembrance of what I had been! The devil throws the sinner down and pulls him almost limb from limb by persuading him that his guilt is heinous beyond parallel and his iniquities are far beyond the reach of mercy—and his death warrant is signed! Ah, poor soul, get up again—the devil has no right to throw you down! Your sin cannot be too great for God's mercy! It is not the greatness of sin that can cause any man to be damned if there is not a lack of faith! If a man has faith, notwithstanding all the sins he may ever have committed, he shall be saved! But if he has but one sin *without* faith, that one sin shall utterly destroy him. Faith in the blood of Christ destroys the sting of sin. One drop of the Savior's precious blood could extinguish a thousand flaming worlds if God should will it! How much more can it put out the burning fears of your poor heart! If you believe in Christ, you shall say to the mountain of your guilt, "Be you removed far from here and cast into the depths of the sea."

Then, there is the doctrine of *effectual calling*, or, *irresistible grace*—that God calls His children effectually—that it is not the power of *man* which brings us to God—but it is the work of God to bring man to divine grace! That He calls those whom He would save with an effectual and special call which He vouchsafes only to His children. "There now," says the evil one, "the minister said there must be an effectual call. Depend upon it, yours is not such a call, it never came from God! It is only a few

heated feelings—you were excited a little under the sermon—and it will all be gone, directly, like the morning cloud or the early dew. You have strong desires, sometimes, but at other seasons they are not half so vehement. If the Lord drew you, you would be always drawn with the same power. It will be over, soon, and you will be all the worse for having been inclined to go to God under these legal convictions and then, afterwards, running away from Him!” Well, beloved, tell Satan that you don't know whether it is an effectual call, but you know this, that if you perish, you will go to Christ and perish only there! Tell him you know it is so effectual that you cannot help going to Christ—that whether it is to last or not, you cannot say—you will let him know, by-and-by, but that you are resolved (for this is your last defense), if you perish, to perish at the cross of Christ! And so, by the help of God, you may, by some means, overcome him when he throws you down on that doctrine.

The devil will also pervert the doctrine of *final perseverance of the saints*. “Look,” says Satan “the children of God always hold on their way—they never leave off being holy, they persevere. Their faith is like the path of the Just, shining more and more unto the perfect day—and so would yours be if you were one of the Lord's. But you will never be able to persevere. Don't you remember six months ago, when you were lying on a sick bed, you resolved to serve God and it all broke down? You have vowed many times that you would be a Christian, but it has not lasted a fortnight! It will never do, you are too fickle! You will never keep fast hold on Christ. You will go with Him a little while, but you will be sure to turn back. Therefore, you cannot be one of the Lord's, for they never turn back!” And so he tries to pull and tear the poor soul on that great and comforting doctrine. The same nail on which a sinner must hang his hope, Satan tries to drive into the very temples of his faith that he may die like Sisera in the tent of Jael! Oh, poor soul, tell Satan that your perseverance is not yours, but that God is the author of it—that however weak *you* are, you know your weakness—but that if God begins a good work, He will never leave it unfinished. And repelling him thus, you may rise up from that throwing down and tearing which he has given to you!

Then there is the doctrine of *limited atonement* with which the unclean spirit will assault the soul. “Oh,” says Satan, “it is true Christ died, but not for *you!* You are a peculiar character.” I remember the devil once made me believe that I was one, alone, without a companion. I thought there was no one like myself. I said that others had sinned as I had done and had gone as far and bad, but I fancied that there was something peculiar about my sin. Thus the devil tried to set me apart as if I did not belong to the rest of mankind! I thought that if I had been anybody else, I

might have been saved. How often I wished I had been a poor swearing drunk in the streets and then, I thought, I might have a better chance. But as it was, I thought I was to die alone, like the deer in the shade of the forest. But well do I remember my friends singing that sweet hymn—

***“His grace is sovereign, rich and free,  
And why, my soul, why not for thee?”***

One of the hymns in Denham's selection and it ought to have been in Rippon's, as well as I can remember, it ends like this—

***“He shed His blood so rich and free,  
And why, my soul, why not for thee?”***

That is just the question we never put to ourselves. We say, “Surely, my soul, why not for anybody else but you?” Up, poor soul! If Satan is trying to tear you, tell him it is written, “He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him.” Tell Satan that, “Whoever comes, He will in no wise cast out.” And it may be that thus God will deliver you from that desperate conflict into which, as a coming sinner, you have been cast.

**2.** But Satan is not very scrupulous and he sometimes throws the coming sinner down and tears him by *telling horrible lies*. Some of you may not have known this, and I thank God if you do not understand some of the things of which I am about to speak. Many a time when the soul is coming to Christ, Satan violently injects infidel thoughts. I have never been thoroughly an unbeliever but once, and that was not before I knew the need of a Savior, but after it. It was just when I wanted Christ and panted after Him, that all of a sudden the thought crossed my mind which I abhorred, but could not conquer, that there was no God, no Christ, no heaven, no hell! I thought that all my prayers were but a farce and that I might as well have whistled to the winds or spoken to the howling waves! Ah, I remember how my ship drifted along through that sea of fire, loosened from the anchor of my faith which I had received from my fathers. I doubted everything, until, at last, the devil defeated himself by making me doubt my own existence—and I thought I was an idea floating in the nothingness of obscurity! Then, startled with that thought and feeling that I was substantial flesh and blood, after all, I saw, by God's grace, that God was, and Christ was, and heaven was, and hell was and that all these things were very truths of God! I would not be astonished if many, here, have been upon the very verge of infidelity and have doubted almost everything. It is when Satan finds the heart tender that he tries to stamp his own impression of infidelity upon the soul. But, blessed be God, he never accomplishes it in the truly coming sinner!

He also labors to inject blasphemous thoughts and then tells us they are ours. Has he not sometimes poured in most vehement torrents of blasphemy and evil imaginations into our hearts, which we ignorantly thought must be our own? Yet not one of them, perhaps, belonged to us.

I remember when I, once, was alone, musing on God, when all of a sudden it seemed as if the floodgates of hell had been loosened! My head became a very pandemonium—ten thousand evil spirits seemed to be holding carnival within my brain and I held my mouth lest I should give utterance to the words of blasphemy that were poured into my ears! Things I had never heard or thought of, before, came rushing impetuously into my mind and I could scarcely withstand their influence! It was the devil throwing me down and tearing me! Ah, poor soul, you will, perhaps, have that, too. But remember, it is only one of the tricks of the arch-enemy! He drives his unclean beasts into your field and then calls them yours. Now, in old times, when tramps and vagrants troubled a parish, they whipped them and then sent them on to the next parish. So when you get these evil thoughts, give them a sound whipping and send them away! They do not belong to you if you do not indulge them—but if you fear that these thoughts are your own, you may say, “I will go to Christ, and even if these blasphemies are mine, I will confess them to the great High Priest, for I know that all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.”

**3.** Then if the devil cannot overcome you, there, he tries another method. He takes all the threatening passages out of God's Word and says they all apply to you! He reads you this passage, “There is a sin unto death; I do not say that you should pray for it.” “There,” says the devil, “the apostle did not say he could even pray for the man who had committed certain sins!” Then he reads that sin against the Holy Spirit shall never be forgiven. “There,” he says, “in your character you have committed sin against the Holy Spirit and you will never be pardoned.” Then he brings another passage—“Let him alone; Ephraim is joined unto idols.” “There,” says Satan, “you have had no liberty in prayer lately. God has let you alone. You are given unto idols—you are entirely destroyed!” And the cruel fiend howls his song of joy and makes a merry dance over the thought that the poor soul is to be lost! But do not believe him, my dear Friends. No man has committed the sin against the Holy Spirit as long as he has divine grace to repent! It is certain that no man can have committed that sin if he flies to Christ and believes on Him! No *believing soul* can commit it! No penitent sinner ever has committed it. If a man is careless and thoughtless—if he can hear a terrible scream and laugh it off and put away his convictions—if he never feels any strivings of conscience—there is a fear that he may have committed that sin. But as long as you have any desires for Christ, you have no more committed that sin than you have flown up to the stars and swept cobwebs from the skies! As long as you have any sense of your guilt, any desire to be redeemed,

you cannot have fallen into that sin. As a penitent, you may still be saved, but if you had committed it, you could not be penitent.

**II.** Let me dwell for a moment or two upon the second point—the DEVIL'S DESIGN. Why does he throw the coming soul down and tear it?

First, because *he does not like to lose it*. “No king will willingly lose his subjects,” said Apollyon to Christian when he stretched himself across the road, “and I swear you shall go no farther; here will I spill your soul.” There he stood vowing vengeance at him because he had escaped from his dominion. Do you suppose that Satan would lose his subjects, one by one, and not be angry? Assuredly not! As soon as he sees a soul hurrying off to the Wicket Gate, with his eyes fixed on the Light, away go all hell's dogs after him! “There is another of my subjects leaving. My empire is being thinned. My family is being diminished.” And he tries with all his might and main to bring the poor soul back again. Ah, soul, don't be deceived by him! His design is to throw you down—he does not tell you these things to do you good, or to humble you—but in order to keep you from coming to Christ! He tries to decoy you into his net, where he may utterly destroy you.

Sometimes, I believe, he has the vile design of *inducing poor souls to kill themselves* before they have faith in Christ! This is an extreme case, but I have met with not a few who have been thus tempted to take away their lives and rush before their Maker with their hands red with their own blood! Satan knows full well that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. But he has never accomplished his design in the soul of one elect sinner yet!

Then Satan has another motive. *When the soul is coming to Christ, he tries, out of spite, to worry that soul*. Satan's heart is made up of that which is just the opposite of benevolence—malevolence—he hates everything and loves nothing. He hates to see any creature happy, any soul glad. And when he sees a soul coming to Christ, he says, “Ah, I have nearly lost him. I shall never have an opportunity of bringing thundering condemnation into his ears and dragging him about in the flames of hell as I thought. And now, before he is gone, I will do something—the last grip shall be a hard one—the last blow shall be dealt with all my power.” And down he comes upon the poor soul who falls wallowing upon the earth in despair and doubt. Then he tears him and will not leave him until he has worked as much of his way with him as the Lord will let him. Don't be afraid, child of God! “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” And even though he may cast you to the ground, remember that the righteous falls many times, but he rises up again! And so shall you—and the designs of the enemy shall be frustrated, as it is written, “Your enemies shall be found liars unto you.”

**III.** In the third place, there is the DEVIL'S DISCOVERY. I do not think the devil would be able to throw one poor sinner to the ground if he came as the devil. But it is seldom he does that. He presents himself to us as an angel of light, or even as the Holy Spirit! He knows that the Holy Spirit does all the work of salvation and, therefore, he tries to counterfeit the operations of the Holy Spirit. He knows it is the Holy Spirit's work to take away pride from man and to humble the soul. Well, Satan counterfeits that blessed work and takes away *hope* from man as well as pride. Under the pretense of humbling the poor sinner and telling him that he ought to lie lower in the dust, he not only humbles the poor soul but puts it down so low that he dishonors God, too, in the sinner's estimation, by telling him that God, Himself, cannot save him. Satan will try, if he can, to mar God's work. While it is yet upon the potter's wheel, he puts on his own instrument while the clay is whirling round upon the wheel, that it may not assume the Holy Spirit's shape, but that there may be some marks of the devil's workmanship in the article! Sometimes you ask God that you may be able to agonize in prayer. "That is right," says Satan, "agonize in prayer. But remember, you must receive the mercy *now*, or you are lost." So he glides in and adds a little piece to the truth, making you believe it is an impulse of the Holy Spirit, while it is, after all, a deception of the Father of Lies! The Holy Spirit tells you that you are a lost sinner and undone. "Ah," says the devil, "you are and you cannot be saved!" And thus, again under the very garb of the Spirit's operations, he deceives the soul. It is my firm belief that very much of the experience of a Christian is not Christian experience—many Christians experience things that have nothing to do with Christianity, but more to do with demonology! When you read the convictions of John Bunyan, you may think that all that terror was the fruit of the Holy Spirit—but be assured it was the fruit of Satanic influence! You may think it is God's Holy Spirit that drives sinners to despair, and keeps them shut up in the iron cage so long. Not at all! There was God's Holy Spirit, and then Satan came in to mar the work if he could.

Now I will give the poor sinner a means of detecting Satan, so that he may know whether his convictions are from the Holy Spirit or merely the bellowing of hell in his ears. In the first place, *you may always be sure that that which comes from the devil will make you look at yourselves, and not at Christ.* The Holy Spirit's work is to turn our eyes from ourselves to Jesus Christ, but the enemy's work is the very opposite. Nine out of ten of the insinuations of the devil have to do with ourselves. "You are guilty," says the devil—*that is self.* "You have not faith"—*that is self.* "You do not repent enough"—*that is self.* "You have got such a wavering hold of Christ"—*that is self.* "You have none of the joy of the Spirit and, there-

fore, cannot be one of His"—*that is self*. Thus the devil begins picking holes in us—whereas the Holy Spirit takes self entirely away and tells us that we are “nothing at all,” but that—

**“Jesus Christ is all-in-all.”**

Satan brings the carcass of self and pulls it about—and because it is corrupt—tells us that most assuredly we cannot be saved. But remember, sinner, it is not *your hold* of Christ that saves you—it is Christ! It is not *your joy* in Christ that saves you—it is Christ! It is not even faith in Christ, though that is the *instrument*—it is Christ's blood and merits! Therefore, look not so much to your hand with which you are grasping Christ, as to Christ! Look not to your hope, but to *Christ*, the *source* of your hope! Look not to your faith, but to Christ, the Author and Finisher of your faith! As you look at yourself, the meanest of those evil spirits may tread you beneath his feet. Look, therefore, to Christ!

You may discern the devil's insinuations in another way—*they generally reflect upon some attribute of God*. Sometimes they reflect upon His love and tell you that God will not save you. Sometimes upon His long-suffering and they tell you, you are too old and that God won't save you. Sometimes upon His sovereignty and they tell you that God does not choose as He wills, but that He has respect to characters and takes men according to their merits. Sometimes they reflect upon God's truth and they tell you that He will not keep His promise. Yes, and sometimes they reflect upon the very being of God and tell you that there is not such a one. But O poor trembling soul, Satan shall not get an advantage over you—but take care—detect him! And when you have found out the devil, you have frustrated his aims as far as you are yourself concerned.

**IV.** Now, in the last place, we have to consider the DEVIL'S DEFEAT. How was he defeated? Jesus rebuked him. Beloved, there is no other way for us to be saved from the castings down of Satan but the *rebuke of Jesus*. “Oh,” says one poor soul, “many months and years have I been distressed for fear I should not be saved. I have gone from place to place in hopes that some minister might say something which should rebuke the evil spirit.” Sister, or beloved brother, have you not been doing wrong? Is it not *Jesus* who rebukes the evil spirit? Or perhaps you have been trying to rebuke the evil spirit yourself!. You have tried to argue and dispute with him. You have said that you are not as vile as he described you to be. Beloved, have you not been doing wrong? It is not *your* business to rebuke Satan—“The LORD rebuke you,” that is what you should say. Oh, if you had looked to Jesus and said, “Lord, rebuke him,” He had only need say, “Hush!” and the demon would have been still in a moment, for he knows how omnipotent Jesus is, since he feels His power. But you get to striving to pacify your own heart when you are under these temptations, instead of remembering that it is *only Jesus* who can remove the

affliction. If I had one here who suffered the most from this ailment—the possession of Satan—I would say to him, “beloved, sit down. Remember Jesus. Go to Gethsemane and, depend upon it, the devil will never stay there with you! Think on the agonies of your Savior covered with His blood. The devil cannot bear Christ’s blood—he goes howling away at the very thought of it! Go to the pavement where Christ endured the accursed flagellation. The devil will not stay long there with you. And if you sit at the foot of His cross and say—

***“Oh, how sweet to view the flowing,  
Of His ever precious blood,”***

you will not long find the devil vexing you! It is no use to simply pray. Prayer is good in itself, but that is not the way to get rid of Satan—it is *thinking of Christ*. We get to saying, “Oh, that I had stronger faith! Oh, that I had love to Jesus!” It is good for a Christian to say that, but it is not enough. The way to overcome Satan and to have peace with God is through Christ, “I am the way.” If you would know the way, come to Christ. “I am the truth.” If you would refute the devil’s lies, come to the truth. “I am the life.” If you would be spared from Satan’s killing, come to Jesus. There is one thing which we, all of us, too much becloud in our preaching, though I believe we do it very unintentionally—namely, the great truth that it is not prayer, it is not faith, it is not our doings, it is not our feelings upon which we must rest—but upon Christ and on *Christ alone!* We are apt to think that we are not in a right state, that we do not feel enough, instead of remembering that our business is not with self, but Christ. Our business is only with Christ!

O soul, if you could fix your soul on Jesus and neglect everything else—if you could but despise good works and all else, so far as they relate to your salvation and look wholly, simply on Christ, I tell you Satan would soon give up throwing you down! He would find it would not answer his purpose, for you would fall on Christ and, like the giant who fell upon his mother, the earth, you would rise up each time stronger than before. Do I have, then, within hearing, one poor tried, tempted, devil-dragged soul? Has Satan been pulling you through the thorns and briars and thickets until you are scarred and bruised? Come now, I have tried to preach a rough sermon to you because I knew I had rough work to do with roughly-used souls! Is there nothing here, poor sinner, that you can lay hold upon? Are you so locked up that not one ray of light comes through the iron bars? What? Are you so chained that you cannot move hand or foot? Why, Man, I have brought you a pitcher and a piece of bread, today, even in your dungeon! Though you are cast down, there is a little here to comfort you in what I have said. But oh, if my Master would come, He would bring more than that, for He would rebuke the unclean spirit and it would immediately depart from you! Let me beseech

you, look only to Christ—never expect deliverance from self, from Satan, from ministers, or from means of any kind apart from Christ! Keep your eyes simply on Him. Let His death, His agonies, His groans, His sufferings, His merits, His glories, His intercession be fresh upon your mind. When you wake in the morning look for Him! When you lie down at night look for Him! Oh let not your hopes or fears come between you and Christ. Seek only Christ! Let the hymn we sang, be your hymn and your prayer—

***“Lord, deny me what you will,  
Only ease me of my guilt,  
Prostrate at Your feet I lie,  
Give me Christ, or else I die.”***

And then, even though the devil throws you down and tears you, it were better he should do so, now, than that he should tear you forever.

I have some here, however, who will laugh at what I have been preaching this morning. Ah, Sirs, you may do so. But bitter though my text may be, I wish you had it in your mouths. Though sad is the experience of being torn when coming to Christ, I had rather see you so than see you whole, away from Christ! It is better to be torn in pieces coming to the Savior, than to have a sound, whole heart away from Him! Tremble, sinner, tremble—for if you come not to Christ, *He* shall tear you at the last. His eyes shall not pity, neither shall His hands spare you! He has said, “Beware you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.” Sirs, within another hour some of you may know this! Certainly, before long there are some who will be torn in pieces by the wrath of God! Why will you die? Why will you die? You cannot answer the question! But let it rest upon your hearts. What profit will you have in your own blood? What will you profit if you gain the whole world and lose your soul? Remember, Jesus Christ can save even you! Believe on His name, you convinced sinners, believe on Christ! The Lord bless you, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

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# THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST

## NO. 101

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING,  
NOVEMBER 2, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”  
Philippians 2:9-11.***

I ALMOST regret, this morning, that I have ventured to occupy this pulpit because I feel utterly unable to preach to you for your profit. I had thought that the quiet and repose of the last fortnight had removed the effects of that terrible catastrophe. I feel somewhat of those same painful emotions which well-nigh prostrated me before. You will, therefore, excuse me this morning if I make no allusion to that solemn event, or scarcely any. I could not preach to you upon a subject that should be in the least allied to it. I would be obliged to be silent if I should bring to my remembrance that terrible scene in the midst of which it was my solemn lot to stand. God shall doubtless overrule it. It may not have been so much by the malice of men, as some have asserted. It was, perhaps, simple wickedness—an intention to disturb a congregation—and certainly with no thought of committing so terrible a crime as that of the murder of those unhappy creatures. God forgive those who were the instigators of that horrid act! They have my forgiveness from the depths of my soul. *It shall not stop us, however!* We are not in the least degree daunted by it. I shall preach there, again, yes and God shall give us souls there and Satan’s empire shall tremble more than ever! “God is with us; who is he that shall be against us?” The text I have selected is one that has comforted me and, in a great measure, enabled me to come here today—the single reflection upon it had such a power of comfort on my depressed spirit. It is this—“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”—Philippians 2:9-11.

I shall not attempt to preach upon this text. I shall only make a few remarks that have occurred to my own mind, for I could not preach

today. I have been utterly unable to study, but I thought that even a few words might be acceptable to you, this morning, and I trust to your loving hearts to excuse them. Oh, Spirit of God, magnify Your strength in Your servant's weakness, and enable him to honor his Lord, even when his soul is cast down within him!

When the mind is intensely set upon one object, however much it may, by different calamities, be tossed to and fro, it invariably returns to the place which it had chosen to be its dwelling place. You have noticed, in the case of David, when the battle had been won by his warriors, they returned flushed with victory. David's mind had doubtless suffered much perturbation in the meantime—he had dreaded, alike, the effects of victory and defeat—but have you not noticed how his mind, in one moment, returned to the darling object of his affections? “Is the young man, Absalom, safe?” he asked, as if it mattered not what else had occurred, if his beloved son were but secure! So, beloved, is it with the Christian in the midst of calamities, whether they are the wreck of nations, the crash of empires, the heaving of revolutions, or the scourge of war—the great question which he asks himself and asks of others, too, is this—is Christ's kingdom safe? In his own personal afflictions, his chief anxiety is—will God be glorified and will His honor be increased by it? If it is so, he says, although I am but as smoking flax, yet if the sun is not dimmed, I will rejoice, and though I am a bruised reed, if the pillars of the temple are unbroken, what does it matter if my reed is bruised? He finds it sufficient consolation, in the midst of all the breaking in pieces which he endures, to think that Christ's throne stands fast and firm and that though the earth has rocked beneath *his* feet, yet Christ stands on a rock which can never be moved! Some of these feelings, I think, have crossed our minds. Amidst much tumult and different rushing to and fro of troublous thoughts, our souls have returned to the darling object of our desires and we have found it no small consolation, after all, to say, “It matters not what shall become of us—God has highly exalted *Him* and given *Him* a name which is above every name—that at the name of *Jesus* every knee should bow.”

This text has afforded sweet consolation to every heir of heaven. Allow me, very briefly, to give you the consolations of it. *To the true Christian, there is much comfort in the very fact of Christ's exaltation.* In the second place, *there is no small degree of consolation in the reason of it.* “Therefore, also, God has highly exalted Him.” That is because of His previous humiliation. And thirdly, there is no small amount of really divine solace in the thought of *the person who has exalted Christ.* “Therefore God also”—although men despise Him, and cast Him down—“God also has highly exalted Him.”

I. First, then, IN THE VERY FACT OF CHRIST'S EXALTATION, THERE IS, TO EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN, A VERY LARGE DEGREE OF COMFORT. Many of you who have no part nor lot in spiritual things, not having love to Christ nor any desire for His glory, will but laugh when I say that this is a very bottle of cordial to the lips of the weary Christian, that Christ, after all, is glorified. To you it is no consolation, because you lack that condition of heart which makes this text sweet to the soul. To you there is nothing of joy in it—it does not stir your bosom, it gives no sweetness to your life, for this very reason—that you are not joined to Christ's cause, nor do you devoutly seek to honor Him. But the true Christian's heart leaps for joy, even when cast down by different sorrows and temptations, at the remembrance that Christ is exalted—for in that he finds enough to cheer his own heart! Note here, beloved, that the Christian has certain features in his character which make the exaltation of Christ a matter of great joy to him. First, he has, in his own opinion, but not only in his own opinion, but in reality, *a relationship to Christ*. And, therefore, he feels an interest in the success of his kinsman. You have watched the father's joy when, step by step, his boy has climbed to opulence or fame. You have marked the mother's eyes as they sparkled with delight when her daughter grew up to womanhood and burst forth in all the grandeur of beauty. You have asked why they should feel such interest—you have been told, because the boy was his, or the girl was hers. They delighted in the advancement of their little ones because of their *relationship*. Had there been no relationship, they might have been advanced to kings, emperors, or queens and they would have felt but little delight. But from the feet of kindred, each step was invested with a deep and stirring interest! Now, it is so with the Christian. He feels that Jesus Christ, the glorified Prince of the kings of the earth, is his brother. While he reverences Him as God, he admires Him as the Man-Christ, bone of his bone, and flesh of His flesh. He delights in his calm and placid moments of communion with Jesus, to say to Him, "O Lord, You are my brother." His song is, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." It is his joy to sing—

***"In ties of blood with sinners one,"***

Christ Jesus is—for He is man, even as we are—and He is no less and no more man than we are, save only sin. Surely, when we feel we are related to Christ, His exaltation is the source of the greatest joy to our spirits! We take a delight in it, seeing it is one of our family that is exalted! It is the Elder Brother of the great one family of God in heaven and earth—it is the Brother to whom all of us are related!

There is also in the Christian, not only the feeling of relationship, but there is a feeling of *unity in the cause*. He feels that when Christ is exalted, it is himself exalted, in some degree, seeing he has sympathy

with His desire of promoting the great cause and honor of God in the world. I have no doubt that every common soldier who stood by the side of the Duke of Wellington felt honored when the commander was applauded for the victory, for, he said, "I helped him; I assisted him; it was but a mean part that I played, but I did but maintain my rank; I did sustain the enemy's fire. But now the victory is gained, I feel an honor in it, for I helped, in some degree to gain it." So the Christian, when he sees his Lord exalted, says, "It is the Captain that is exalted, and in His exaltation, all His soldiers share. Have I not stood by His side? Little was the work I did and poor the strength which I possessed to serve Him, but still, I aided in the labor." And the most common soldier in the spiritual ranks feels that he, himself, is, in some degree, exalted when he reads this—"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name." A name above every name—"That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow."

Moreover, the Christian knows not only that there is this unity in design, but that there is a *real union* between Christ and all His people. It is a doctrine of revelation seldom sung upon, and never too much thought of—the doctrine that Christ and His members are all one! Know you not, beloved, that every member of Christ's Church is a member of Christ Himself? We are "of His flesh, and of His bones," parts of His great mystical body! And when we read that our Head is crowned, O rejoice, you members of His! Though the crown is not on you, yet being on your Head, you share the glory, for you are one with Him! See Christ yonder, sitting at His Father's right hand? Believer! He is the pledge of your glorification! He is the surety of your acceptance. And, moreover, He is your representative. The seat which Christ possesses in heaven, He has not only by His own right, as a person of the Deity, but He has it, also, as the representative of His whole church, for He is their forerunner, and He sits in glory as the representative of every one of them. O rejoice, believer, when you see your Master exalted from the tomb, when you behold Him exalted up to heaven! Then, when you see Him climb the steps of light and sit upon His lofty throne—when you hear the acclamations of a thousand seraphs—when you note the loud pealing choral symphony of millions of the redeemed—think, when you see Him crowned with light—think that you are exalted, too, *in Him*, seeing that you are a part of Himself! Happy are you if you know this, not only in doctrine but in sweet *experience*, too! Knit to Christ, wedded to Him, grown into His parts and portions of His very self; we throb with the heart of the body! When the head, itself, is glorified, we share in the praise. We feel that His glorification bestows an honor upon us! Ah, beloved, have you ever felt that unity to Christ? Have you ever felt a unity of desire with Him? If so,

you will find this rich with comfort. But if not—if you know not Christ—it will be a source of grief rather than a pleasure to you that He is exalted, for you will have to reflect that He is exalted to *crush* you—He is exalted to *judge* you, and *condemn* you! He is exalted to sweep this earth of its sins, and pull the curse up by the roots—and you with it—unless you repent and turn to God with full purpose of heart!

There is yet another feeling which I think is extremely necessary to any very great enjoyment of this truth of God, that Christ is exalted. It is a feeling of *entire surrender of one's whole being to the great work of seeking to honor Him*. Oh, I have strived for that—would to God I might attain unto it! I have now concentrated all my prayers into one and that one prayer is this—that I may die to self—and live wholly to Him! It seems to me to be the highest stage of man—to have no wish, no thought, no desire but Christ! To feel that to die were bliss, if it were for Christ; that to live in penury, and woe, and scorn, and contempt, and misery were sweet for Christ. To feel that it did not matter what became of one's self, so that one's Master was but exalted; to feel that though, like a dry leaf, you are blown in the blast, you are quite careless where you are going—as long as you feel that the Master's hand is guiding you according to His will! Or rather to feel that though, like the diamond, you must be cut, that you care not how sharply you may be cut so that you may be made fit to be a brilliant jewel in *His* crown. That you care little what may be done to you, if you may but honor *Him!* If any of you have attained to that sweet feeling of self-annihilation, you will look up to Christ as if He were the sun and you will say of yourself, "O Lord, I see Your beams, I feel myself to be not a beam from You—but darkness, swallowed up in Your light. The most I ask is that You would live in me—that the life I live in the flesh may not be my life, but Your life in me—that I may say with emphasis, as Paul did, 'For me to live is Christ.'" A man that has attained to this never need care what the opinion of the world is! He may say, "Do you praise me? Do you flatter me? Take back your flatteries! I ask them not at your hands—I sought to praise my Master, but you have laid the praises at my door. Go; lay them at His, and not at mine! Do you scorn me? Do you despise me? Thrice happy am I to hear it, if you will not scorn and despise *Him!*" And if you will, yet know this that He is beyond your scorn! Therefore smite the soldier for his Captain's sake—yes, strike, strike—but the King you cannot touch! He is highly exalted—and though you think you have gotten the victory, you may have routed one soldier of the army—but the main body is triumphant! One soldier seems to be smitten to the dust, but the Captain is coming on with His victorious cohorts and shall trample you, flushed with your false victory, beneath His conquering feet!

As long as there is a particle of selfishness remaining in us, it will mar our sweet rejoicing in Christ—till we get rid of it—we shall never feel constant joy. I think that the root of sorrow is self. If we once got rid of that, sorrow would be sweet, sickness would be health, sadness would be joy, and penury would be wealth, as far as our feelings with regard to them are concerned. *They* might not be changed, but *our feelings* under them would be vastly different! If you would seek happiness, seek it at the roots of your selfishness; cut up your selfishness, and you will be happy. I have found that whenever I have yielded to the least joy when I have been praised, I have made myself effeminate and weak; I have then been prepared to feel acutely the arrows of the enemy; but when I have said of the praises of men, “Yes, what are you? Worthless things!”—then I could also say of their contempt—“Come on! Come on! I’ll send you all where I sent the praises. You may go together and fight your battles with one another, but as for me, let your arrows rattle on my mail—they must not, and they shall not reach my flesh!” But if you give way to one, you will to another. You must seek and learn to live wholly on Christ—to sorrow when you see *Christ* maligned and dishonored, to rejoice when you see *Him* exalted. Then you will have constant cause for joy! Sit down, now, O reviled one, poor, despised and tempted one. Sit down, lift up your eyes, see Him on His throne and say within yourself, “Little though I am, I know I am united to Him! He is my love, my life, my joy! I care not what happens, so long as it is written, ‘The Lord reigns.’”

**II.** Now, briefly upon the second point. Here, also, is the very fountain and wellspring of joy, in THE REASON OF CHRIST’S EXALTATION. “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him.” Why? Because, “He, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him.” This, of course, relates to the manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ. As God, Christ needed no exaltation. He was higher than the highest, “God over all, blessed forever.” But the symbols of His glory, having been for a while obscured, having wrapped His Godhead in mortal flesh—His flesh with His Godhead ascended up on high and the Man-God, Christ Jesus, who had stooped to shame and sorrow and degradation, was highly exalted “far above all principalities and powers”—that He might reign Prince-regent over all worlds, yes, over heaven itself! Let us consider for a moment, that depth of degradation to which Christ descended. And then, my beloved, it will give you joy to think that for that very reason His manhood was highly elected. Do you see that man—

**“The humble Man before His foes,**

***The weary Man and full of woes?"***

Do you mark Him as He speaks? Note the marvelous eloquence which pours from His lips and see how the crowds attend Him. But do you hear in the distance the growling of the thunders of calumny and scorn? Listen to the words of His accusers! They say He is “a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.” “He has a devil and is mad.” All the whole vocabulary of abuse is exhausted by abusive censure upon Him. He is slandered, abused, persecuted! Stop! Do you think that He is by this cast down, by this degraded? No, for this very reason—“God has highly exalted Him.” Mark the shame and spit that have come upon the cheeks of yonder Man of Sorrows! See His hair plucked with cruel hands. Mark how they torture Him and how they mock Him. Do you think that this is at all dishonorable to Christ? It is apparently so, but listen to this—“He became obedient” and, therefore, “God has highly exalted Him.” Ah, there is a marvelous connection between that shame and spit and the bending of the knee of seraphs! There is a strange, yet mystic link, which unites the calumny and the slander with the choral sympathies of adoring angels! The one was, as it were, the seed of the other. Strange that it should be, but the black, the bitter seed brought forth a sweet and glorious flower which blooms forever! He suffered and He reigned! He stooped to conquer and He conquered, for He stooped and was exalted, for He conquered!

Consider Him still further. Do you mark Him in your imagination nailed to yonder cross! Oh yes! Oh, how I mark the floods gushing down His cheeks! Do you see His hands bleeding and His feet, too, gushing gore? Behold Him! The bulls of Bashan gird Him round and the dogs are hounding Him to death! Hear Him! “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” The earth is startled with fright! A God is groaning on a cross! What? Does not this dishonor Christ? No. It honors Him! Each of the thorns becomes a brilliant jewel in His diadem of glory! The nails are forged into His scepter and His wounds clothe Him with the purple of empire! The treading of the winepress has stained His garments, but not with stains of scorn and dishonor. The stains are embroideries upon His royal robes forever. The treading of that winepress has made His garments purple with the empire of a world—and He is the Master of a universe forever! O Christian! Sit down and consider that your Master did not mount from earth’s mountains into heaven but from her valleys! It was not from heights of bliss on earth that He strode to eternal bliss, but from depths of woe He mounted up to glory! Oh, what a stride was that, when, at one mighty step from the grave to the throne of The Highest, the Man-Christ, the God, did gloriously ascend! And yet reflect He, in some way, mysterious, yet true, was exalted because He suffered! “Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death,

even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name." Believer, there is comfort for you here, if you will take it! If Christ were exalted through His degradation, so shall you be! Count not your steps to triumph by your steps upward but by those which are seemingly downward! The way to heaven is downhill! He who would be honored forever, must sink in his own esteem and often in that of his fellow men. Oh, think not of you fool who is mounting to heaven by his own light opinions of himself, and by the flatteries of his fellows, thinks that he shall safely reach paradise! No, that shall burst on which he rests and he shall fall and be broken in pieces. But he who descends into the mines of suffering shall find unbounded riches there—and he who dives into the depths of grief shall find the pearl of everlasting life within its caverns!

Remember, Christian, that you are exalted when you are disgraced. Read the slanders of your enemies as the plaudits of the just; count the scoff and jeer of wicked men equal to the praise and honor of the godly—their blame is censure, and their censure praise! Reckon, too, if your body should ever be exposed to persecution, that it is no shame to you, but the reverse. And if you should be privileged, (and you may), to wear the blood-red crown of martyrdom, count it no disgrace to die! Remember that the most honorable in the church are "the noble army of martyrs"; reckon that the greater the sufferings they endured, so much the greater is their "eternal weight of glory." And so do you, if you stand in the brunt and thick of the fight! Remember that you shall stand in the midst of glory—if you have the hardest to bear, you shall have the sweetest to enjoy! On with you, then—through floods, through fire, through death, through hell, if it should lie in your path! Fear not! He who glorified Christ because He stooped, shall glorify you, for after He has caused you to endure awhile, He will give you "a crown of life which fades not away."

**III.** And now, in the last place, beloved, here is yet another comfort for you. THE PERSON WHO exalted Christ is to be noticed. "GOD also has highly exalted Him." The emperor of all the Russians, crowns himself. He is an autocrat and puts the crown upon his own head—but Christ has no such foolish pride! Christ did not crown Himself. "GOD also has highly exalted Him." The crown was put upon the head of Christ by God! And there is to me a very sweet reflection in this—that the hand that put the crown on Christ's head will one day put the crown on ours—that the same Mighty One who crowned Christ, "King of kings and Lord of lords," will crown us, when He shall make us "kings and priests unto Him forever." "I know," said Paul, "there is laid up for me a crown of glory which fades not away, which God, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day."

Now, just pause over this thought—that Christ did not crown Himself, but that His Father crowned Him. That He did not elevate Himself to the throne of majesty, but that His Father lifted Him there and placed Him on His throne. Why, reflect thus—man never highly exalted Christ. Put this, then, in opposition to it: “God also has highly exalted Him.” Man hissed Him, mocked Him, hooted Him. Words were not hard enough—they would use stones. “They took up stones again to stone Him.” And stones failed. Nails must be used, and He must be crucified. And then there comes the taunt, the jeer, the mockery, while He hangs languishing on His cross. Man did not exalt Him. Set the black picture there. Now put this with this glorious—this bright scene, side by side with it—and one shall be a foil to the other! Man dishonored Him—“God also exalted Him.” Believer, if all men speak ill of you, lift up your head and say, “Man exalted not my Master. I thank him that he exalts not me. The servant should not be above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord, nor he that is sent, greater than He that sent him”—

***“If on my face for His dear name,  
Shame and reproach shall be,  
I’ll hail reproach and welcome shame—  
For He’ll remember me.”***

God will remember me and highly exalt me, after all, though man casts me down.

Put it, again, in opposition to the fact that Christ did not exalt Himself. Poor Christian! *You* feel that you cannot exalt yourself. Sometimes you cannot raise your poor depressed spirits. Some say to you, “Oh, you should not feel like this.” They tell you, “Oh, you should not speak such words, nor think such thoughts.” Ah, “The heart knows its own bitterness and a stranger intermeddles not therewith”—yes, and I will improve upon it, “nor a friend, either.” It is not easy to tell how another ought to feel and how another ought to act. Our minds are differently made, each in its own mold, which mold is broken afterwards and there shall never be another like it. We are all different, each one of us. But I am sure there is one thing in which we are all brought to unite in times of deep sorrow, namely, in a sense of helplessness. We feel that we cannot exalt ourselves. Now remember, our Master felt just like it. In the 22<sup>nd</sup> Psalm, which, if I read it rightly, is a beautiful soliloquy of Christ upon the cross, He says to Himself, “I am a worm and no man.” As if He felt Himself so broken, so cast down that instead of being more than a man, as He was, He felt for awhile less than man. And yet, when He could not lift a finger to crown Himself, when He could scarcely heave a thought of victory, when His eyes could not flash with even a distant glimpse of triumph—then His God was crowning Him! Are you so broken in pieces, Christian? Think not that you are cast away, forever, for, “God

also has highly exalted Him who did not exalt Himself.” And this is a picture and prophecy of what He will do for you!

And now, beloved, I can say little more upon this text save that I bid you, now, for a few minutes, meditate and think upon it. Oh, let your eyes be lifted up. Bid heaven’s blue veil divide. Ask power of God—I mean *spiritual* power from on high—to look within the veil. I bid you not look to the streets of gold, nor to the walls of jasper, nor to the pearly-gated city. I do not ask you to turn your eyes to the white-robed hosts who forever sing loud hallelujahs—but yonder, my friends, turn your eyes—

***“There, like a man, the Savior sits!  
The God, how bright He shines!  
And scatters infinite delight  
On all the happy minds!”***

Do you see Him?—

***“The head that once was crowned with thorns,  
Is crowned with glory now!  
A royal diadem adorns  
That mighty Victor’s brow!  
No more the bloody crown,  
The cross and nails no more—  
For hell itself shakes at His frown  
And all the heavens adore.”***

Look at Him! Can your imagination picture Him? Behold His transcendent glory! The majesty of kings is swallowed up. The pomp of empires dissolves like the white mist of the morning before the sun, the brightness of assembled armies is eclipsed! He, in Himself, is brighter than the sun, more terrible than armies with banners! Look at Him! Look at Him! Oh, hide your heads, you monarchs! Put away your gaudy pageantry, you lords of this poor narrow earth! His kingdom knows no bounds. Without a limit His vast empire stretches out itself. Above Him all is His! Beneath Him many a step are angels and they are His. And they cast their crowns before His feet. With them stand His elect and ransomed and *their* crowns, too, are His! And here upon this lower earth stand His saints and they are His and they adore Him! And under the earth, among the infernal, where devils growl their malice, even there is trembling and adoration—and where lost spirits, with wailing and gnashing of teeth forever lament their being—even there, there is the acknowledgement of His Godhead, even though the confession helps to make the fire of their torments hotter! In heaven, in earth, in hell, all knees bend before Him and every tongue confesses that He is God! If not now, yet in the time that is to come this shall be carried out, that every creature of God’s making shall acknowledge His Son to be “God over all, blessed forever. Amen.” Oh, my soul anticipates that blessed day when this whole earth shall willingly bend its knee before its God. I do believe

there is a happy era coming, when there shall not be one knee unbent before my Lord and Master. I look for that time, that latter-day glory, when kings shall bring presents, when queens shall be the nursing mothers of the church, when the gold of Sheba and the ships of Tarshish and the camels of Arabia shall, alike, be His. When nations and tribes of every tongue shall—

***“Dwell on His name with sweetest song,  
And infant voices shall proclaim  
Their early blessings on His name.”***

Sometimes I hope to live to see that all-auspicious era—that tranquil age of this world, so much oppressed with grief and sorrow by the tyranny of its own habitants. I hope to see the time when it shall be said, “Shout, for the great Shepherd reigns and His glorious kingdom now is come”—when earth shall be one great orchestra of praise and every man shall sing the glorious hallelujah anthem of the King of kings! But even now, while waiting for that era, my soul rejoices in the fact that every knee does virtually bow, though not willingly, yet really. Does the scoffer, when he mouths high heaven, think that he insults God? He thinks so, but his insult dies long before it reaches half-way to the stars. Does he conceive, when in his malice he forges a sword against Christ that his weapon shall prosper? If he does, I can well conceive the derision of God when He sees the wildest rebel, the most abandoned despiser still working out his great decrees, still doing that which God has eternally ordained—and in the midst of his wild rebellion still running in the very track which in some mysterious way from before all eternity had been marked as the track in which that being should certainly move! “The wild steeds of earth have broken their bridles, the reins are out of the hands of the charioteer”—so some say—but they are not, or if they are, the steeds run the same round as they would have done had the Almighty still grasped the reins! The world has not gone to confusion. Chance is not God. God is still Master and let men do what they will and hate the truth we now prize, they shall, after all, do what God wills and their direst rebellion shall prove but a species of obedience, though they know it not!

But you will say, “Why do you yet find fault, for who has resisted such a will as that?” “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? What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction—and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory?” Who is he that shall blame Him? Woe

unto him that strives with his Maker! He is God—know that, you inhabitants of the land—and all things, after all, shall serve His will! I like what Luther says in his bold hymn, where, notwithstanding all that those who are haters of predestination choose to affirm, he knew and boldly declared, “He everywhere has sway and all things serve His might.” Notwithstanding all they do, there is God’s sway, after all! Go on, reviler! God knows how to make all your reviling into songs! Go on, you warrior against God, if you will. But know this, your sword shall help to magnify God and carve out glory for Christ—when *you* thought it might slaughter His church! It shall come to pass that all you do shall be frustrated, for God makes the diviners mad, and says, “Where is the wisdom of the scribe? Where is the wisdom of the wise?” Surely, “Him has God exalted and given Him a name which is above every name.”

And now, lastly, beloved, if it is true, as it is, that Christ is so exalted that He is to have a name above every name and every knee is to bow to Him, will we not bow our knees this morning before His Majesty? You must, whether you will or not, one day bow your knee. O iron-sinewed sinner, bow your knee now! You will have to bow it, man, in that day when the lightning shall be loosed and the thunder shall roll in wild fury. You will have to bow your knee, then. Oh, bow it now! “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” O Lord of hosts! Bend the knees of men! Make us all the willing subjects of Your divine grace, lest afterward, we should be the unwilling slaves of Your terror—dragged with chains of vengeance down to hell! O that now those who are on earth might willingly bend their knees, lest in hell it should be fulfilled, “Things under the earth shall bow the knee before Him.” God bless you, my friends. I can say no more but that. God bless you, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

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# FALSE PROFESSORS SOLEMNLY WARNED

## NO. 102

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING,  
AUGUST 24, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

***“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.”***  
***Philippians 3:18, 19.***

PAUL was the very model of what a Christian minister should be. He was a *watchful* shepherd over the flock. He did not simply preach to them and consider that he had done all his duty when he had delivered his message. His eyes were always upon the churches, marking their spiritual welfare, their growth in divine grace, or their declension in godliness. He was the unsleeping guardian of their spiritual welfare. When he was called away to other lands to proclaim the everlasting gospel, he always seems to have kept an eye upon those Christian colonies which he had founded in the midst of heathen darkness. While lighting other lamps with the torch of truth, he did not fail to trim the lamps already burning. Here you observe he was not indifferent to the character of the little church at Philippi, for he speaks to them and warns them.

Note, too, that the apostle was a very *honest* pastor—when he marked anything amiss in his people, he did not blush to tell them. He was not like your modern minister, whose pride is that he never was personal in his life, and who thus glories in his shame, for if he were honest, *he would be personal*, for he would deal out the truth of God without deceitfulness, and would reprove men sharply, that they might be sound in the faith. “I tell you,” says Paul, “because it concerns you.” Paul was very honest—he did not flinch from telling the whole truth and telling it often, too, though some might think that once from the lip of Paul would be of more effect than a hundred times from anyone else. “I have told you often,” says he, “and I tell you yet again that there are some who are the enemies of the cross of Christ.”

And while faithful, you will notice that the apostle was, as every true minister should be, extremely *affectionate*. He could not bear to think that any of the members of the churches under his care should swerve from the truth. He wept while he denounced them—he knew not how to wield the thunderbolt with tearless eyes. He did not know how to pro-

nounce the threat of God with a dry and husky voice. No—while he spoke terrible things, the tears were in his eyes and when he reproved sharply, his heart beat so fast with love that those who heard him denounce so solemnly were yet convinced that his harshest words were dictated by affection! “I have told you often, and I tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.”

Beloved, I have a message to deliver tonight which is to the same effect as that of the Apostle Paul and I am afraid it is as necessary, now, as it was in his time. There are many now among us, as there were then, who walk in such a manner that we recognize them at once as the “enemies of the cross of Christ.” I fear that the evil, instead of having decreased, has multiplied and grown in danger! We have more profession, now, than there was in the age of Paul and, consequently, we have more hypocrisy. It is a crying sin with our churches that there are many in their midst who never ought to be there—who would be fit members of an ale-house or any favorite resort of the merry and frivolous, but who never ought to sip the sacramental wine or eat the holy bread, the emblems of the sufferings of our Lord! We have—O Paul, how would you have said it, tonight, and how would you have wept while saying it!—we have many in our midst who are the “enemies of the cross of Christ,” because “their god is their belly, they mind earthly things,” and their life is not consistent with the great things of God!

I shall endeavor, for a short time, tonight, to tell you the reason of the apostle’s extraordinary sorrow. I never read that the apostle wept when he was persecuted. Though they plowed his back with furrows, I believe that never was a tear seen to gush from his eyes while the soldiers scourged him! Though he was cast into prison, we read of his singing, never of his groaning! I do not believe he ever wept on account of any sufferings or dangers to which he, *himself*, was exposed for Christ’s sake. I call this an extraordinary sorrow because the man who wept was no soft piece of sentiment and seldom shed a tear even under grievous trials! He wept for three things—he wept on account of *their guilt*—on account of *the ill effects of their conduct* and on account of *their doom*.

**I.** First, Paul wept on account of the GUILT of those persons who, having a name to live, were dead. While uniting themselves with a Christian church, they were not walking as they should among men and before God. Notice the sin with which he charges them. He says, “Their god was their belly.” By this I understand that *they were sensual persons*. There were those in the early church who, after they sat at God’s table, would go away and sit at the feasts of the heathen and there indulge in gluttony and drunkenness. Others indulged in lusts of the flesh, enjoying those pleasures (so miscalled) which, afterwards, bring unutterable pain even to the body, itself, and are disgraceful to men—much more to professors

of religion! Their god was their belly. They cared more about the dress of their body than the dress of their soul. They regarded more the food of the outward carcass than the life of the inner man. Ah, my hearers—are there not many everywhere in our churches who still bow before their belly-god and make themselves their own idols? Is it not notorious, in almost every society, that professing men can pamper themselves as much as others?—I mean not all, but some. Yes, I have heard of drunken professors. Not men who positively reel through the street, who are drunk in midday, or intoxicated before their fellow men, but men who go to the very verge of drunkenness in their social parties. Men who take so much that while it would be an insult to their respectability to call them intoxicated, it would equally be an insult to the truth to call them sober! Have we not some men in our churches (it is idle to deny it) who are as fond of the excesses of the table and of the good things of this life as any other class of men? Have we not persons who spend a very fortune upon the dress of their bodies, adorning themselves far more than they adorn the doctrine of their Savior—men whose perpetual business it is to take good care of their bodies, against whom flesh and blood never had any cause to complain—for they not only serve the flesh, but make a god of it? Ah, sirs, the church is not pure! The church is not perfect—we have scabbed sheep in the flock. In our own little communion, now and then, we find them out and then comes the dread sentence of excommunication, by which they are cut off from our fellowship. But there are many of whom we are not aware, who creep like snakes along the grass and are not discovered till they inflict a grievous wound upon religion and do damage to our great and glorious cause. Brothers and sisters, there are some in the church (both established and dissenting)—let us say it with the deepest sorrow—“whose god is their belly.”

Another of their sins was that they *did mind earthly things*. Beloved, the last sentence may not have touched your consciences, but this is a very sweeping assertion! I am afraid that a very large proportion of Christ's church is verily guilty here. It is an anomaly, but it is a fact that we hear of ambitious Christians. Although Christ has told us that he who would be exalted, must humble himself, there are among the professed followers of the humble Man of Galilee men who strive to gain the topmost round of the ladder of this world! Their aim is not to magnify Christ, but to magnify themselves at any cost. It had been thought at one time that a Christian would be a holy, a humble and contented man—but it is not so nowadays! We have (oh, shame on you churches!) mere professors—men who are as worldly as the worldliest and have no more of Christ's Holy Spirit in them than the most carnal who never made a profession of the truth of God. Again, it is a paradox, but it stares us in the face every day, that we have covetous Christians. It is an incon-

sistency. We might as well talk of unholy seraphim, of perfect beings subject to sin, as of covetous Christians! Yet there are such men—whose purse strings were never intended to slide, at least at the cry of the poor—who call it *prudence* to amass wealth and never use it in any degree in the cause of Christ. If you want men that are hard in business, that are grasping after wealth, that seize upon the poor debtor and suck the last particle of his blood—if you want the men who are grasping and grinding, that will skin the flint and take away the very life from the orphan, you must come—I blush to say it, but it is a solemn truth—you must sometimes come to our churches to find them! Some such there are among the highest of her officers, who “mind earthly things” and have none of that devotion to Christ which is the mark of pure godliness! These evils are *not* the fruits of religion—they are the diseases of mere profession! I rejoice that the remnant of the elect are kept pure from these, but the “mixed multitude” are sadly possessed therewith.

Another character which the apostle gives of these men is that they *gloried in their shame*. A professing sinner generally glories in his shame more than anyone else. In fact, he miscalls it. He labels the devil’s poisons with the names of Christ’s medicines! Things that he would reckon vices in any other man are virtues with him. If he could see in another man the same action which he has just performed—if another could be the mirror of himself—oh, how he would thunder at him! He is the very first man to notice a little inconsistency. He is the very strictest of Sabbatarians. He is the most upright of thieves. He is the most tremendously generous of misers. He is the most marvelously holy of profane men. While he can indulge in his favorite sin, he is forever putting up his glass to his eye to magnify the faults of others. *He* may do as he pleases, *he* may sin with impunity—and if his minister should hint to him that his conduct is inconsistent, he will make a storm in the church and say the minister was personal and insulted him! Reproof is thrown away upon him. Is he not a member of the church? Has he not been so for years? Who shall dare to say that he is unholy? O sirs, there are some of your members of churches who will one day be in hell! We have some united with our churches who have passed through baptism and sit at our sacramental tables, who, while they have a name to live, are dead as corpses in their graves as to anything spiritual! It is an easy thing to palm yourself off for a godly man, nowadays. There is little self-denial, little mortification of the flesh, little love to Christ. Oh, no. Learn a few religious hymns—get a few phrases and you will deceive the very elect! Enter into the church, be called respectable and if you cannot make all believe you, you will yet smooth your path to destruction by quieting an uneasy conscience! I am saying harsh things, but I am saying true things. My blood sometimes boils when I meet with men whom I would not acknowledge,

whom I would not sit with anywhere and yet, who call me, “brother.” They can live in sin and yet call a Christian, “brother.” God forgive them! We can feel no brotherhood with them—nor do we wish to do so until their lives are changed and their conduct is made more consistent!

You see, then, in the apostle’s days there were some who were a disgrace to godliness and the apostle wept over them because he knew their guilt. Why, it is guilt enough for a man to make a god of his belly without being a professor—but how much worse for a man who knows better? Worse, even, for one who even sets up to teach other people, still to go on and sin against God and against his conscience by making a solemn profession, which is found, in his case, to be a lie. Oh, how dreadful is such a man’s guilt! For him to stand up and say—

**“’Tis done! The great transaction’s done!  
I am the Lord’s and He is mine,”**

and yet to go and sin like others—to use the same conversation, to practice the same chicanery, to walk in as ungodly a manner as those who have never named the name of Christ—ah, what guilt is here! It is enough to make us weep if we have been guilty, ourselves! Yes, to weep tears of blood that we should so have sinned against God!

**II.** But the apostle did not so much weep for them as for THE MISCHIEF THEY WERE DOING, for he says, emphatically, that they are, “The enemies of the cross of Christ.” “*The enemies.*” As much as to say, the infidel is *an* enemy. The curser, the swearer, the profane man, is *an* enemy. Herod, yonder, the persecutor, is *an* enemy—but these men are the chief soldiers—the lifeguards in Satan’s army! “*The enemies of the cross of Christ*” are Pharisaic professors, bright with the whitewash of outside godliness, while they are rotten within. Oh, I think there is nothing that should grieve a Christian more than to know that Christ has been wounded in the house of His friends! Look, there comes my Savior with bleeding hands and feet. O my Jesus, my Jesus, who shed that blood? Where did You get that wound? Why do You look so sad? He replies, “I have been wounded, but guess where I received the blow?” Why, Lord, surely You were wounded in the gin palace. You were wounded where sinners meet, in the seat of the scornful. You were wounded in the infidel hall. “No, I was not,” says Christ, “I was wounded in the house of My friends. These scars were made by those who sat at My table and bore My name and talked My language. *They* pierced Me and crucified Me afresh and put Me to an open shame.” Far worst of sinners, they that pierce Christ thus, while professing to be friends! Caesar wept not until Brutus stabbed him. Then it was that he was overcome and exclaimed, “*Et tu, Brute?*” And you, “Have *you* stabbed Me?” So, my hearers, might Christ say to some of you. “What? You and you and you, professors, have you stabbed Me?” Well might our Savior muffle up His face in grief, or ra-

ther bind it in clouds of wrath and drive the wretches away who have so injured His cause!

If I must be defeated in battle, let me be defeated by my enemies, but let me not be betrayed by my friends! If I must yield the citadel which I am willing to defend, even to the death, then let me yield it and let my foes walk over my body. But oh, let not my friends betray me! Let not the warrior who stands by my side open the gate and admit the enemy! That would be enough to break one's heart twice—once for the defeat, and the second time at the thought of treachery!

When a small band of Protestants were striving for their liberties in Switzerland, they bravely defended a pass against an immense host. Though their dearest friends were slain and they, themselves, were weary and ready to drop with fatigue, they stood firm in the defense of the cause they had espoused. All of a sudden, however, a cry was heard—a dread and terrible shriek! The enemy was winding up a steep acclivity, and when the commander turned his eye to see, O how his brow gathered with storm! He ground his teeth and stamped his foot, for he knew that some coward Protestant had led the blood-thirsty foe up the goat track to slay his friends! Then turning to his friends, he said, “On!” and like a lion on his prey, they rushed upon their enemies—ready, now, to die—for a friend had betrayed them! So feels the bold-hearted Christian when he sees his fellow member betraying Christ, when he beholds the citadel of Christianity given up to its foes by those who pretended to be its friends! Beloved, I would rather have a thousand devils out of the church, than have one in it. I do not care about all the adversaries outside. Our greatest cause of fear is from the crafty “wolves in sheep's clothing” that devour the flock! It is against such that we would denounce in holy wrath the solemn sentence of divine indignation and for such we would shed our bitterest tears of sorrow. They are “the enemies of the cross of Christ.”

Now, for a moment, let me show you how it is that the wicked professor is the greatest enemy to Christ's church.

In the first place, *he grieves the church more than anyone else*. If any man in the street were to pelt me with mud, I believe I would thank him for the honor, if I knew him to be a bad character and knew that he hated me for righteousness' sake. But if one who called himself a Christian should injure the cause with the filthiness of his own licentious behavior—ah, that were more injurious than the stakes of Smithfield, or the racks of the Tower! The deepest sighs the Christian has ever heaved have been fetched from him by carnal professors. I would not weep a tear if every man should curse me who was a hater of Christ. But when the professor forsakes Christ and betrays His cause—ah, that, indeed, is griev-

ous—and who is he that can keep back the tears on account of so vile a deed?

Again—*nothing divides the church more*. I have seen many divisions in journeying through the country and I believe almost every division may be traced to a deficiency of piety on the part of some of the members. We would be more one, if it were not for cants that creep into our midst. We would be more loving to each other, more tender-hearted, more kind, but that these men, so deceptive, coming into our midst, render us suspicious. Moreover, they, themselves, find fault with those who walk worthily in order to hide their own faults against God and against justice. The greatest sorrows of the church have been brought upon her, not by the arrows shot by her foes, not by the discharge of the artillery of hell—but by fires lit in her own midst by those who have crept into her in the guise of good men and true—but who were spies in the camp and traitors to the cause!

Yet again—*nothing has ever hurt poor sinners more than this*. Many sinners coming to Christ would get relief far more easily and find peace far more quickly if it were not for the evil lives of false professors. Now let me tell you a story, which I remember telling once before—it is a very solemn one. I hope to feel its power, myself, and I pray that all of you may do the same. A young minister had been preaching in a country village, and the sermon apparently took deep effect on the minds of the hearers in the congregation. There was a young man who felt acutely the truth of the solemn words to which the preacher had given utterance; he sought the preacher after the service and walked home with him. On the road, the minister talked of every subject except the one that had occupied his attention in the pulpit. The poor soul was under great distress and he asked the minister a question or two, but they were put off very coolly, as if the matter was of no great importance. Arriving at the house, several friends were gathered together, and the preacher commenced very freely to crack jokes, to utter his funny expressions, and to set the company in a roar of laughter. That, perhaps, might not have been so bad, had he not gone even farther and uttered words which were utterly false, and verged upon the licentious. The young man suddenly rose from the table—and though he had wept under the sermon, and had been under the deepest apparent conviction—he rose up and went outside the door. Stamping his foot, he said, “Religion is a lie! From this moment I abjure God, I abjure Christ, and if I am damned I will be damned, but I will lay the charge at that man’s door, for he preached just now, and made me weep, but now see what he is! He is a liar, and I will never listen to him, again!” He carried out his threat. And some time afterwards, as he lay dying, he sent word to the minister that he wanted to see him. The minister had moved to a distant part, but had been brought there by provi-

dence, I believe purposely, to chasten him for the great sin he had committed. The minister stepped into the room with a Bible in his hand to do as he was accustomed—to read a chapter and to pray with the poor man. Turning his eyes on him, the man said, “Sir, I remember hearing you preach once.” “Blessed be God,” said the minister, “I thank God for it,” thinking, no doubt, that he was a convert, and rejoicing over him. “Stop,” said the man, “I do not know that there is much reason for thanking God, at any rate, on my part! Sir, do you remember preaching from such-and-such a text on such-and-such an evening?” “Yes, I do.” “I trembled then, sir—I shook from head to foot. I left with the intention of bending the knee in prayer and seeking God in Christ, but do you remember going to such-and-such a house and what you said there!” “No,” said the minister, “I cannot.” “Well, then, I can tell you, and mark you—through what you said that night, my soul is damned, and as true as I am a living man, I will meet you at God’s bar and lay it to your charge.” The man then shut his eyes and died. I think you can scarcely imagine what must have been the feeling of that preacher as he retired from the bedside. He must always carry with him that horrid, that terrible incubus, that there was a soul in hell who laid his blood to his charge!

I am afraid there are some in the ranks of the church who have much guilt at their doors on this account. Many a young man has been driven from a solemn consideration of the truth by the harsh and censorious remarks of Scribes and Pharisees. Many a careful seeker has been prejudiced against sound doctrine by the evil lives of its professors. Ah, you Scribes and Pharisees, you enter not in, yourselves, and they who would enter in, you hinder! You take the key of knowledge, lock up the door by your inconsistencies and drive men away by your unholy living!

Again—they are “the enemies of the cross of Christ,” because *they give the devil more theme for laughter* and the enemy more cause for joy, than any other class of Christians. I do not care what all the infidel lecturers in the world like to say. They are very clever fellows, no doubt, and they have to be good to prove an absurdity and “make the worse appear the better reason.” But we care little what they say. They may say what they like against us that is false, but it is when they can say anything that is true about us that we do not like it. It is when they can find a real inconsistency in us and then bring it to our charge, that they have got stuff to make lectures of! If a man is an upright Christian, he never need fear what others say of him. They will get but little fun out of him if he leads a holy, blameless life. But let him be sometimes godly and at other times ungodly—then he may grieve—for he has given the enemy cause to blaspheme by his unholy living! The devil gets much advantage over the church by the inconsistency of professors. It is when Satan makes hypocrites that he brings the great battering ram against the wall. “Your lives

are not consistent”—ah, that is the greatest battering ram that Satan can use against the cause of Christ! Be careful, my dear friends, be very careful that you do not dishonor the cause you profess to love by living in sin and walking in iniquity! And let me say a word to those of you who, like myself, are strong Calvinists. No class of persons is more maligned than we. It is commonly said that our doctrine is licentious. We are called Antinomians. We are cried down as *hypers*. We are reckoned the scum of creation! Scarcely a minister looks on us or speaks favorably of us because we hold strong views upon the divine sovereignty of God and His divine electing and special love towards His own people. In many towns, the legal ministers will tell you that there is a nasty nest of people there, who, they say, are Antinomians—such a strange set of creatures! Very likely, if a good minister enters the pulpit, when he has finished his sermon, up comes some man and grasps his hand and says, “Ah, brother, I am glad to see you down here. Sixteen ounces to the pound, today—our minister gives us nothing but milk and water.” “Where do you go?” he asks. “Oh, I attend a little room where we labor to exalt free grace alone.” “Ah, then you belong to that nasty set of Antinomians our minister was telling us of just now.” Then you begin to talk with him and you find that if he is an Antinomian, you should very much like to be one yourself! Very possibly he is one of the most spiritual men in the village. He knows so much of God that he really cannot sit down under a legal ministry. He understands so much of free grace that he is obliged to turn out, or else he would be starved to death! It is common to cry down those who love God, or rather, who not only *love* God, but love all that God has said, and who hold the truth firmly! Let us then, not as Christians, only, but as being a peculiar class of Christians, take care that we give no handle to the enemy but that our lives are so consistent that we do nothing to disgrace that cause which is dear to us as our lives, and which we hope to maintain faithfully unto death!

**III.** Lastly, Paul wept BECAUSE HE KNEW THEIR DOOM. “Their end is destruction.” Mark—the end of a professing man who has been a hypocrite will be *emphatically destruction*. If there are chains in hell more heavy than others—if there are dungeons in hell more dark than others—if there are racks that shall more fearfully torment the frame—if there are fires that shall more tremendously scorch the body—if there are pangs that shall more effectually twist the soul in agonies, *PROFESSING Christians* must have them if they are found rotten, at last! I had rather die a profligate than die a lying professor! I think I had rather die the worse sweeping of the street than die a hypocrite! Oh, to have had a name to live and yet to have proved insincere! The higher the soar, the greater the fall. This man has soared high, how low must he tumble when he finds himself mistaken! He who thought to put to his mouth the nectared cup

of Heaven, finds, when he quaffs the bowl, that it is the very draught of hell. He who hoped to enter through the gates into the city finds the gates shut and he, himself, bid to depart as an unknown stranger! Oh, how terrible is that sentence, "Depart from Me, I never knew you!" I think I had rather hear it said to me, "Depart accursed, among the rest of the wicked," than to be singled out and to have it said, after exclaiming, "Lord, Lord"—"Depart from Me. I know you not. Though you ate and drank in My courts, though you came to My sanctuary, you are a stranger to Me and I am a stranger to you." Such a doom, more horrible than hell, more direful than fate, more desperate than despair—will be the inevitable lot of those—"whose god is their belly," who have "gloried in their shame," and "minded earthly things."

Now I dare say most of you will say, "Well, he has stirred the churches up tonight! If he has not spoken earnestly, he has spoken harshly, at any rate." "Ah," says one, "I dare say it is very true. They are all a set of cants and hypocrites. I always thought so. I shall not go among them, none of them are genuine." Stop a bit, my friend, I did not say they were *all* so! I would be very wicked if I did. The very fact that there are hypocrites proves that all are not so! "How is that?" you ask. Do you think there would be any bad bank notes in the world if there were no good ones? Do you think anyone would try and circulate bad sovereigns if there were no really good ones? No, I think not. It is the good bank note that makes the bad one, by prompting the wicked man to imitate it and produce a forgery. It is the very fact that there is gold in the world that makes another try to imitate the metal and so to cheat his neighbor. If there were no true Christians, there would be no hypocrites. It is the excellence of the Christian character which makes men seek after it and, because they have not the real heart of oak, they try to grain their lives to look like it. Because they have not the real solid metal, they try to gild themselves to imitate it! You must have a few brains left and those are enough to tell you that if there are hypocrites, there must be some who are genuine! "Ah," says another, "quite right. There are many genuine ones and I can tell you, whatever you may think, I am genuine enough. I never had a doubt or fear. I know I was chosen of God. And though I do not exactly live as I would wish, I know if I do not go to Heaven, very few will ever have a chance! Why, sir, I have been a deacon the last ten years and a member twenty. And I am not to be shaken by anything you say. As for my neighbor, there, who sits near me, I do not think he ought to be so sure. But I have never had a doubt for 30 years." Oh my dear friend, can you excuse me? *I will doubt for you.* If you have no doubt, yourself, I begin to doubt. If you are quite so sure, I really must suspect you. For I have noticed that true Christians are the most suspicious in the world—they are always afraid of themselves. I never met with a truly good man

but he always felt he was not good enough. And as you are so particularly good, you must excuse me if I cannot quite endorse your security. You may be very good, but if you will take a trifle of my advice, I recommend you to “examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith,” lest, being puffed up by your carnal fleshly mind, you fall into the snare of the Wicked One. “Not too sure,” is a very good motto for the Christian. “Make your calling and election sure” if you like—but do not make your opinion of yourself so sure!

Take care of presumption. Many a good man in his own esteem has been a very devil in God’s eyes. Many a pious soul in the esteem of the church has been nothing but rottenness in the esteem of God. Let us then try ourselves. Let us say, “Search us, O God, and try our hearts; see if there is any wicked way in us and lead us in the way everlasting.” If you shall be sent home with such a thought, I shall bless God that the sermon was not altogether in vain. But there are some here who say that it does not matter whether they are in Christ or not. They intend to still go on trifling, despising God and laughing at His name. Mark this, sinner—the cry that does for one day won’t do forever, and though you now talk of religion as if it were a mere trifle, mark you, men—you will need it, by-and-by. You are on board ship and you laugh at the lifeboat because there is no storm. You will be glad enough to leap into it if you are able when the storm shall come! Now you say Christ is nothing because you do not need Him. But when the storm of vengeance comes and death lays hold upon you, mark me—you will howl for Christ! Though you will not pray for Him now, you will shriek for Him then! Though you will not call for Him now, your heart will burst for Him then; though you will not even desire Him now, “Turn you, turn you. Why will you die, O house of Israel.” The Lord bring you to Himself, and make you His true and genuine children, that you may not know destruction, but that you may be saved now and saved forever! Amen.

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# CHRIST IN THE EVERLASTING COVENANT NO. 103

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING,  
JULY 18, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“I will give You for a covenant of the people.”  
Isaiah 49:8.***

WE all believe that our Savior has very much to do with the everlasting covenant. We have been accustomed to regard Him as the Mediator of the covenant, as the surety of the covenant and as the scope or substance of the covenant. We have considered Him to be the *Mediator* of the covenant, for we were certain that God could make no covenant with man unless there were a Mediator—an arbiter who would stand between them both. And we have hailed Him as the Mediator, who with mercy in His hands, came down to tell sinful man the news that divine grace was promised in the eternal counsel of the Most High. We have also loved our Savior as the *surety* of the covenant, who, on our behalf, undertook to pay our debts—and on His Father’s behalf, undertook, also, to see that all our souls should be secure and safe—and ultimately presented unblemished and complete before Him. And, doubt not, we have also rejoiced in the thought that Christ is the *sum and substance* of the covenant. We believe that if we would sum up all spiritual blessings, we must say, “Christ is all.” He is the matter, He is the substance of it—and although much might be said concerning the glories of the covenant, yet nothing could be said which is not to be found in that one word, “Christ.” But this morning I shall dwell on Christ, not as the Mediator, nor as the surety, nor as the scope of the covenant, but as one great and glorious article of the covenant which God has given to His children! It is our firm belief that Christ is ours and is given to us of God—we know that “He freely delivered Him up for us all,” and we, therefore, believe that He will, “with Him, freely give us all things.” We can say with the spouse, “My beloved is mine.” We feel that we have a personal property in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And I will, therefore, delight us for a while, this morning, in the simplest manner possible, without the garnishing of eloquence or the trappings of oratory just to meditate upon this great thought—that Jesus Christ in the covenant is the property of every believer.

First, we shall *examine this property*; secondly we shall notice the *purpose for which it was conveyed to us*; and thirdly, we shall give *one precept* which may well be affixed upon so great a blessing as this, and is indeed an inference from it.

**I.** In the first place, then, here is a GREAT POSSESSION—Jesus Christ, by the covenant, is the property of every believer! By this we must understand Jesus Christ in many different senses. We will begin, first of all, by declaring that Jesus Christ is ours, *in all His attributes*. He has a double set of attributes, seeing that there are two natures joined in glorious union in one person. He has the attributes of very God and He has the attributes of perfect man; whatever these may be, they are each one of them, the perpetual property of every believing child of God! I need not dwell on His attributes as God—you all know how Infinite is His love, how vast His grace, how firm His faithfulness, how unswerving His veracity. You know that He is omniscient. You know that He is omnipresent. You know that He is omnipotent and it will console you if you will but think that all these great and glorious attributes which belong to God are all yours! Has He power? That power is yours—yours to support and strengthen you—yours to overcome your enemies, yours to keep you immutably secure! Has He love? Well, there is not a particle of His love in His great heart which is not yours. All His love belongs to you! You may dive into the immense, bottomless ocean of His love and you may say of it all, “It is mine.” Has He justice? It may seem a stern attribute. But even that is yours for He will, by His justice, see to it that all which is covenanted to you by the oath and promise of God shall be most certainly secured to you. Mention whatever you please which is a characteristic of Christ as the ever-glorious Son of God and, O faithful one, you may put your hand upon it and say, “It is mine!” Your arms, O Jesus, upon which the pillars of the earth hang, are mine! Those eyes, O Jesus, which pierce through the thick darkness and behold the future—your eyes are mine to look on me with love! Those lips, O Christ, which sometimes speak words louder than ten thousand thunders, or whisper syllables sweeter than the music of the harps of the glorified—those lips are mine! And that great heart which beats high with such unselfish, pure and unaffected love—that heart is mine! The whole of Christ, in all His glorious nature as the Son of God, as God over all, blessed forever, is yours, positively, actually, without metaphor, in reality yours!

**1.** Consider Him as man, too. All that He has as perfect man is yours. As a perfect man He stood before His Father, “full of grace and Truth,” full of favor and accepted by God as a perfect being. O believer, God’s acceptance of Christ is your acceptance! Do you not know that that love which the Father set on a perfect Christ, He now sets on you? For all

that Christ did is yours. That perfect righteousness which Jesus worked out, when through His stainless life He kept the law and made it honorable, is yours. There is not a virtue which Christ ever had, that is not yours! There is not a holy deed which He ever did which is not yours! There is not a prayer He ever sent to heaven that is not yours! There is not one solitary thought towards God which it was His duty to think and which He thought as man serving His God, which is not yours! All His righteousness, in its vast extent and in all the perfection of His character, is imputed to you! Oh, can you think what you have gotten in the word, “Christ?” Come, believer, consider that word, “God,” and think how mighty it is. And then meditate upon that word, “perfect man,” for all that the Man-God, Christ, and the glorious God-man, Christ, ever had, or ever can have as the characteristic of either of His natures—all that is yours! It all belongs to you—it is out of pure free favor, beyond the fear of revocation, passed over to you to be your actual property—and that forever!

**2.** Then consider, believer, that not only is Christ yours in all His attributes, but He is yours *in all His offices*. Great and glorious these offices are. We have scarcely time to mention them all. Is He a prophet? Then He is *your* prophet. Is He a priest? Then He is *your* priest. Is He a king? Then He is *your* king. Is He a redeemer? Then He is *your* redeemer. Is He an advocate? Then He is *your* advocate. Is He a forerunner? Then he is *your* forerunner. Is He a surety of the covenant? Then He is *your* surety. In every name He bears, in every crown He wears, in every vestment in which He is arrayed, He is the believer’s own! Oh, child of God, if you had grace to gather up this thought into your soul, it would comfort you marvelously—to think that in all Christ is in office, He is most assuredly yours! Do you see Him yonder, interceding before His Father, with outstretched arms? Do you mark His ephod—His golden miter on His brow, inscribed with, “holiness unto the Lord?” Do you see Him as He lifts up His hands to pray? Hear you not that marvelous intercession such as man ever prayed on earth? That authoritative intercession such as He Himself could not use in the agonies of the garden? For—

**“With sighs and groans, He offered up  
His humble suit below.  
But with authority He pleads  
Enthroned in glory now.”**

Do you see how He asks and how He receives as soon as His petition is put up? And can you, dare you, believe that that intercession is all your own, that on His breast your name is written? That in His heart your name is stamped in marks of indelible grace and that all the majesty of that marvelous, that surpassing intercession is your own—and would be all expended for you if you did require it? He has not any au-

thority with His Father that He will not use on your behalf if you need it! He has no power to intercede that He would not employ for you in all times of necessity! Come now, words cannot set this forth—it is only your *thoughts* that can teach you this. It is only God, the Holy Spirit, bringing home the Truth that can set this ravishing, this transporting thought in its proper position in your heart—that Christ is yours in all He is and has! See Him on earth? There He stands, the priest offering His bloody sacrifice! See Him on the cross, His hands are pierced, His feet are gushing gore? Oh, do you see that pallid countenance and those languid eyes flowing with compassion? Do you mark that crown of thorns? Do you behold that mightiest of sacrifices, the sum and substance of them all? Believer, that is yours! Those precious drops plead and claim *your* peace with God! That open side is *your* refuge. Those pierced hands are *your* redemption—that groan He groans for *you* that cry of a forsaken heart He utters for *you*. That death He dies for *you*. Come, I beseech you; consider Christ in any of His various offices. But when you do consider Him, lay hold of this thought—in all these things, He is *your* Christ, given unto *you* to be one article in the everlasting covenant—your possession forever!

**3.** Then mark next, Christ is the believer's in every one of His *works*. Whether they are works of suffering or of duty, they are the property of the believer. As a Child, He was circumcised and is that bloody rite mine? Yes, "Circumcised in Christ." As a believer He is baptized, and is that watery sign of baptism mine? Yes, "Buried with Christ in baptism unto death." Jesus' baptism I share when I lie interred with my best friend in the same watery tomb. See there, He dies and it is a master work to die. But is His death mine? Yes, I died in Christ! He is buried and is that burial mine? Yes, I am buried with Christ. He rises. Mark Him startling His guards and rising from the tomb! And is that resurrection mine? Yes, we are "risen together with Christ." Mark again, He ascends up on high and leads captivity captive. Is that ascension mine? Yes, for He has "raised us up together." And look, He sits on His Father's Throne—is that deed mine? Yes, He has made us, "sit together in heavenly places." all He did is ours! By divine decree there existed such a union between Christ and His people that all Christ did, His people did—and all Christ has performed, His people did perform in Him, for they were in His loins when He descended to the tomb and in His loins they have ascended up on high! With Him they entered into bliss and with Him they sit in heavenly places. Represented by Him, their Head, all His people, even now, are glorified in Him, even in Him who is the head over all things to His church! In all the deeds of Christ either in His humilia-

tion or His exaltation, remember, O believer, you have a covenant interest and all those things are yours!

**4.** I would for one moment hint at a sweet thought, which is this—you know that in the person of Christ “dwells *all the fullness of the Godhead* bodily.” Ah, believer, “and of His fullness have we received—grace for grace.” All the fullness of Christ—and do you know what that is? Do you understand that phrase? I guarantee you, you do not know it and shall not just yet. But all that fullness of Christ, the abundance of which you may guess of by your own emptiness—all that fullness is yours to supply your multiplied necessities! All the fullness of Christ to restrain you, to keep you, and preserve you; all that fullness of power, of love, of purity, which is stored up in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, is yours! Do treasure up that thought, for then your emptiness need never be a cause of fear. How can you be lost while you have all fullness to fly to?

**5.** But I come to something sweeter than this; *the very life of Christ* is the property of the believer. Ah, this is a thought into which I cannot dive and I feel I have outdone myself in only mentioning it. The life of Christ is the property of every believer. Can you conceive what Christ’s life is? “Sure,” you say, “He poured it out upon the cross.” He did and it was His life that He gave to you, then. But He took that life again—even the life of His body was restored and the life of His great and glorious Godhead had never undergone any change, even at that time! But now you know He has immortality—“He only has immortality.” Can you conceive what kind of life that is which Christ possesses? Can He ever die? No—far sooner may the harps of heaven be stopped and the chorus of the redeemed cease forever! Sooner may the glorious walls of paradise be shaken and the foundations thereof be removed than that Christ, the Son of God, should ever die. Immortal as His Father, He now sits, the Great Eternal One. Christian, that life of Christ is yours! Hear what He says—“Because I live, you shall live also.” “You are dead and your life”—where is it? It is “hid with Christ in God.” The same blow which smites us dead, spiritually, must slay Christ, too! The same sword which can take away the spiritual life of a regenerate man must take away the life of the redeemer, also! They are linked together—they are not two lives, but one. We are but the rays of the great Sun of Righteousness, our Redeemer; sparks which must return to the great orb again. If we are, indeed, the true heirs of heaven, we cannot die until He from whom we take our rise, also dies. We are the stream that cannot stop till the fountain is dry! We are the rays that cannot cease until the Sun, also, cease to shine. We are the branches and we cannot wither until the Trunk, itself, shall die! “Because I live, you shall live also.” The very life of Christ is the property of every one of His brothers and sisters!

**6.** And best of all, *the person of Jesus Christ* is the property of the Christian. I am persuaded, beloved; we think a great deal more of God's gifts than we do of God. We preach a great deal more about the Holy Spirit's *influence* than we do about the Holy Spirit. And I am also assured that we talk a great deal more about the offices and works and attributes of Christ than we do about the person of Christ! Hence it is that there are few of us who can often understand the figures that are used in Solomon's Song, concerning the person of Christ, because we have seldom sought to see Him or desired to know Him. But, O believer, you have sometimes been able to behold your Lord. Have you not seen *Him*, who is white and ruddy, "the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely"? Have you not sometimes been lost in pleasure when you have seen His feet, which are like much fine gold, as if they burned in a furnace? Have you not beheld Him in the double character, the white and the red, the lily and the rose, the God, yet the man, the dying, yet the living—the perfect and yet bearing about with Him a body of death? Have you ever beheld that Lord with the nail-prints in His hands and the mark still on His side? And have you ever been ravished at His loving smile and been delighted at His voice? Have you ever had love visits from Him? Has He ever put His banner over you? Have you ever walked with Him to the villages and the garden? Have you ever sat under His shadow? Have you ever found His fruit sweet unto your taste? Yes, you have. His *person*, then, is yours! The wife loves her husband. She loves his house and his property. She loves him for all that he gives her, for all the bounty he confers, and all the love he bestows. But his person is the object of her affections. So with the believer—he blesses Christ for all He does and all He is, but oh, it is Christ who is everything! He does not care so much about His office, as he does about *the Man* Christ.

See the child on his father's knee—the father is a professor in the university. He is a great man with many titles and, perhaps, the child knows that these are honorable titles and esteems him for them. But he does not care so much about the professor and his dignity, as about the person of his father! It is not the college square cap, or the gown that the child loves. Yes and if it is a loving child, it will not be so much the meal the father provides, or the house in which it lives, as the father which it loves. It is his dear person that has become the object of true and hearty affection. I am sure it is so with you, if you know your Savior. You love His mercies, you love His offices, you love His deeds, but oh, you love His person best! Reflect, then, that the person of Christ is in the covenant conveyed to you—"I will give You to be a covenant for the people."

**II.** Now we come to the second—FOR WHAT PURPOSE DOES GOD PUT CHRIST IN THE COVENANT?

1. Well, in the first place, Christ is in the covenant in order *to comfort every coming sinner*. “Oh,” says the sinner who is coming to God, “I cannot lay hold on such a great covenant as that! I cannot believe that heaven is provided for me. I cannot conceive that that robe of righteousness and all these wondrous things can be intended for such a wretch as I am.” Here comes the thought that Christ is in the covenant. Sinner, can you lay hold on Christ? Can you say—

**“Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Your cross I cling”?**

Well, if you have got that, it was put in on purpose for you to hold fast! By God’s covenant, all mercies go together and if you have laid hold on Christ, you have gained every blessing in the covenant! That is one reason why Christ was put there. Why, if Christ were not there, the poor sinner would say, “I dare not lay hold on that mercy. It is a God-like and a divine one, but I dare not grasp it. It is too good for me. I cannot receive it, it staggers my faith.” But he sees Christ with all His great atonement in the covenant—and Christ looks so lovingly at him and opens His arms so wide, saying, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest,” that the sinner comes and throws his arms around Christ. And then Christ whispers, “Sinner, in laying hold of Me you have laid hold of all.” “Why, Lord, I dare not think I could have the other mercies. I dare trust You but I dare not take the others.” “Ah sinner” says our Master, “but in that you have taken Me you have taken all, for the mercies of the covenant are like links in the chain.” This one link is an enticing one. The sinner lays hold of it—God has purposely put it there to entice the sinner to come and receive the mercies of the covenant, for when he has once got hold of Christ—here is the comfort—he has everything that the covenant can give!

2. Christ is also put *to confirm the doubting saint*. Sometimes he cannot read his interest in the covenant. He cannot see his portion among them who are sanctified. He is afraid that God is not *his* God, that the Spirit has no dealings with *his* soul. But then—

**“Amid temptations, sharp and strong,  
His soul to that dear refuge flies!  
Hope is his anchor, firm and strong,  
When tempests blow and billows rise.”**

So he lays hold of Christ and were it not for that, even the believer dare not come at all. He could not lay hold on any other mercy than that with which Christ is connected. “Ah,” he says, “I know I am a sinner and Christ came to save sinners.” So he holds fast to Christ. “I can hold fast here,” he says, “my black hands will not blacken Christ, my filthiness will not make Him unclean.” So the saint holds hard to Christ, as hard as if it were the death clutch of a drowning man! And what then? Why,

he has got every mercy of the covenant in his hands! It is the wisdom of God that He has put Christ in, so that a poor sinner, who might be afraid to lay hold of another, knowing the gracious nature of Christ, is not afraid to lay hold of Him and therein he grasps the whole.

**3.** Again, it was necessary that Christ should be in the covenant because there *are many things there that would be nothing without Him*. Our great redemption is in the covenant, but we have no redemption except through His blood. It is true that my righteousness is in the covenant, but I can have no righteousness apart from that which Christ has worked out and which is imputed to me by God. It is very true that my eternal perfection is in the covenant, but the elect are only perfect in Christ. They are not perfect in themselves, nor will they ever be until they have been washed and sanctified and perfected by the Holy Spirit. And even in heaven their perfection consists not so much in their sanctification, as in their justification in Christ—

***“Their beauty this, their glorious dress,  
Jesus the Lord, their righteousness.”***

In fact, if you take Christ out of the covenant, you have just done the same as if you should break the string of a necklace—all the jewels, or beads, or corals, drop off and separate from each other! Christ is the golden string whereon the mercies of the covenant are threaded and when you lay hold of Him, you have obtained the whole string of pearls. But if Christ is taken out, true, there will be the pearls, but we cannot wear them, we cannot grasp them—they are separated and poor faith can never know how to get hold of them. Oh, it is a mercy worth worlds that Christ is in the covenant!

**4.** But mark once more, as I told you when preaching concerning God in the covenant, [See Sermon No. 93, Vol. 2—GOD IN THE COVENANT—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at [www.spurgeongems.org](http://www.spurgeongems.org).] Christ is in the covenant to be used. God never gives His children a promise which He does not intend them to use. There are some promises in the Bible which I have never yet used—but I am well assured that there will come times of trial and trouble when I shall find that that poor despised promise, which I thought was never meant for me, will be the only one on which I can float! I know that the time is coming when every believer shall know the worth of every promise in the covenant. God has not given us any part of an inheritance which He did not mean us to till! Christ is given us to use. Believer, use Him! I tell you again, as I told you before, that you do not use your Christ as you ought to. Why, brothers and sisters, when you are in trouble, why do you not go and tell Him? Has He not a sympathizing heart and can He not comfort and relieve you? No, you are gadding about to all your friends, except your best friend, and telling your tale everywhere except into the bosom of your Lord. Oh, use Him, use Him! Are you black with

yesterday's sins? Here is a fountain filled with blood—use it! Saint, use it! Has your guilt returned? Well His power has been proved again and again—come use Him! Use Him! Do you feel naked? Come here, soul, put on the robe. Stand not staring at it—put it on! Strip, sir, strip your own righteousness off and your own fears, too—put this on and wear it, for it was meant to wear. Do you feel sick? What? Will you not go and pull the night-bell of prayer and wake up your physician? I beseech you go and stir Him up and He will give the cordial that will revive you. What? Are you sick? With such a physician next door to you, a present help in time of trouble—and will you not go to Him? Oh, remember you are poor, but then you have “a kinsman, a mighty man of wealth.” What? Will you not go to Him and ask Him to give you of His abundance, when He has given you this promise, that as long as He has anything, you shall go shares with Him, for all He is and all He has is yours?

Oh, believer, do use Christ, I beseech you! There is nothing Christ dislikes more than for His people to make a show of Him and not to use Him. He loves to be worked. He is a great laborer—He always was for His Father and now He loves to be a great laborer for His brothers and sisters. The more burdens you put on His shoulders, the better He will love you! Cast your burden on Him. You will never know the sympathy of Christ's heart and the love of His soul so well as when you have heaved a very mountain of trouble from yourself to His shoulders and have found that He does not stagger under the weight! Are your troubles like huge mountains of snow upon your spirit? Bid them rumble like an avalanche upon the shoulders of the Almighty Christ! He can bear them all away and carry them into the depths of the sea. Do use your Master—for this very purpose He was put into the covenant, that you might use Him whenever you need Him.

**III.** Now, lastly, here is A PRECEPT and what shall the precept be? Christ is ours—then *be you Christ's*, beloved! You are Christ's, you know right well. You are His by your Father's donation when He gave you to the Son. You are His by His bloody purchase, when He counted down the price for your redemption. You are His by dedication, for you have dedicated yourselves to Him. You are His by adoption, for you are brought to Him and made one of His brethren and joint-heirs with Him. I beseech you, labor, dear brothers and sisters, to show the world that you are His in practice. When tempted to sin, reply, “I cannot do this great wickedness. I cannot, for I am one of Christ's.” When wealth is before you to be won by sin, touch it not—say that you are Christ's, otherwise you would take it. But now you cannot. Tell Satan that you would not gain the world if you had to love Christ less. Are you exposed in the world to difficulties and dangers? Stand fast in the evil day, remembering that you

are one of Christ's. Are you in a field where much is to be done and others are sitting down idly and lazily, doing nothing? Go at your work and when the sweat stands upon your brow and you are bid to stop, say, "No, I cannot stop. I am one of Christ's. He had a baptism to be baptized with and so have I—and I am straitened until it is accomplished. I am one of Christ's. If I were not one of His and purchased by blood, I might be like Issachar, crouching between two burdens. But I am one of Christ's." When the siren song of pleasure would tempt you from the path of right, reply, "Hush your strains, O temptress! I am one of Christ's. Your music cannot affect me. I am not my own, I am bought with a price." When the cause of God needs you, give yourself to it, for you are Christ's. When the poor need you, give yourself away, for you are one of Christ's. When, at any time there is something to be done for His church and for His cross, do it, remembering that you are one of Christ's. I beseech you, never belie your profession! Go not where others could say of you, "He cannot be Christ's"—but be you always one of those whose brogue is Christian, whose very idiom is Christ-like, whose conduct and conversation are so fragrant of heaven, that all who see you may know that you are one of the Savior's and may recognize in you, His features and His lovely countenance!

And now, dearly beloved, I must say one word to those of you to whom I have not preached, for there are some of you who have never laid hold of the covenant. I sometimes hear it whispered and sometimes read it, that there are men who trust to the uncovenanted mercies of God. Let me solemnly assure you that there is now no such thing in heaven as uncovenanted mercy! There is no such thing beneath God's sky or above it, as uncovenanted grace towards men! All you can receive and all you ever ought to hope for must be through the covenant of free grace, the everlasting covenant, and that alone!

Perhaps, poor convinced sinner, you dare not take hold of the covenant today. You cannot say the covenant is yours. You are afraid it never can be yours. You are such an unworthy wretch. Listen! Can you lay hold on Christ? Dare you do that? "Oh," you say, "I am too unworthy." No, soul, dare you touch the hem of His garment today? Dare you come up to Him just so much as to touch the very robe that is trailing on the ground? "No," you say "I dare not," Why not, poor soul, why not? Can you not trust Christ?—

***"Are not His mercies rich and free?"***

***Then say, poor soul, why not for thee?"***

*"I dare not come, I am so unworthy,"* you say. Hear, then, My Master bids you come, and will you be afraid after that?—"Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world

to save sinners.” Why dare you not come to Christ? Oh, you are afraid He will turn you away! Hear, then, what He says—“Whoever comes unto Me, I will in nowise cast out.” You say, “*I know He would cast me out.*” Come, then, and see if you can prove Him a liar. I know you cannot, but come and try! He has said, “whoever!” “*But I am the blackest.*” Nevertheless, He has said “whoever.” Come along, blackest of the black. “*Oh, but I am filthy.*” Come along, filthy one, come and try Him, come and prove Him—remember He has said He will cast out none who come to Him by faith. Come and try Him! I do not ask you to lay hold on the whole covenant—you shall do that, by-and-by—but lay hold on Christ, and if you will do that, then you have the covenant. “*Oh, I cannot lay hold of Him,*” says one poor soul. Well then, lie prostrate at His feet, and beg Him to lay hold of you! Do groan one groan and say, “Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner!” Do sigh one sigh and say, “Lord, save me, or I perish.” Do let your heart say it, if your lips cannot. If grief, long smothered, burns like a flame within your bones, at least let one spark out. Now pray one prayer and verily I say unto you, one sincere prayer shall most assuredly prove that He will save you! One true groan, where God has put it in the heart, is an earnest of His love! One true wish after Christ, if it is followed by sincere and earnest seeking of Him, shall be accepted of God and you shall be saved!

Come, soul, once more. Lay hold on Christ. “*Oh, but I dare not do it.*” Now I was about to say a foolish thing. I was going to say that I wish I were a sinner like yourself, this moment, and I think I would run before you and lay hold on Christ, and then say to you, “Take hold, too.” But *I am* a sinner like yourself, and no better than yourself! I have no merits, no righteousness, no works; I shall be damned in Hell unless Christ has mercy on me! And I would have been there now if I had had my just deserts. Here am I, a sinner once as vile as they were. And yet, O Christ, these arms embrace You! Sinner, come and take your turn after me! Have not I embraced Him? Am I not as vile as you are? Come and let my case assure you! How did He treat me when I first laid hold of Him? Why, He said to me, “I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn you.” Come, sinner, come and try! If Christ did not drive me away, He will never spurn you. Come along, poor soul, come along —

***“Venture on him, (’tis no venture,) venture wholly,  
Let no other trust intrude!  
None but Jesus  
Can do helpless sinners good.”***

He can do you all the good you need! Oh, trust my Master! Oh, trust my Master! He is the precious Lord Jesus! He is the sweet Lord Jesus! He is the loving Savior! He is the kind and condescending forgiver of sin! Come,

you vile! Come, you filthy! Come, you poor! Come, you dying! Come, you lost—you who have been taught to feel your need of Christ! Come, all of you—come now, for Jesus bids you come! Come quickly! Lord Jesus, draw them, draw them by Your Spirit! Amen.

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# LOVE'S COMMENDATION

## NO. 104

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 23, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“But God commended His love toward us, in that  
while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”  
Romans 5:8.***

I SHALL have nothing new to tell you. It will be as old as the everlasting hills and so simple that a child may understand it. Love's commendation. “God commended His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” God's commendation of Himself and of His love is not in words, but in deeds. When the Almighty God would commend His love to poor man, it is not written, “God commended His love towards us in an eloquent oration.” It is not written that He commended His love by winning professions—but He commended His love toward us by an act, by a deed—a surprising deed, the unutterable grace of which eternity, itself, shall scarcely discover. He “commended His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Let us learn, then, upon the threshold of our text, that if *we* would commend ourselves, it must be by *deeds* and not by words! Men may talk fairly and think that thus they shall win esteem. They may order their words aright and think that they shall command respect. But let them remember, it is not the wordy oratory of the tongue, but the more powerful eloquence of the hand which wins the affection of “the world's great heart.” If you would commend yourself to your fellows, go and *do*—not go and *say*. If you would win honor from the excellent, talk not, but *act*. And if before God you would show that your faith is sincere and your love to Him real—remember, it is no fawning words, uttered either in prayer or praise—but it is the pious *deed*, the holy *act*, which is the justification of your faith and the *proof* that it is the faith of God's elect! Doing, not saying—acting, not talking—these are the things which commend a man—

***“No big words of ready talkers,  
No fine boastings will suffice!  
Broken hearts and humble walkers,  
These are dear in Jesus' eyes.”***

Let us imitate God, then, in this. If we would commend our religion to mankind, we cannot do it by mere formalities, but by gracious *acts* of integrity, charity and forgiveness—which are the proper discoveries of divine grace within. “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” “Let your

conversation be such as becomes the gospel of Christ." And so shall you honor Him and "adorn the doctrine" which you profess.

But now for this mighty deed whereby God commended His love. We think that it is two-fold. We believe the Apostle has given us a double commendation of love. The first is, "*God commended His love toward us, in that Christ died for us.*" The second commendation arises from our condition, "*In that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*"

**I.** The first commendation of love then, is this—that "CHRIST DIED FOR US" and as the whole text is double, so this sentence, also, contains a two-fold commendation. There is a commendation of love in the person who died—Christ—and then in the act which He performed—"Christ *died* for us."

**1.** First, then, it is the highest commendation of love, *that it was CHRIST who died for us.* When sinful man erred from his Maker, it was necessary that God should punish his sin. He had sworn by Himself, "The soul that sins, it shall die." And God—with reverence to His all-holy name, be it spoken—could not swerve from what He had said. He had declared on Sinai that He would by no means clear the guilty but, inasmuch as He desired to pardon the offending, it was necessary that someone else should bear the sufferings which the guilty ought to have endured, that so by the vicarious substitution of another, God might be "just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly." Now, the question might have arisen, "Who is he that shall be the scapegoat for man's offense? Who is he that shall bear his transgressions and take away his sins?" If I might be allowed to picture in my imagination (and mark, it is nothing more than imagination), I could almost conceive a parliament in heaven! The angels are assembled—the question is proposed to them—"Cherubim and Seraphim, cohorts of the glorified, you spirits that like flames of fire, swift at My bidding, fly. You happy beings, whom I have created for My honor! Here is a question which I condescend to offer for your consideration—man has sinned—there is no way for his pardon but by someone suffering and paying blood for blood. Who shall it be?" I can conceive that there was silence throughout the august assembly. Gabriel spoke not—he would have stretched his wings and flapped the ether in a moment, if the deed had been possible—but he felt that he could never bear the guilt of a world upon his shoulders and, therefore, he sat still. And there the mightiest of the mighty, those who could shake a world if God should will it, sat still. They all felt powerless to accomplish redemption. I do not conceive that one of them would have ventured to hope that God, Himself, would assume flesh and die! I do not think it could have entered even into angelic *thought* to conceive that the mighty Maker of the skies should bow His awful head and sink into a grave! I cannot imagine that the brightest and most seraphic of these glorified ones would, for an instant, have suffered such a thought to abide with them! And when the

Son of God, starting up from His throne, spoke to them and said, "Principalities and powers! *I will become flesh! I will veil this Godhead of Mine in robes of mortal clay, I will die!*"—I think I see the angels, for once, astonished!

They had seen worlds created. They had beheld the earth, like a spark from the incandescent mass of unformed matter hammered from the anvil of omnipotence and smitten off into space—and yet they had not wondered. But on this occasion, I conceive that they ceased not to marvel, "What? Will You die, O Word! Creator! Master! Infinite! Almighty! Will You become a man and die?" "Yes," said the Savior, "I will." And are *you* not astonished, mortal men? Do you not wonder? What? Will *you* not marvel? The hosts of heaven still are wondering! Though it is many an age since they heard it, they have not yet ceased to admire—and do not you *begin* to marvel yet? Shall the theme which stirs the marvel of the Seraph not move your hearts—that God, Himself, should become man and then should die for you! "God commended His love toward us, in that *Christ* should die." Had it been an archangel who had died for us, it would have been a theme for gratitude. Had it been merely a good and holy man who had shed his blood, we might have kissed his feet and loved him forever. But seeing that He who groaned upon the cross was none other than the Almighty God and that He who sweat in the garden, while He was man, was still none other than one person of the all-glorious Trinity, it is, indeed, love's highest commendation that *Christ* should die! Roll that thought over in your mind; ponder it in your meditations; weigh it in your hearts. If you have right ideas of the Godhead, if you know what Christ is, if you can conceive Him who is the everlasting God and yet the man—if you can picture Him, the pure, holy, perfect creature and yet the everlasting Creator—if you can conceive of Him as the man who was wounded, and yet the God who was exalted forever—if you can picture Him as the Maker of all worlds, as the Lord of providence by whom all things exist and consist—if you can conceive of Him now, as robed in splendor, surrounded with the choral symphonies of myriads of angels—then, perhaps, you may guess how deep was that stride of condescension when He stepped from heaven to earth, from earth into the grave, from the grave, down, it is said, into the lowest "*sheol*," that He might make His condescension perfect and complete! "He has commended His love" to you, my brothers and sisters, in that it was Christ, the Son of God, who died for us!

**2.** The second part of the first commendation lies here, that Christ *died for us*. It was much love when Christ became man for us, when He stripped Himself of the glories of His Godhead for a while, to become an infant of a span long, slumbering in the manger of Bethlehem. It was no little condescension when He divested Himself of all His glories, hung His mantle on the sky, gave up His diadem and the pleasures of His throne

and stooped to become flesh! It was, moreover, no small love when He lived a holy and a suffering life for us. It was amazing love, when God, with feet of flesh, did tread the earth and teach His own creatures how to live, all the while bearing their scoffs and jests with cool unangered endurance. It was no little favor of Him that He should condescend to give us a perfect example by His spotless life. But the commendation of love lies here—not that Christ *lived* for us, but that Christ *died* for us! Come, dear hearers, for a moment, weigh those words, “Christ *DIED* for us!” Oh, how we love those brave defenders of our nation who but lately died for us in a far-off land! Some of us showed our sympathy to their sons and daughters, their wives and children, by contributing to support them, when the fathers were laid low. We feel that the wounded soldier is a friend to us and that we are his debtors, forever! We may not love war—we may not, some of us—think it a Christian act to wield the sword, but, nevertheless, I am sure we love the man who sought to defend our country with their lives and who died in our cause. We would drop a tear over the silent graves of Balaclava, if we were there, now. And beloved, if any of our friends should dare danger for our sakes and more especially, if it should ever come to pass that any one of them should be called to *die* for us, should we not, henceforth, love them? Do any of us know what is contained in that great word, “*die*”? Can we measure it? Can we tell its depths of suffering or its heights of agony? “Died for us!” Some of you have seen death. You know how great and dread is its power—you have seen the strong man bowing down, his knees quivering. You have beheld the eye strings break and seen the eyeballs glazed in death. You have marked the torture and the agonies which appall men in their dying hours. And you have said, “Ah, it is a solemn and an awful thing to die.” But, my hearers, “Christ *died* for us.” All that death could mean, Christ endured! He yielded up the ghost, He resigned His breath, He became a lifeless corpse and His body was interred, even like the bodies of the rest that died. “Christ died for us.” Consider the circumstances which attended His death. It was no common death He died—it was a death of ignominy—for He was put to death by a legal slaughter! It was a death of unutterable pain, for He was *crucified*—and what more painful fate than to die nailed to a cross? It was a long protracted death, for He hung for hours, with only His hands and His feet pierced—parts which are far away from the seat of life, but in which are situated the most tender nerves, full of sensibility. He suffered a death which, for its circumstances, still remains unparalleled! It was no speedy blow which crushed the life out of the body and ended it—but it was a lingering, long and doleful death, attended with no comforts and no sympathy but surrounded with scorn and contempt!

Picture Him! They have hurled Him on His back, they have driven nails through His hands and His feet—they have lifted Him up. Look!

They have dashed the cross into its place. It is fixed. And now behold Him! Mark His eyes, all full of tears. Behold His head, hanging on His breast. Ah, mark Him, while Suffering, with her black wings, fans His cheeks with flame! Behold Him, while He seems all silently to say, "I am poured out like water. All My bones are out of joint. I am brought into the dust of death." Hear Him, when He groans, "I thirst." Above all, listen to Him, while He cries, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" My words cannot picture Him! My thoughts fail to express it! No painter ever accomplished it, nor shall any speaker be able to perform it! Yet I beseech you—regard the Royal Sufferer. See Him with the eyes of your faith, hanging on the bloody tree. Hear Him cry, before He dies, "It is finished!"—

***"See from His head, His hands, His feet  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
Did ever such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?"***

Oh, how I wish I could stir you up! If I would tell you some silly story of a love sick maid, you would weep. If I would turn novelist and give you some sad account of a fabled hero who had died in pain—if it were a fiction, I would have your hearts—but this is a dread and solemn REALITY and one with which you are intimately connected—for all this was done for as many of you as sincerely repent of your sins—

***"All you that pass by, to Jesus draw nigh—  
To you is it nothing that Jesus should die?"***

Remember, if you are saved, He did it for you—for the blood which trickles from His hands, distils for *you!* That frame which writhes in torture, writhes for *you!* Those knees, so weak with pain, are weak for *you!* Those eyes, dripping with showers of tears, drop for *you!* Ah, think of Him, then, you who have faith in Him—look to Him! And as many of you who have not yet believed, I will pray for you, that you may now behold Him as the expiation of your guilt—as the key which opens heaven to all believers!

**II.** Our second point is this—"God commended His love towards us," not only because Christ died for us, but that CHRIST DIED FOR US WHEN WE WERE YET SINNERS.

Let us, for a moment, consider what sort of sinners many of us have been, and then we shall see it was marvelous grace that Christ should die for men—not as penitents—but as sinners! Consider how many of us have been *continual* sinners. We have not sinned once, nor twice, but ten thousand times! Our life, however upright and moral it has been, is stained by a succession of sins. If we have not revolted against God in the outward acts which proclaim the profligate to be a great sinner, yet the thoughts of our heart and the words of our lips are swift witnesses against us that we have continually transgressed! And oh, my brothers and sisters, who is there among us who will not likewise confess to sins of act? Who among us has not broken the Sabbath? Who among us has

not taken God's name in vain? Who of us shall dare to say that we have loved the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our strength? Have we ever, by any act whatever, showed that we have coveted our neighbor's goods? Verily, I know we have! We have broken His commands and it is well for us to join in that general confession—"We have done those things which we ought not to have done. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done and there is no health in us." Now, the sweet thought is that Christ died for us while He *knew* that we would be continual transgressors. Brothers and sisters, He did not die for you as those who have committed but one fault, but as those who were emphatically "sinners"—sinners of years' standing—some of you sinners with gray heads—sinners who have persevered in a constant course of iniquity. As sinners, we are redeemed and by it, we become saints. Does not this commend Christ's love to us that He should die for *sinners* who have dyed themselves with sin as with crimson and with scarlet, great and continual sinners?

Note again, He has died for us, although our sins were *aggravated*. Oh, there are some of us here who are great sinners—not so much in the acts we have performed—as in the aggravation of our guilt! I reckon that when I sin, I sin worse than many of you because I sin against better training than many of my hearers received in their youth. Many of you, when you sin, sin against faithful ministers and against the most earnest warnings. It has been your desire to sit under truthful pastors—you have often been told of your sins. Remember, brothers and sisters, when you sin, you do not sin so cheaply as others. When you sin against the convictions of your consciences, against the warnings of your friends, against the enlightenment of the times and against the solemn admonitions of your pastors, you sin more grossly than others do! The Afrikaans sin not as the Britons do; he who has been brought up in this land may be openly more righteous, but he may be inwardly more wicked, for he sins against more knowledge! But even for such, Christ died—for men who have sinned against the wooings of His love, against the strivings of their conscience, against the invitations of His Word, against the warnings of His providence—even for such, Christ died and, therein, He commended His love towards us that He died for sinners! My hearer, if you have so sinned, do not therefore, despair—it may be He will yet make you rejoice in His redemption!

Reflect again. When we were sinners, *we were sinners against the very person who died for us*. "Tis strange, 'tis passing strange, 'tis amazing," that the very Christ against whom we have sinned died for us! If a man should be injured in the street—if a punishment should be demanded of the person who attacked him—it would be passing strange if the injured man should, for love's sake, bear the penalty that the other might go free! But 'twas even so with Christ. He had been injured, yet He suffers for the

very injury that others did to Him! He dies for His enemies—dies for the men that hate and scorn Him! There is an old tradition that the very man who pierced Christ's side was converted—and I sometimes think that, perhaps in heaven, we shall meet with those very men who drove the nails into His hands and pierced His side. Love is a mighty thing—it can forgive great transgressors. I know my Master said, "Begin at Jerusalem," and I think He said that because there lived the men who had crucified Him and He wanted them to be saved. My hearer, have you ever blasphemed Christ? Have you ever mocked Him and scoffed at His people? Have you done all you could to emulate the example of those who spat in His holy face? Do you repent of it? Do you feel you need a Savior? Then I tell you, in Christ's name, He is your Savior! Yes, your Savior, though you have insulted Him—your Savior, though you have trampled on Him—your Savior, though you have spoken evil of His people, His day, His Word and His gospel!

Once more—let us remember that many of us, as sinners, have been persons who for a long time have heard this good news and yet *have despised it*. Perhaps there is nothing more terrible in the depravity of man than that he is able to forget the love of Christ. If we were not as sinful as we are, there is no one here, this morning, who would not weep at the thought of the Savior's love! And I believe there is not a solitary man, woman, or child here who would not say, "I love You, O my God! Because You have done so much for me." It is the highest proof of our depravity that we do not, at once, love the Christ who died for us! There is a story told of the Covenanters—of one named Patrick Welwood—whose house was surrounded at a time when a minister had, for security, been hidden there. Claverhouse's dragoons were at the door and the minister had fled. The master of the house was summoned and it was demanded of him, "Where is the minister?" "He is gone. I cannot tell where, for I know not." But they were not satisfied with that. They tortured him, and since he could not tell them where he was (for in reality he did not know), they left him, after inflicting upon him the torture of the thumbscrew. And they took his sister, a young girl who was living in the house. I believe she did know where the minister was concealed, but on taking her, they asked her, and she said, "No, I can die, myself, but I can never betray God's servant, and never will, as He may help me." They dragged her to the water's edge and making her kneel down, they determined to put her to death. But the captain said, "Not yet. We will try to frighten her." And sending a soldier to her, he knelt down, and applying a pistol to her ear, she was bid to betray the minister or die. The click of the pistol was heard in her ear, but the pistol was not loaded. She slightly shivered, and the question was again asked of her. "Tell us now," they said, "where he is, or we will have your life." "Never, never," she said. A second time the endeavor was made. This time a couple of carbines were

discharged, but into the air, in order to terrify her. At last they resolved upon really putting her to death, when Trail, the minister, who was hidden somewhere near, being aroused by the discharge of guns, and seeing the poor girl about to die for him, sprang forward and cried, "Spare that maiden's blood and take mine. This poor innocent girl, what has she done?" The poor girl had truly died of fright, but the minister had come prepared to die, himself, to save her life. Oh, my friends, I have sometimes thought that her heroic martyrdom was somewhat like the blessed Jesus! He comes to us and says, "Poor sinner, will you be My friend?" We answer, "No." "Ah, I will make you so," He says, "I will die for you." And He goes to die on the cross. Oh, I think I could spring forward and say, "No, Lord Jesus, no! You must not die for such a worm!" Surely such a sacrifice is a price too large to pay for poor sinful worms! And yet, my hearers, to return, again, to what I have uttered before—you will hear all this and nine out of ten will retire from this place and say—"It was an old, old story." And while you can drop a tear for anything else, you will not weep one tear for Jesus, nor sigh one sigh for Him! Nor will you afford Him even a faint emotion of love! I wish it were different! Would to God He would change your hearts, that so you might be brought to love Him!

Further, to illustrate my text, let me remark, again, that inasmuch as Christ died for sinners, it is a special commendation of His love for the following reasons—it is quite certain that God did not consider *man's merit* when Christ died. In fact, no merit could have deserved the death of Jesus! Though we had been holy as Adam, we could never have deserved a sacrifice like that of Jesus for us. But inasmuch as it says, "He died for sinners," we are thereby taught that God considered our *sin* and *not* our righteousness! When Christ died, He died for men as vile, as wicked, as abominable—not as good and excellent—Christ did not shed His blood for us as saints—but as sinners! He considered us in our loathsomeness, in our low estate and misery—not in that high estate to which divine grace afterwards elevates us, but in all the decay into which we had fallen by our sins! There could have been no merit in us and, therefore, God commended His love by our ill-desert.

Again—it is quite certain, because Christ died for us as sinners, that God had *no interest* to serve by sending His Son to die. How could sinners serve Him? Oh, if God had pleased, He might have crushed this nest of rebels and have made another world—all holy! If God had chosen, the moment that man sinned, He might have said unto the world, "You shall be burned," and like as a few years ago astronomers told us that they saw the light of a far-off world burning myriads of miles away, this world might have been consumed with burning heat and sin scorched out of its clay! But no—while God could have made another race of beings and could have either annihilated us or consigned us to eternal torment, He

was pleased to veil Himself in flesh and die for us! Surely, then, it could not have been from any motive of self-interest. God had nothing to get by man's salvation. What are the attractions of human voices in Paradise? What are the feeble symphonies which mortal lips can sing on earth compared with the death of our Lord? He had angels enough! Do they not, day without night, circle His throne rejoicing? Are not their golden harps sufficient? Is not the orchestra of heaven large enough? Must our glorious Lord give up His blood to buy poor worms that they may join their little notes with the great swell of a choral universe? Yes, He must, and inasmuch as we are sinners and could by no possibility repay Him for His kindness, "God commended His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

But there is another commendation of love. Christ died for us *un-asked*. Christ did not consider me as an awakened heir of heaven but as a dead, corrupt, lost and ruined heir of hell! If He had died for me as an awakened heir of heaven, then I could have prayed for Him to die, for then I have power to pray and will to pray. But Christ died for me when I had no power nor will to lift my voice in prayer to Him! It was entirely unasked. Where did you ever hear that man was first in mercy? Did man ask God to redeem? No, rather, it is almost the other way—it is as if God did entreat man to be redeemed! Man never asked that he might be pardoned, but God pardons him and then turns round and cries, "Return unto Me, backsliding children of men, and I will have mercy upon you." sinners! If you should go down on your knees and were, for months, to cry for mercy, it would be great mercy if mercy should look upon you! But without asking, when we are hardened and rebellious, when we will not turn to Christ—He still comes to die for us! Tell it in heaven, tell it in the lower world—God's amazing work surpasses thought—for Love, itself, did die for hatred—Holiness did crucify itself to save poor sinful men! Unasked for and unsought, like a fountain in the desert sparkling spontaneously with its native waters, Jesus Christ came to die for man—who would not seek His grace. "God commended His love towards us."

And now, my dear hearers, I want to close up, if the Spirit of God will help me, by endeavoring to commend God's love to you, as much as ever I can and inviting as many of you as feel your need of a Savior to lay hold of Him and embrace Him, now, as your all-sufficient sacrifice. Sinner! I can commend Christ to you for this reason—*I know that you need Him*. You may be ignorant of it, yourself, but you do need Him. You have leprosy within your heart—you need a physician. You say, "I am rich." But sinner, you are not—you are naked and poor and miserable. You say, "I shall stand before God, accepted at last"—but sinner, without Christ you will not—for whoever believes not on Christ, "has not life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Hear that, my dear hearers—"The wrath of God abides on him." Oh, that wrath of God! Sinner, you need Christ, even

though you do not think so! Oh, that the Lord would impress this upon you! Again, a day is coming when *you will feel your need* of Christ if you do not, now. Within a few short years, perhaps months or days, you will lie upon the last bed that shall ever bear your weight. Soon you shall be stayed up by soft pillows. Your frame will be weak and your soul full of sorrow. You may live without Christ, now, but it will be hard work to *die* without Him! You may do without this bridge, here, but when you get to the river, you will think yourself a fool to have laughed at the only bridge which can carry you safely over! You may despise Christ, now, but what will you do in the swellings of Jordan? Can you face death and not be afraid? No, man, you are frightened, now, if the cholera is in the city! Or if some little sickness is about you, you shake for fear! What will you do when you are in the jaws of death—when his bony hand is squeezing you and when his dart is in your vitals? What will you do, then, without a Savior? Ah, you will want Him, then! And what will you do when you have passed that black stream, when you find yourself in the realm of spirits—in that day of judgment when the thunders shall be loosed and the wings of the lightning shall be unbound—when tempests shall herald with trumpet voice the arrival of the great Assize? What will you do when you shall stand before His bar before whom, in astonishment, the stars shall flee, the mountains quake and the sea be licked up with tongues of forked flame? What will you do, when from His throne, He shall exclaim, “Come here, sinner,” and you shall stand there, alone, to be judged for every deed done in the body? You will turn your head and say, “Oh, for an advocate!” And He shall look on you and say, “I called and you refused, I stretched out My hands and no man regarded. I also will now laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear comes.” Ah, what will you do, then, sinner, when the judgment seat is set? Oh, there will be weeping—there will be weeping at the judgment seat of Christ! And what will you do in that day when He shall say, “Depart, you cursed”—and when the black angel, with a countenance more fierce than lightning and with a voice louder than ten thousand thunders shall cry, “Depart!” and smite you down where those accursed spirits lie forever bound in fetters of iron, who, long ago, were cast into perdition? Don't tell me that I tell you terrible things. If it is terrible to speak of, how terrible it must be to bear! If you believe not what I say, I shall not wonder if you laugh at me. But as the most of you believe this, I claim your most solemn attention to this subject.

Sirs! Do you believe there is a hell *and that you are going there?* And yet do you still march heedlessly on? Do you believe that beyond you, when the stream of life is ended, there is a black gulf of misery? And do you still sail downwards to it, still quaffing your glass of happiness, still merry all the live-long day? O stop, poor sinner, stop! Stop! It may be the last moment you will ever have the opportunity to stop! Therefore stop,

now, I beseech you! And if you know yourself to be lost and ruined—if the Holy Spirit has humbled you, and made you feel your sin—let me tell you how you shall be saved. “He that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not,” says the Scripture “shall be *damned*.” Do you not like that message? Ought I to have said another word instead of that? Even if you wish it, I shall not—what God says, I will say—far be it from me to alter the messages from the Most High! I will, if He helps me, declare His truth without altering. He says, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, he that believes not shall be damned.” What is it to believe? To tell you as simply as possible—to believe is to give up trusting in yourself and to trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior. The slave said, “Massa, dis here is how I believe—when I see a promise, I do not stand on de promise, but I say, dat promise firm and strong, I fall flat on it, if de promise will not bear me, den it is de promise fault, but I fall flat on it.” Now, that is faith! Christ says, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Faith is to say, “Well, then, sink or swim, that is my only hope! Lost or saved, that is my only refuge! I am resolved for this, my last defense—

***‘If I perish there and die  
At His cross I still will lie!’***

“*What?*” asks one, “*No good works?*” Good works will come *afterwards*, but they do not go with it. You must come to Christ, not with your good works, but with your sins—and coming with your sins, He will take them away and give you good works afterwards! After you believe, there will be good works as the effect of your faith. But if you think faith will be the effect of good works, you are mistaken! It is, “Believe and live.” Cowper calls them the soul-quickenings words, “*Believe and live.*” This is the sum and substance of the gospel!

Now, do any of you say this is not the gospel? I shall ask you, one day, what it is. Is not this the doctrine Whitefield preached? Pray what else did Luther thunder, when he shook the Vatican? What else was proclaimed by Augustine and Chrysostom but this one doctrine of salvation in Christ, by faith alone? And what did Paul write? Turn to his epistles. And what did our Savior, Himself, say when He left these words on record—“Go you and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”? And what did He command His disciples to teach them? To teach them this—the very words I have now repeated to you were his last commission—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, he that believes not shall be damned.”

But again, you say, “How can I believe that Christ died for me?” Why, thus—He *says* He died for *sinners*—can you say you are a sinner? I do not mean with that fine complimentary phrase which many of you use when you say, “*Yes, I am a sinner,*” and if I sit down to ask you, “Did you

break that commandment?" "Oh no," you will say. "Did you commit that offense?" "Oh, no." You never did anything wrong—and yet you are sinners? Now that is the sort of sinners I do not think I shall preach to! The sort of sinners I would call to repentance are those whom Christ invited—those who mean what they say when they confess that they are sinners—those who know that they have been guilty, vile and lost. If you know your sinnership, then truly, Christ died for you! Remember that striking saying of Luther. Luther says Satan once came to him and said, "Martin Luther, you are lost, for you are a sinner." Said I to him, 'Satan, I thank you for saying I am a sinner, for inasmuch as you say I am a sinner, I answer you thus—Christ died for sinners. And if Martin Luther is a sinner, Christ died for him.'" Now, can you lay hold on that, my hearer? It is not on *my* authority, but on *God's* authority. Go away and rejoice—for if you are the chief of sinners, you shall be saved, if you believe—

***"Jesus, Your blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress  
'Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed  
With joy shall I lift up my head.  
Bold shall I stand in that great day  
For who to my charge shall lay,  
While, thro' Your blood, absolved I am  
From sin's tremendous curse and shame?"***

Sing that, poor soul, and you have begun to sing the song of Paradise! May the Lord, the Holy Spirit, apply these simple statements of truth to the salvation of your souls. Amen. Amen.

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# MANASSEH

## NO. 105

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING,  
NOVEMBER 30, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“Then Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God.”  
2 Chronicles 33:13.***

MANASSEH is one of the most remarkable characters whose history is written in the sacred pages. We are accustomed to mention his name in the list of those who greatly sinned and yet found great mercy. Side by side with Saul of Tarsus, with that great sinner who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head and with the thief who died upon the cross—a forgiven sinner at the eleventh hour—we can write the name of Manasseh, who “shed innocent blood very much.” But notwithstanding that, he was forgiven and pardoned, finding mercy through the blood of a Savior who had not then died, but whom God foresaw would die and the merits of whose sacrifice He therefore imputed to so great a transgressor as Manasseh!

Without preface we shall enter on the history of Manasseh this morning and consider him in a three-fold light—first, *as a sinner*, then *as an unbeliever* and, thirdly, *as a convert*. It may be there shall be some Manasseh within these walls, now, and if in describing the case of this ancient king of Israel, I shall in some degree describe him, I trust he will take to himself the same consoling truths which were the means of the comfort of Manasseh when in the dungeon of repentance.

**I.** First, then, we shall consider MANASSEH IN HIS SIN.

**1.** And we note, first, that he belonged to that class of sinners who stand first in the phalanx of evil—namely, those *who sin against great light, against a pious education and early training*. Manasseh was the son of Hezekiah, a man who had some faults but of whom it is said, nevertheless, “He did right in the sight of the Lord.” To a great degree he walked before God with a perfect heart, even as did David, his father. We cannot suppose that he neglected the education of his son, Manasseh. He was the son of his old age. You will remember that at a time of heavy sickness, God promised Hezekiah that he would have his life prolonged 15 years. Three years after that event, Manasseh was born and he was, therefore, only 12 years old when his father died. Still, he was old enough to remember the pious prayer of a father and a mother and had arrived at sufficient maturity to understand right from wrong and to have received those early impressions which we believe are, in most cases, eminently useful for adult life. And yet Manasseh pulled down what his fa-

ther had built up and built up the idol temples which his father had pulled down! Now, it is a notorious fact that men who do go wrong after a good training are the worst men in the world. You may not know, but it is a fact, that the late lamented murder of Williams at Erromanga was brought about by the evil doings of a trader who had gone to the island and who was the son of a missionary! He had become reckless in his habits and treated the islanders with such barbarity and cruelty that they revenged his conduct upon the next white man who put his foot on their shore—and the beloved Williams, one of the last of the martyrs, died a victim of the guilt of those who had gone before him. The worst of men are those who, having much of the light of God, still run astray. You shall find among the greatest champions of the camp of hell men who were brought up and educated in our very ranks! It is not necessary that I should mention names. But any of you that are acquainted with those who are the leaders of infidelity at the present time will, at once, recognize the fact. And such men actually make the very worst of infidels—while the best of Christians often come from the very worst of sinners. Our John Bunyans have come from the tavern and the taproom, from the bowling alley, or places lower in the scale. Our best of men have come from the very worst of places and have been the best adapted to reclaim sinners because they, themselves, had stepped into the kennel and had, nevertheless, been washed in a Savior's cleansing blood. And so it is true that the worst of the enemies of Christ are those who are nourished in our midst and, like the viper of old, which the husbandman nursed in his bosom, turned round to sting the bosom which has nurtured them! Such a one was Manasseh.

**2.** In the next place, *Manasseh, as a sinner, was a very bold one.* He was one of those men who do not sin covertly, but who, when they transgress, do not seem to be at all ashamed. They are born with brazen foreheads and lift their faces to heaven with insolence and impudence. He was a man who, if he would set up an idol, as you would see by reading this chapter, did not set it up in an obscure part of the land, but put it in the very temple of God! And when he would desecrate the name of the Most High, he did not in private go to his chapel, where he might worship some evil deity, but he put the deity into the very temple, itself, as if to insult God to His very face! He was a desperado in sin and went to the utmost limit of it, being very bold and desperately set on mischief! Now, whether it is for right or wrong, boldness is always sure to win the day. Give me a coward—you give me nothing! Give me a bold man and you give me one that can do something—whether for Christ's cause or for the devil's! Manasseh was a man of this kind. If he cursed God, it was with a loud voice—it was not in a hole or corner, but upon his throne that he issued proclamations against the Most High—and in the most daring manner, insulted the Lord God of Israel! And yet, dear friends, this man was saved, notwithstanding all this! This greatest sinner, this man who

had trampled on his father's prayers, who had wiped from his brow the tears which had been shed there by an anxious parent, who had stifled the convictions of his conscience and had gone to an extremity of guilt, in bold, open and desperate sin—yet this man was at last, by divine grace, humbled and brought on his knees to acknowledge that God was God, alone! Let no man, therefore, despair of his fellow! I never do, since I think and hope that God has saved me. I am persuaded that, live as long as I may, I shall never see the individual of whom I can say, "That man is a hopeless case." I may, perhaps, meet with the person who has been so exhorted and so warned and has so put off all the sweet wooing of his conscience that he has become seared and hardened and, consequently, *apparently* hopeless. But I shall never meet a man who has sinned so desperately that I can say of him, he never can be saved! Ah, no—that arm of mercy which was long enough to save me is long enough to save you! And if He could redeem you from your transgression, assuredly there are none sunk lower than you were and, therefore, you may believe that His arm of mercy can reach them! Above all, let no man despair of himself. While there is life, there is hope! Give not up yourselves unto Satan's arms! He tells you that your death warrant is sealed, that your doom is cast and that you never can be saved. Tell him to his face that he is a liar, for Jesus Christ, "is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing that He ever lives to make intercession for them."

**3.** Again, Manasseh was a sinner of that peculiar caste which we suspect is not to be found very frequently. He was one of those who *had the power of leading others*, to a very large extent, astray from the truth and religion of God. He was a king and had, therefore, great influence—what he commanded was done! Among the ranks of idolaters, Manasseh stood first—and it was the song and glory of the false priests that the king of Judah was on the side of the gods of the heathen! He was the leader—the first man in the battle! When the troops of the ungodly went to war against the God of the whole earth, Manasseh led the vanguard and cheered them on! He was their great Goliath, challenging all the armies of the living God. Many among the wicked stood back and feared the conflict. But he never feared. "He spoke and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast." And therefore he was bold and arrogant in leading others astray. There are some such still alive—men not content with treading the broad road themselves, but seeking to entice others into it. And oh, how active they are in their efforts! They will go from house to house and distribute those publications which are impure and polluting. They will stand in our streets and endeavor to draw around them the young—yes, men and women—just fresh come from the house of God, or going to God's sanctuary—to tell them that dreary story that there is no God, or the dismal lie that there is no future but that we must all die like dogs and suffer annihilation! There are some such who never seem to be hap-

py unless they are leading others astray. It is not enough for them to go alone against God, but they must sin in company! Like the woman in the Proverbs, they hunt for precious life and like hounds thirsting for blood, they are seeking after men to destroy! Society is now like Prometheus. It is, to a great extent, bound hand and foot by the very customs that surround us—and like Prometheus, we have upon us the winged hound of hell perpetually tapping at our heart and swallowing the life-blood of our spirit! I mean we have that accursed infidelity which seeks to lead men from God and drive them from their Maker. But, nevertheless, leaders among them have yet been saved. Manasseh, the leader of those who hated God, was yet humbled and made to love the Most High!

Do you ask me whether such cases ever occur now? I answer, yes they do—too rarely, but yet they do happen. Yesterday I received something which cheered my heart very much and made me bless my God, that notwithstanding all opposition He had still made me of some little use in the world. I received a long letter from a certain city, from one who has been one of the leaders of the secular society in that place. The writer says, “I purchased one of the pamphlets entitled ‘Who Is This Spurgeon?’ and also your portrait, (or a portrait sold as yours) for 3d. I brought these home and exhibited them in my shop window. I was induced to do so from a feeling of derisive pleasure. The title of the pamphlet is, naturally, suggestive of caricature and it was especially to incite that impression that I attached it to your portrait and placed it in my window. But I also had another object in view. I thought by its attraction, to improve my trade. I am not at all in the book or paper business, which rendered its exposure and my motive the more conspicuous. I have taken it down, now—I *am taken down, too*. I had bought one of your sermons of an infidel a day or two previous. In that sermon I read these words—‘They go on, that step is safe—they take it. The next is safe—they take it, their foot hangs over a gulf of darkness.’ I read on, but the word, darkness, staggered me! It was all dark with me. True, the way has been safe, so far, but I am lost in bewilderment. No, no, no, I will not risk it! I left the apartment in which I had been musing and as I did so, the three words, ‘Who can tell?’ seemed to be whispered at my heart. I determined not to let another Sunday pass without visiting a place of worship. How soon my soul might be required of me I knew not, but I felt that it would be mean, base, cowardly, not to give it a chance. Yes, my associates may laugh, scoff, deride, call me coward, turncoat, I will do an act of justice to my soul. I went to chapel. I was just stupefied with awe. What could I want there? The doorkeeper opened his eyes wider and involuntarily demanded, ‘It’s Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, isn’t it?’ ‘Yes,’ I said, ‘it is.’ He conducted me to a seat and afterwards brought me a hymnbook. I was fit to burst with anguish. ‘Now’, I thought, ‘I am here. If it is the house of God, heaven grant me an audience and I will make a full surrender! O God, show me some token by which I may know that You *are* and that You will in no wise

cast out the vile deserter who has ventured to seek Your face and your pardoning mercy.' I opened the hymnbook to divert my mind from feelings that were rending me and the first words that caught my eyes were—

***'Dark, dark indeed the grave would be  
Had we no light, O God, from Thee.'***

After giving some things which he looks upon as evidences that he is a true convert of religion, he closes up by saying, "O sir, tell this to the poor wretch whose pride, like mine, has made him in league with hell! Tell it to the hesitating and to the timid! Tell it to the cooling Christian, that God is a very present help to all that are in need! Tell it to the poor sinner who may never look upon you in this world, but who will live to bless and pray for you here, and long to meet you in the world exempt from sinful doubts, from human pride, and backsliding hearts." Ah, he need not ask *my* forgiveness! I am happy, too happy, in the hope of calling him, "brother," in the Christian church! This letter is from a place many miles from this city and from a man who had no small standing among the ranks of those who hate Christ. Ah, there have been Manassehs saved, and there shall be more yet! There have been men who hated God, who have leaped for joy and said—

***"I'm forgiven, I'm forgiven!  
I'm a miracle of grace,"***

and have kissed the very feet which once they scorned and scoffed and could not bear to hear the mention of!

There is one fact concerning Manasseh which stamps him as being a very prince of sinners, namely this—"He caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom," and dedicated his sons unto Tophet. This was a dreadful sin, for though Manasseh repented, we find that his son, Amon, followed in the steps of his father in his wickedness but not in his righteousness. Listen! "Amon was 22 years old when he began to reign and reigned two years in Jerusalem. But he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as did Manasseh his father: for Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh, his father, had made and served them and humbled not himself before the Lord, as Manasseh, his father, had humbled himself. But Amon trespassed more and more." Children will imitate their fathers in their vices, seldom in their repentance. If parents sin, their children will follow them, without much doubt. But when they repent and turn to God, it is not so easy to lead a child back in the way which it has once forsaken. Are there any here, who, like that ancient Carthaginian, have dedicated their sons to the opposition of their enemy? You remember one who dedicated his son, Hannibal, from his very birth, to be the everlasting enemy of the Romans. There may be such a man, here, who has dedicated his offspring to Satan, to be the everlasting enemy of Christ's gospel and is trying to train up and tutor him in a way which is contrary to the fear of the Lord. Is such a man hopeless? His sin is dreadful, his state is dreary—

his sin without repentance will assuredly damn him! But as long as he is here, we will still preach repentance to him, knowing that Manasseh was brought to know God and was forgiven all his manifold sins.

**II.** The second aspect in which we are to regard Manasseh is as an UNBELIEVER—for it appears that Manasseh did not believe that Jehovah, alone, was God. He was, therefore, a believer in false gods, but an unbeliever, so far as the truth of God is concerned. Now, does it not strike you at the outset, that while Manasseh was an unbeliever in the truth, he must have been a very credulous person to believe in all the imaginary deities of the heathen? In fact, the most credulous persons in the world are unbelievers! It takes ten thousand times more faith to be an unbeliever than to be a believer in revelation! One man comes to me and tells me I am credulous because I believe in a great First Cause who created the heavens and the earth and that God became man and died for sin. I tell him I may be and, no doubt, am very credulous, as he conceives credulity. But I conceive that which I believe is in perfect consistency with my reason and I, therefore, receive it. “But,” he says, “I am not credulous—not at all.” Sir, I would like to ask you one thing. You do not believe the world was created by God. “No.” You must be amazingly credulous, then, I am sure! Do you think this Bible exists without being made? If you should say I am credulous because I believe it had a printer and a binder, I would say you were infinitely more credulous, if you assured me that it was made at all! And should you begin to tell me one of your theories about creation—that atoms floated through space and came to a certain shape—I would resign the palm of credulity to you! You believe, perhaps, moreover, that man came to be in this world through the improvement of certain creatures. I have read that you say that there were certain monads—that these monads improved themselves until they came to be small animalcule—that afterwards, they grew into fishes—that these fishes wanted to fly—and then wings grew—that, by-and-by, they wanted to crawl and then legs came and they became lizards and by many steps they then became monkeys and then the monkeys became men and you believe yourself to be cousin-germane to an orangutan! Now, I may be very credulous, but really not as credulous as you are! I may believe very strange things. I may believe that with the jawbone of an ass, Samson slew a thousand men. I may believe that the earth was drowned with water and many other strange things, as you call them, but as for your creed, your non-creed, “’tis strange, ’tis passing strange, ’tis amazing,” and it as much outstrips mine, in credulity, if I am credulous, as an ocean outstrips a drop! It requires the hardest faith in the world to deny the Scriptures, because the man, in his secret heart, knows they are true. Go where he will, something whispers to him, “You may be wrong—perhaps you are.” And it is as much as he can do, to say, “Lie down, conscience! Down with you! I must not let you speak, or I could not deliver my lecture tomorrow, I could not go among my friends, I

could not go to such-and-such a club, for I cannot afford to keep a conscience, if I cannot afford to keep a God.”

And now let me tell you what I conceive to be the reasons why Manasseh was an unbeliever. In the first place, I conceive that *the unlimited power* which Manasseh possessed had a very great tendency to make him a disbeliever in God. I would not wonder if an autocrat—a man with absolute dominion—should deny God! I would think it only natural. You remember that memorable speech of Napoleon’s? He was told that man proposed, but that God disposed. “Ah,” said Napoleon, “I propose and dispose, too.” And therein he arrogated himself the very supremacy of God! We do not wonder at it, because his victories had so speedily succeeded each other, his prowess had been so complete, his fame so great and his power over his subjects so absolute. Power, always, I believe, except in the heart which is rightly governed by divine grace, has a tendency to lead us to deny God. It is that noble intellect of such-and-such a man which has led him into discussion. He has twice, thrice, four, five, six, seven times come off more than conqueror in the field of controversy! He looks around and says, “I am, there is none beside me. Let me take up whatever I please, I can defend it. There is no man who can stand against the blade of my intellect—I can give him such a home thrust as will assuredly overcome him.” And then, like Dr. Johnson, who often took up the side of the question he did not believe, just because he liked to get a victory that was difficult to win—so do these men espouse what they believe to be wrong, because they conceive it gives them the finest opportunity of displaying their abilities. “Let me,” says some mighty intellect, “fight with a Christian. I shall have hard enough work to prove my thesis. I know I shall have a great difficulty to undermine the bastions of truth which he opposes to bear against me, but so much the better! It were worthwhile to be conquered by so stout an opposition and if I can overcome my antagonist, if I can prove myself to have more logic than he has, then I can say, ‘tis glorious—‘tis glorious to have fought against an opponent with so much on his side and yet to have come off more than conqueror!” I do believe the best man in the world is very hard to be trusted with power. He will, unless grace keeps him, make a wrong use of it before long. Hence it is that the most influential of God’s servants are almost invariably the most tried ones, because our heavenly Father knows that if it were not for great trials and afflictions, we would begin to set ourselves up against Him and arrogate to ourselves a glory which we had no right to claim.

But another reason why Manasseh was an unbeliever, I take it, *was because he was proud*. Pride lies at the root of infidelity. Pride is the very germ of opposition to God. The man says, “Why should I believe? The Sunday school child reads his Bible and says it is true. Am I, a man of intellect, to sit side by side with him and receive a thing as true simply at the dictum of God’s Word? No, I will not! I will find it out for myself, and I

will not believe simply because it is revealed to me, for that would be to make myself a child.” And when he turns to the page of revelation and reads thus, “Except you be converted and become as little children, you can in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven,” he says, “Pshaw! I shall not be converted, then! I am not going to be a child. I am a man and a man I will be and I would rather be a lost man than a saved child! What? Am I to surrender my judgment and sit down tacitly to believe in God’s Word?” “Yes,” says God’s Word, “you are. You are to become as a child and meekly to receive My Word.” “Then,” he says in his arrogance and pride, “I will not,” and, like Satan, he declares it were better to rule in hell than serve in heaven—and he goes away an unbeliever—because to believe is too humbling a thing.

But perhaps the most potent reason for Manasseh’s unbelief lies here—*he loved sin too well*. When Manasseh built the altars for his false gods, he could sin easily and keep his conscience. He felt Jehovah’s Laws so stringent that if he once believed in the One God, he could not sin as he did. He read it thus—“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. You shall not kill. You shall not steal.” And so on. Manasseh wanted to do all these things and, therefore, he would not believe because he could not believe and keep his sin. The very reason why we have much unbelief is because we have much love of sin! Men will have no God because God interferes with their lusts! They could not go on in their sins if they once believed there was an Everlasting God above them! Or *professed* to believe it, for all do believe it, whether they say so or not. And because the thought of God checks them in their impiety and their lust, therefore they cry out, “There is no God,” and say it with their lips as well as in their hearts. I believe it was this that led Manasseh to persecute the saints of God—for among his sins it is written, “he shed innocent blood very much.” It is a tradition among the Jews that the prophet Isaiah was sawn in two by Manasseh on account of a rebuke which he gave him for his sin. Isaiah was not very timid and he told the king of his lusts and, therefore, placing him between two planks, he cut him in two from head to foot. It is just the reason why men hate God and hate His servants, because the truth is too hot for them. Send you a preacher who would not tell you of your sins and you would hear him peaceably. But when the gospel comes with power, then it is that men cannot bear it! When it trenches upon that pleasure, that sin, or that lust—then they will not believe it! You would believe the gospel if you could believe it and live in your sins, too. Oh, how many a drunken reprobate would be a Christian if he might be a drunk and a Christian, too! How many a wicked wretch would turn believer if he might believe and yet go on in his sins! But because faith in the Everlasting God can never stand side by side with sin and because the gospel cries, “Down with it! Down with it! Down with your sin”; therefore it is that men turn round and say, “Down with the gospel!” It is too hot for you, O you sinful generation! Therefore you turn

aside from it because it will not tolerate your lusts, nor indulge your iniquity.

**III.** We look, then, at Manasseh as an unbeliever. And now we have our last and most pleasing task of looking at Manasseh as a convert. Hear it, O heavens and listen, O earth! The Lord God has said it! Manasseh shall be saved! He on his throne of cruelty has just appended his name to another murderous edict against the saints of God, yet he shall be humbled—he shall ask for mercy and shall be saved! Manasseh hears the decree of God—he laughs. “What? I play the hypocrite and bend my knee? Never! It is not possible!” And when the godly hear of it, they all say, “It is not possible! What? Is Saul among the prophets? Manasseh regenerated? Manasseh made to bow before the Most High? The thing is impossible.” Ah, it is impossible with *man*, but it is possible with God! God knows how to do it. The enemy is at the gates of the city. A hostile king has just besieged the walls of Jerusalem. Manasseh flees from his palace and hides himself among the thorns. He is taken, carried captive to Babylon and shut up in prison. And now we see what God can do. The proud king is proud no longer, for he has lost his power. The mighty man is mighty no more, for his might is taken from him. And now in a low dungeon, listen to him! He is no more the blasphemer, no more the hater of God, but look at him, cold, on the floor! Manasseh bows his knees and with the tears rolling down his cheeks, he cries, “O God! My father’s God! An outcast comes to You; a hell-hound, stained with blood, throws himself at Your feet. I, a very demon, full of filthiness, now prostrate myself before You!” Hear it, you heavens! Listen yet again! Look, from the skies the angel flies with mercy in his hand. Ah, where speeds he? It is to the dungeon of Babylon! The proud king is on his knees and mercy comes and whispers in his ear—“Hope!” Manasseh starts from his knees and cries, “Is there hope?” And down he falls again! Once more he pleads and mercy whispers that sweet promise, uttered once by the murdered Isaiah—“I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions for My name’s sake and will not remember your sins.” Oh, do you see him? His very heart is running over in his eyes! Oh, how he weeps for joy and yet for sorrow that he ever could have sinned against a God so kind! A moment more and the dungeon is opened. The king of Babylon, moved by God, bids him go free and Manasseh returns to his kingdom and throne, a happier and a better man than he had ever been before! I think I see him coming into Jerusalem. There are his statesmen and favorites. They welcome him. “Come in, Manasseh! The bowl shall be filled, and we will have a merry night, tonight—we will bow before the shrine of Ashtaroth, and thank her that she has set you at liberty! Lo, the horses of the sun are ready—come and pay your devotions to him that shines on the earth and leads the host of heaven!” I think I see their astonishment when he cries, “Stand back! Stand back! You are my friends no longer, until you become God’s friends! I have dandled you on my knees and as vipers you have

stung me with the poison of asps! I made you my friends and you have led me down to the gulf of hell! But now I know it—stand back till you are better men and I will find others to be my courtiers.” And there the poor saints, hidden in the back streets of the city, so frightened because the king has come back, are holding meetings of solemn prayer, crying unto God that no more murderous, persecuting edicts might go forth! And lo, a messenger comes and says, “The king is returned.” And while they are looking at him, wondering what the messenger is about to say, he adds, “He has returned, not Manasseh as he went, but as a very angel! I saw him, with his own hands dash Ashtaroth in pieces! I heard him cry, ‘The horses of the sun shall be hanged’—sweep out the house of God—we will hold a Passover there—the morning and evening lamb shall again burn on Jehovah’s altars, for He is God, and beside Him there is none else!”

Oh, can you conceive the joy of believers on that auspicious day? Can you think how they went up to God’s house with joy and thanksgiving? And on the next Sabbath they sung as they had never sung before, “O come let us sing unto the Lord, let us make a joyful noise unto the rock of our salvation,” while they remembered that he who had persecuted the saints of God aforetime, now defended that very truth which once he abhorred! There was joy on earth, yes, and there was joy in heaven, too! The bells of heaven rang merry peals the day Manasseh prayed! The angels of heaven flapped their wings with double willingness the day Manasseh repented! Earth and heaven were glad and even the Almighty on His throne smiled gracious approbation while He again said, “I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions for My name’s sake and will not remember your sins.”

And now, are you curious to know what were the causes of the faith of Manasseh—what were the rocks on which he built his trust in God? I think they were two. He believed in God, first, *because He had answered his prayer*; and secondly, *because He had forgiven his sin*. I have sometimes said, when I have become the prey of doubting thoughts, “Well, now, I dare not doubt whether there is a God, for I can look back in my diary and say on such a day in the depths of trouble, I bent my knees to God and before I had risen from my knees the answer was given me.” And so can many of you say, too! Therefore, whatever others may say, you know there is a God because *He answered your prayers*. You have heard of that holy man, Mr. Muller, of Bristol. If you were to tell George Muller there was not a God, he would weep over you. “Not a God?” he would say, “Why, I have seen His hands; where came those answers to my prayers?” Ah, sirs, you may laugh at us for credulity, but there are hundreds here who could most solemnly assert that they have asked of God for many matters, and that God has not failed them, but granted their requests! This was one reason why Manasseh knew that the Lord, He was God!

The other reason was that *Manasseh had a sense of pardoned sin*. Ah, that is a delightful proof of the existence of a God! Here comes a poor miserable wretch. His knees are knocking together—his heart is sinking within him—he is giving himself up to despair. “Bring the physicians to him.” they cry, “we fear his mind is infirm. We believe he will, at last, have to be taken to some lunatic asylum.” They apply their remedies, but he is none the better, but rather grows worse. All of a sudden this poor creature, afflicted with a sense of sin, groaning on account of guilt, is brought within the sound of the Sacred Word. He hears it—it increases his misery! He hears it again—his pain becomes doubled—till, at last, everyone says his case is utterly hopeless! Suddenly, on a happy morning which God had ordained, the minister is led to some sweet passage. Perhaps it is this, “Come now and let us reason together; though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” The Spirit applies it and the poor man goes home light as air and says to his wife and children, “Come, rejoice with me!” “Why?” they ask. “Because,” he says, “my sins are forgiven!” “How do you know that?” “Oh,” he says, “I sense pardoning love within my heart, which all the doubters in the world could not deny—and if all the earth should rise up against me and say I would be condemned, I could say, ‘I know there is now no condemnation for me.’” Have you ever felt pardoning blood applied? You will never doubt God, I know, if you have! Why, dear friends, if the poorest old woman in the world should be brought before an infidel of the wisest order, having a mind of the greatest caliber—and he should endeavor to pervert her—I think I see her smile at him and say, “My good man, it is of no use at all, for the Lord has appeared unto me of old, saying, ‘Yea I have loved you with an everlasting love,’ and so you may tell me what you please. I have had a sense of blood-bought pardon shed abroad in my heart and I know that He is God and you can never beat it out of me.” As good Watts says, when we have once such an assurance as that—

**“Should all the forms that men devise  
Assault my faith with treacherous art—  
I’d call them vanity and lies  
And bind the gospel to my heart!”**

Oh, if you have a sense that sin is forgiven, you can never doubt the existence of a God, for it will be said of you, “Then *he* knew that the Lord, He was God.”

And now I gather up my strength for just one moment, to speak to those of you who desire to know what you must do to be saved. My hearer, no question can be more important than that! None is so requisite to ask. Alas, there are too many who never ask it, but who go sailing down to the gulf of black despair, listening to the siren song of procrastination and delay. But if you have been brought to ask the question solemnly and seriously, “What must I do to be saved?” I am happy, thrice happy to be able to tell you God’s own word—“He who believes on the Lord Jesus

Christ and is baptized, shall be saved. He who believes not," the Scripture says, "shall be damned." "Not of works, lest any man should boast." "But, sir," you say, "I have many good works and would trust on them." If you do, you are a lost man! As old Matthew Wilks most quaintly said, once, speaking in his usual tone,—“You might as well try to sail to America in a paper boat as to go to heaven by your own works. You will be swamped on the passage if you attempt it.” We cannot spin a robe that is long enough to cover us—we cannot make a righteousness that is good enough to satisfy God. If you would be saved, it must be through what Christ did and not what you did! You cannot be your own Savior. Christ must save you, if you are saved at all. How, then, can you be saved by Christ? Here is the plan of salvation. It is written—“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Do you feel that you are a sinner? Then believe that Jesus Christ came to save you, for as sure as ever you feel you are a sinner, it is a fact that Christ died for you! And if He died for you, you shall not perish, for I cannot conceive that Christ would die in vain. If He did die for you, you shall most assuredly be pardoned and saved and shall one day sing in heaven!

The only question is, Did He die for you? He most certainly did if you are a sinner! For it is written—I will repeat it again—“It is a faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came to save sinners.” Poor sinner, believe! My dear friend, give me your hand! I wish I could put it inside Christ’s hand. Oh, embrace Him! Embrace Him, lest, God forbid, the clouds of night should come upon you and the sun should set before you have found Him! Oh, lay hold on Him, lest death and destruction should overtake you! Fly to this mountain, lest you be consumed! And remember, once in Christ, you are safe beyond hazard—

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

Oh, believe Him! Believe Him, my dear, dear hearers, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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# TURN OR BURN

## NO. 106

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING,  
DECEMBER 7, 1856,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“If he does not turn, He will whet His sword;  
He has bent His bow and made it ready.”  
Psalm 7:12.***

“IF the sinner turns not, God will whet His sword.” So, then, God has a sword and He will punish man on account of his iniquity. This evil generation has labored to take away from God the sword of His justice. They have endeavored to prove to themselves that God will, “clear the guilty,” and will by no means, “punish iniquity, transgression and sin.” Two hundred years ago the predominant strain of the pulpit was one of terror—it was like Mount Sinai. It thundered forth the dreadful wrath of God and from the lips of a Baxter or a Bunyan, you heard most terrible sermons, full to the brim with warnings of judgment to come! Perhaps some of the Puritan fathers may have gone too far and have given too great a prominence to the terrors of the Lord in their ministry. But the age in which we live has sought to forget those terrors, altogether, and if we dare to tell men that God will punish them for their sins, it is charged upon us that we want to bully them into religion! And if we faithfully and honestly tell our hearers that sin must bring after it, certain destruction, it is said that we are attempting to frighten them into goodness! Now we care not what men mockingly impute to us—we feel it our duty, when men sin, to tell them they shall be punished—and as long as the world will not give up its sin, we feel we must not cease our warnings. But the cry of this age is that God is merciful, that God is love! Yes, who said He was not? But remember, it is *equally* true God is just, severely and inflexibly just! If He were not God, He would not be just! And He could not be merciful if He were not just, for punishment of the wicked is demanded by the highest mercy to the rest of mankind! Rest assured, however, that He *is* just and that the words I am about to read you from God’s Word are true—“The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God.” “God is angry with the wicked every day.” “If he does not turn, He will whet His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. He has also prepared for Himself, the instruments of death; He ordains His

arrows against the persecutors.” Indeed, because this age is wicked, we are told it is to have no hell—and because it is hypocritical, it would have but feigned punishment! This doctrine is so prevalent as to make even the ministers of the gospel flinch from their duty in declaring the day of wrath. How few there are who will solemnly tell us of the judgment to come! They preach of God’s love and mercy as they ought to do and as God has commanded them—but of what use is it to preach mercy unless they also preach the doom of the wicked? And how shall we hope to effect the purpose of preaching unless we warn men that if they “turn not, He will whet His sword”? I fear that in too many places the doctrine of future punishment is rejected and laughed at as a fancy and a fantasy—but the day will come when it shall be known to be a reality!

Ahab scoffed at Micaiah, when he said he would never come home alive. The men of Noah’s generation laughed at the foolish old man (as they thought him), who bid them take heed, for the world would be drowned. But when they were climbing to the treetops and the floods were following them—did they then say that the prophecy was untrue? And when the arrow was sticking in the heart of Ahab and he said, “Take me from the battle, for I must die,” did he then think that Micaiah spoke a lie? And so it is now. You tell us we speak lies when we warn you of judgment to come, but in that day when your mischief shall fall on yourselves and when destruction shall overwhelm you, will you say we were liars, then? Will you then turn round and scoff and say we spoke not the truth of God? Rather, my hearers, the highest gift of honor will then be given to him who was the most faithful in warning men concerning the wrath of God! I have often trembled at the thought that here I am, standing before you, and constantly engaged in the work of the ministry, but what if, when I die, I should be found unfaithful to your souls? How doleful will be our meeting in the world of spirits! It would be a dreadful thing if you were able to say to me in the world to come, “Sir, you flattered us. You did not tell us of the solemnities of eternity. You did not rightly dwell upon the awful wrath of God. You spoke to us feebly and faintly. You were somewhat afraid of us—you knew we could not bear to hear of eternal torment and, therefore, you kept it back and never mentioned it!” Why, I think you would look me in the face and curse me throughout eternity, if that should be my conduct! But by God’s help it never shall be! Come fair or foul, when I die I shall, God helping me, be able to say, “I am clear of the blood of all men.” So far as I know God’s truth, I will endeavor to speak it. And though on my head disgrace and scandal is poured to a ten-fold greater extent than ever, I’ll hail it and welcome it—if I may but be faithful to this unstable generation, faithful to God and

faithful to my own conscience! Let me, then, endeavor, and by God's help I will do it as solemnly and as tenderly as I can—to address such of you as have not yet repented—most affectionately reminding you of your future doom if you should die impenitent. “If he does not turn, He will whet His sword.”

In the first place, *what is the turning, here meant?* In the second place, let us dwell on the *necessity there is for men's turning, otherwise God will punish them.* And then thirdly, let me remind you of the *means whereby men can be turned from the error of their ways, and the weakness and frailty of their nature amended by the power of divine grace.*

**I.** In the first place, my hearers let me endeavor to explain to you the NATURE OF THE TURNING, HERE MEANT. It says—“If he does not turn, He will whet His sword.”

To commence, then: The turning, here meant, is actual, not fictitious—not that which stops with promises and vows, but that which deals with the real acts of life! Possibly one of you will say, this morning, “Lo I turn to God! From this time forth I will not sin and I will endeavor to walk in holiness. My vices shall be abandoned, my crimes shall be thrown to the winds and I will turn unto God with full purpose of heart.” But, perhaps, *tomorrow* you will have forgotten this. You will weep a tear or two under the preaching of God's Word, but by tomorrow every tear shall have been dried and you will utterly forget that you ever came to the house of God at all. How many of us are like men who see their faces in a mirror and straightway go away and forget what manner of men we are? Ah, my hearer, it is not your *promise* of repentance that can save you—it is not your *vow*. It is not your *solemn declaration*, it is not the *tear* that is dried more easily than the dewdrop by the sun. It is not the transient *emotion* of the heart which constitutes a real turning to God! There must be a true and actual *abandonment of sin* and a *turning unto righteousness* in real act and deed in everyday life. Do you say you are sorry and repent, and yet go on, from day to day, just as you always have gone? Will you now bow your heads and say, “Lord, I repent,” and in a little while commit the same deeds, again? If you do, your repentance is worse than nothing and shall but make your destruction yet more sure—for he that vows to his Maker and does not pay, has committed another sin, in that he has attempted to deceive the Almighty and lie against the God that made him! Repentance, to be true, to be evangelical—must be a repentance which really affects our outward conduct.

In the next place, repentance, to be sure, *must be entire.* How many will say, “Sir, I will renounce this sin and the other, but there are certain darling lusts which I must keep and hold.” O sirs, in God's name, let me

tell you, it is not the giving up of one sin, nor 50 sins, which is true repentance—it is the solemn renunciation of *every* sin! If you harbor one of those accursed vipers in your heart, your repentance is but a sham! If you indulge in but one lust and give up every other—that one lust, like one leak in a ship—will sink your soul! Think it not sufficient to only give up your *outward* vices. Fancy it not enough to cut off the more corrupt sins of your life—it is all or none which God demands! “Repent,” says God, and when He bids you repent, He means repent of *all* your sins, otherwise He can never accept your repentance as being real and genuine. The true penitent hates sin in the race—not in the individual—in the mass, not in the particular. He says, “Gild you as you will, O sin, I abhor you! Yes, cover yourself with pleasure, make yourself gaudy like the snake with its azure scales—I still hate you, for I know your venom and I flee from you, even when you come to me in the most showy garb.” All sin must be given up or else you shall never have Christ! All transgression must be renounced, or else the gates of heaven will be barred against you! Let us remember, then, that for repentance to be *sincere*, it must be *entire* repentance.

Again, when God says, “If he does not turn, He will whet His sword,” He means *immediate* repentance! You say when we are nearing the last extremity of mortal life and when we are entering the borders of the thick darkness of futurity, *then* we will change our ways. But, my dear hearers do not delude yourselves! It is few who have ever changed after a long life of sin. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? If so, let him that is accustomed to do evil learn to do well.” Put no faith in the repentances which you promise yourselves on your deathbeds—here are ten thousand arguments against one, that if you repent not in health—you will never repent in sickness. Too many have promised themselves a quiet season before they leave the world, when they could turn their face to the wall and confess their sins—but how few have found that time of repose! Do not men drop down dead in the streets—yes, even in the house of God? Do they not expire in their business? And when death is gradual, it affords but an ill season for repentance. Many a saint has said on his deathbed, “Oh, if I had to seek my God, now—if I had to cry to Him, now, for mercy—what would become of me? These pangs are enough, without the pangs of repentance! It is enough to have the body tortured, without having the soul wrung with remorse.” Sinner! God says, “Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, when your fathers tempted Me and proved Me.” When God the Holy Spirit convinces men of sin, they will never talk of delays! You may never have another day in which to repent! “Therefore,” says the

voice of wisdom, “Repent now.” The Jewish Rabbis said, “Let every man repent one day before he dies—and since he may die tomorrow, let him take heed to turn from his evil ways today.” Even so, we say immediate repentance is that which God demands, for He has never promised you that you shall have any hour to repent in, except the one that you have now!

Furthermore, the repentance here described as absolutely necessary is *heartly* repentance. It is not a mock tear. It is not hanging out the tokens of grief while you are keeping merriment in your hearts. It is not having an illumination within and shutting up all the windows by a pretended repentance. It is the putting out of the candles of the heart! It is sorrow of soul which is true repentance. A man may renounce every outward sin and yet not really repent. True repentance is a turning of the *heart* as well as of the *life*. It is the giving up of the whole soul to God, to be His, forever and ever—it is a renunciation of the sins of the heart as well as the crimes of the life! Ah, dear hearers, let none of us fancy that we have repented when we have only a false and fictitious repentance. Let none of us take that to be the work of the Spirit which is only the work of poor human nature! Let us not dream that we have savingly turned to God, when, perhaps, we have only turned to ourselves. And let us not think it enough to have turned from one vice to another, or from vice to virtue. Let us remember it must be a turning of the *whole soul*, so that the old man is made new in Christ Jesus. Otherwise we have not answered the requirement of the text—we have not turned unto God.

And lastly, upon this point, this repentance must be *perpetual*. It is not my turning to God during today that will be a proof that I am a true convert—it is forsaking of my sin throughout the entire of my life—until I sleep in the grave. You need not fancy that to be upright for a week will be a proof that you are saved—it is a perpetual abhorrence of evil. The change which *God works* is neither a transitory nor a superficial change—not a cutting off the top of the weed, but an eradication of it! Not the sweeping away of the dust of one day, but the taking away of that which is the cause of the defilement! In old times, when rich and generous monarchs came into their cities, they made the fountains run with milk and wine. But the fountain was not, therefore, always a fountain of milk and wine—on the morrow it ran with water as before. So you may, today, go home and pretend to pray. You may, today, be serious—tomorrow you may be honest and the next day you may pretend to be devout. Yet if you return, as Scripture has it, “like the dog to its vomit and like the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire,” your re-

penitence shall but sink you deeper into hell, instead of being a proof of divine grace in your hearts!

It is very hard to distinguish between legal repentance and evangelical repentance. However, there are certain marks whereby they may be distinguished and, at the risk of tiring you, we will just notice one or two of them—and may God grant that you may find them in your own souls! Legal repentance is a fear of damning—evangelical repentance is a fear of *sinning*. Legal repentance makes us fear the wrath of God—evangelical repentance makes us fear the cause of that wrath—*sin*. When a man repents with that grace of repentance which God the Spirit works in him, he repents not of the punishment which is to follow the deed, but of the *deed, itself*. And he feels that if there were no pit dug for the wicked, if there were no ever-gnawing worm and no unquenchable fire, he would still *hate sin!* It is such repentance as this which every one of you must have, or else you will be lost. It must be a *hatred of sin*. Do not suppose that because when you come to die, you will be afraid of eternal torment, therefore, that will be repentance. Every thief is afraid of prison, but he will steal tomorrow if you set him free. Most men who have committed murder, tremble at the sight of the gallows, but they would do the deed, again, could they live. It is not the hatred of the *punishment* that is repentance—it is the hatred of the *deed* itself! Do you feel that you have such repentance as that? If not, these thundering words must be preached to you again—“If he does not turn, He will whet His sword.”

But one more hint, here. When a man is possessed of true and evangelical repentance—I mean the gospel repentance which saves the soul—he not only hates sin, for its own sake, but loathes it so extremely and utterly that he feels that no repentance of his own can avail to wash it out! And he acknowledges that it is only by an act of sovereign grace that his sin can be washed away. Now, if any of you suppose that you repent of your sins and yet imagine that by a course of holy living you can blot them out—if you suppose that by walking uprightly in the future, you can obliterate your past transgressions—you have not yet truly repented—for true repentance makes a man feel that—

**“Could his zeal no respite know,  
Could his tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone,  
Christ must save and Christ, alone.”**

And if it is so in you, that you hate sin as a corrupt and abominable thing—and would bury it out of your sight—but you feel that it will never be entombed unless Christ shall dig the grave, then you have repented of sin. We must humbly confess that we deserve God’s wrath and that we cannot avert it by any deeds of our own. And we must put our trust sole-

ly and entirely in the blood and merits of Jesus Christ! If you have not so repented, again we exclaim in the words of David, “If you turn not, He will whet His sword.”

**II.** And now the second point—it is a yet more terrible one to dwell upon—and if I consulted my own feelings, I would not mention it. But we must not consider our feelings, in the work of the ministry, any more than we would if we were physicians, of men’s bodies. We must sometimes use the knife where we feel that mortification would ensue without it. We must frequently make sharp gashes into men’s consciences in the hope that the Holy Spirit will bring them to life. We assert then, that there is a **NECESSITY** that God should whet His sword and punish men, if they will not turn! Baxter used to say, “Sinner! Turn or burn! It is your only alternative—TURN OR BURN!” And it is so. We think we can show you why men must turn, or else they will burn.

**1.** First, we cannot suppose the God of the Bible could allow sin to be unpunished. Some may suppose it. They may dream their intellects into a state of intoxication so as to suppose a God apart from justice—but no man whose reason is sound and whose mind is in a healthy condition can imagine a God without justice. You cannot suppose a king without it to be a good king, much less of God, the Judge and King of all the earth, without justice in His bosom. To suppose Him all love and no justice, were to undeify Him, and make Him no longer God! He could not be capable of ruling this world if He had not justice in His heart. There is in man a natural perception of the fact that if there is a God, He must be just. And I can scarcely imagine that you can believe in a God without also believing in the punishment of sin. It would be difficult to suppose Him elevated high above His creatures, beholding their disobedience and yet looking with the same serenity upon the good and upon the evil! You cannot suppose Him awarding the same praise to the wicked and to the righteous! The idea of God *presumes* justice—and it is but to say, justice, when you say God.

**2.** But to imagine that there shall be no punishment for sin and that man can be saved without repentance is to fly in the face of all the Scriptures! What? Are the records of divine history nothing? And if they are anything, must not God have mightily changed if He does not, now, punish sin? What? Did He once blast Eden and drive our parents out of that happy garden on account of a little theft, as man would style it? Did He drown a world with water and inundate Creation with the floods which He had buried in the bowels of this earth? And will He not punish sin? Let the burning hail which fell on Sodom tell you that God is just! Let the open mouth of the earth which swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abi-

ram, warn you that He will not spare the guilty! Let the mighty works of God which He did in the Red Sea, the wonders which He worked on Pharaoh and the miraculous destruction which he brought on Sennacherib, tell you that God is just! And it was, perhaps, out of place for me in the same argument to mention the judgments of God even in our age, but have there never been such? This world is not the dungeon where God punishes sin, but still, there are a few instances in which we cannot but believe that He actually did avenge it. I am no believer that every accident is a judgment. I am far from believing that the destruction of men and women in a theater is a punishment upon them for their sin, since the same thing has occurred in divine service to our perpetual sorrow. I believe judgment is reserved for the next world. I could not account for providence if I believed that God punishes *here*. "Those men upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, think you that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you no." It has injured religion for men to take up every providence and say, for instance, that because a boat was upset on the Sabbath, it was a judgment on the persons that were in it. We assuredly believe that it was sinful to spend the day in pleasure, but we deny that it was a punishment from God! God usually reserves His punishment for a future state. But yet, we say, there have been a few instances in which we cannot but believe that men and women have been, by providence, punished in this life for their guilt. I remember one which I scarcely dare relate to you. I saw the wretched creature, myself. He had dared to imprecate on his head the most awful curses that man could utter. In his rage and fury, he said he wished his head were twisted on one side, that his eyes were put out and that his jaws were made fast. But a moment afterwards the lash of his whip—with which he had been cruelly treating his horse—entered his eye. It brought on first, inflammation, and then lock-jaw—and when I saw him, he was in the very position in which he had asked to be placed, for his head was twisted round, his eyesight was gone and he could not speak except through his closed teeth! You will remember a similar instance happening at Devizes, where a woman declared that she had paid her part of the price of a sack of meal when she had it in her hand and, immediately dropped down dead on the spot! Some of these may have been singular coincidences. But I am not so credulous as to suppose that they were brought about by accident. I think the will of the Lord was in it! I believe they were some faint intimations that God was just and that although the full shower of His wrath does not fall on men in *this life*, He does pour a drop or two on them, to let us see how He will, one day, chasten the world for its iniquity!

**3.** But why need I go far to bring arguments to bear on you, my hearers? Your own consciences tell you that God must punish sin. You may laugh at me and say that you have no such *belief*. I do not say you have, but I say that your *conscience* tells you so—and conscience has more power over men than what they think to be their belief! As John Bunyan said, Mr. Conscience had a very loud voice and though Mr. Understanding shut himself up in a dark room, where he could not see, yet he used to thunder out so mightily in the streets that Mr. Understanding used to shake in his house through what Mr. Conscience said. And it is often so. You say in your understanding, “I cannot believe God will punish sin”—but you know He will! You would not like to confess your secret fears, because that would be to give up what you have so often most bravely asserted. But because you assert it with such boast and bombast, I imagine you do not believe it, for if you did, you would not need look so big while saying it! I know this, no sooner than you are sick, you cry out for mercy! I know that when you are dying, you will believe in a hell. Conscience makes cowards of us all and makes us believe, even when we say we do not, that God must punish sin!

Let me tell you a story. I have told it before, but it is a striking one and sets out in a true light how easily men will be brought, in times of danger, to believe in a God and a God of justice, too, though they have denied Him before. In the backwoods of Canada there resided a good minister who, one evening, went out to meditate, as Isaac did, in the fields. He soon found himself on the borders of a forest which he entered and walked along a track which had been trod before him, musing, still musing until, at last, the shadows of twilight gathered around him and he began to think how he would spend a night in the forest. He trembled at the idea of remaining there, with the poor shelter of a tree into which he would be compelled to climb. All of a sudden he saw a light in the distance among the trees and imagining that it might be from the window of some cottage where he could find a hospitable retreat, he hastened to it. But to his surprise he saw a space cleared and trees laid down to make a platform and upon it a speaker addressing a multitude. He thought to himself, “I have stumbled on a company of people who, in this dark forest, have assembled to worship God and some minister is preaching to them at this late hour of the evening concerning the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” But to his surprise and horror, when he came nearer, he found a young man declaiming *against* God, daring the Almighty to do His worst upon him—speaking terrible things in wrath against the justice of the Most High and venturing most bold and awful assertions concerning his own disbelief in a future state! It was altogether a singu-

lar scene. It was lighted up by pine-knots, which cast a glare here and there, while the thick darkness in other places still reigned. The people were intent on listening to the orator and, when he sat down, thunders of applause were given to him, each one seeming to emulate the other in his praise! The minister thought, "I must not let this pass. I must rise and speak. The honor of my God and His cause demands it!" But he feared to speak, for he knew not what to say, having come there suddenly. He would have left, anyway, had not something else occurred. A man of middle age, hale and strong, rose, and leaning on his staff he said, "My friends, I have a word to speak to you tonight. I am not about to refute any of the arguments of the orator. I shall not criticize his style, I shall say nothing concerning what I believe to be the blasphemies he has uttered, but I shall simply relate to you a fact—and after I have done that—you can draw your own conclusions. Yesterday, I walked by the side of yonder river. I saw on its floods, a young man in a boat. The boat was unmanageable. It was going fast towards the rapids. He could not use the oars and I saw that he was not capable of bringing the boat to the shore. I saw that young man wring his hands in agony. By-and-by he gave up the attempt to save his life. He kneeled down and cried with desperate earnestness, 'O God! Save my soul! If my body cannot be saved, save my soul!' I heard him confess that he had been a blasphemer. I heard him vow that if his life were spared, he would never be such again. I heard him implore the mercy of heaven for Jesus Christ's sake and earnestly plead that he might be washed in His blood. These arms saved that young man from the flood. I plunged in, brought the boat to shore and saved his life. That same young man has just now addressed you and cursed his Maker. What do you say to this, sirs?" The speaker sat down. You may guess what a shudder run through the young man, himself, and how the audience in one moment changed their notes and saw that, after all, while it was a fine thing to brag and bravado against Almighty God on dry land, when danger was distant, it was not quite so grand to think ill of Him when near the verge of the grave! We believe there is enough conscience in every man to convince him that God must punish him for his sin. Therefore we think that our text will wake an echo in every heart—"If he does not turn, He will whet His sword."

I am tired of this terrible work of endeavoring to show you that God must punish sin! Let me just utter a few of the declarations of His holy word, and then let me tell you how repentance is to be *obtained*. O sirs! You may think that the fire of hell is, indeed, a fiction and that the flames of the nethermost pit are but popish dreams! But if you are believers in the Bible, you must believe that it cannot be so! Did not our

Master say, "Where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched." You say it is metaphorical fire. But what meant He by this?—"He is able to cast both *body* and soul into hell"? Is it not written that there is reserved for the devil and his angels, fearful torment? And do you not know that our Master said, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment"? "Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"? "Yes," you say, "but it is not philosophical to believe that there is a hell, it does not consort with reason to believe there is." However, I should like to act as if there were, even if there is no such place. For as the poor and pious man once said, "Sir, I like to have two strings to my bow. If there should be no hell, I shall be as well off as you will. But if there should, it will go hard with you." But why need I say, "If"? You *know* there is! No man has been born and educated in this land without having his conscience so far enlightened as to know that to be a truth of God. All I need to do is to press upon your anxious consideration this thought—do you feel that you are a fit subject for heaven right now? Do you feel that God has changed your heart and renewed your nature? If not, I beseech you, lay hold of this thought—unless you are renewed—all that can be dreadful in the torments of the future world must inevitably be yours! Dear hearers, apply it to yourself, not to your fellow men, but to your own conscience and may God Almighty make use of it to bring you to repentance!

**III.** Now briefly, what are the MEANS of repentance? Most seriously I say, I do not believe any man can repent with evangelical repentance of *himself*. You ask me, then, to what purpose is the sermon I have endeavored to preach, proving the necessity of repentance? Allow me to make the sermon of some purpose, under God, by its conclusion. Sinner! You are so desperately set on sin that I have no hope you will ever turn from it of yourself. But listen! He who died on Calvary is exalted on high, "to give repentance and remission of sin." Do you, this morning, feel that you are a sinner? If so, ask Christ to give you repentance, for *He* can work repentance in your heart by His Spirit, though you cannot work it there yourself! Is your heart like iron? He can put it into the furnace of His love and make it melt! Is your soul like the nether millstone? His grace is able to dissolve it like the fog is melted before the sun! He can make you repent, though you cannot make yourself repent! If you feel your need of repentance, I will not now say to you, "Repent," for I believe there are certain acts that must precede a sense of repentance. I would advise you to go to your houses and if you feel that you have sinned and yet cannot sufficiently repent of your transgressions, bow your knees before God and *confess your sins*. Tell Him you cannot repent as you

should. Tell Him your heart is hard. Tell Him it is as cold as ice. You *can do that* if God has made you feel your need of a Savior! Then if it should be laid to your heart to endeavor to seek repentance, I will tell you the best way to find it. Spend an hour, first, in endeavoring to remember your sins—and when conviction has gotten a firm hold on you, then spend another hour—where? At Calvary, my hearer! Sit down and read that chapter which contains the history and mystery of the God who loved and died. Sit down and look at that glorious Man, with blood dropping from His hands and His feet gushing rivers of gore! And if that does not make you repent, with the help of God’s Spirit, then I know of nothing that can! An old divine says, “If you feel you do not love God, love Him till you feel you do. If you think you cannot believe, believe till you feel you believe.” Many a man says he cannot repent while he is repenting! Keep on with that repentance till you feel you have repented. Only acknowledge your transgressions—confess your guiltiness—acknowledge that He were just if He should destroy you. And say this, solemnly—

***“My faith does lay its hand  
On that dear head of Yours,  
While like a penitent I stand,  
And there confess my sin.”***

Oh, what would I give if one of my hearers should be blessed by God to go home and repent! If I had worlds to buy *one* of your souls, I would readily give them if I might but bring one of you to Christ! I shall never forget the hour when I hoped God’s mercy first looked on me. It was in a place very different from this, among a despised people, in an insignificant little chapel, of a peculiar sect. I went there bowed down with guilt, laden with transgression. The minister walked up the pulpit stairs, opened his Bible and read that precious text, “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 as I thought, fixing his eyes on me, before he began to preach to others, he said, “Young man! Look! Look! Look! You are one of the ends of the earth. You feel you are. You know your need of a Savior. You are trembling because you think He will never save you. He says this morning, ‘Look!’” Oh, how my soul was shaken within me, then! What, thought I, does that man know me, and all about me? He seemed as if he did. And it made me “look!” Well, I thought, lost or saved, I will try. Sink or swim, I will run the risk of it. And in that moment I hoped, by His grace. I looked upon Jesus! And though desponding, downcast, ready to despair, and feeling that I would rather die than live as I had lived—at that very moment it seemed as if a young heaven had had its birth within my conscience! I went home, no more cast down! Those about me, noticing the change, asked me why I was so glad, and I told them that I had

believed in Jesus and that it was written, “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.”

Oh, if one such should be here this morning! Where are you, you chief of sinners, you vilest of the vile? My dear hearer, you have never been in the house of God, perhaps these last 20 years, but here you are, covered with your sins, the blackest and vilest of all! Hear God’s Word—“Come, now, let us reason together, though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool and though they are red like crimson, they shall be whiter than snow.” And all this for Jesus’ sake! All this for His blood’s sake! “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved,” for His word and mandate is, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; he that believes not shall be damned.”

## **SINNER! TURN OR BURN!**

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