

GOD—ALL IN ALL
NO. 737

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 24, 1867,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“When He gives quietness, who then can make trouble? And when He hides His face, who then can behold Him? Whether it is done against a nation, or against a man only.”
Job 34:29.

WE commenced our special services with a sermon of encouragement, by which we were reminded of the rapid answer which Daniel received to his prayer, [Sermon #734—*The Dawn of Revival, Or Prayer Speedily Answered*] and were led to hope that the Lord intended, at the very commencement of our supplications, to send forth a commandment of mercy. Since then, God has done great things for us, of which we are glad. Few of you, probably, are aware of the numerous conversions which God has worked in this place during the past two weeks. We are not fond of publishing numbers, or of making estimates, but it suffices you to know, and us to say, that the Lord has made bare His arm and led forth captive souls from the bondage of sin. Many fathers and mothers here have had to weep for joy, because their children have declared themselves to be on the Lord's side. Satan's kingdom has been weakened, and the armies of the Lord have been increased. There has been joy among the angels *this week*, and joy in the heart of the great Father; for many lost ones have been found. Let us give unto the Lord the glory which is due unto His name; let us rejoice and be glad in the Lord. And now, halting in the midst of our career, like an army with uplifted banners, resting on the wing like a lark when mounting towards heaven, let us give a tongue to our gratitude, and sing aloud unto God our strength. We cheerfully confess that neither our own arm nor our own strength can give us the victory. Unto Jehovah be all glory. Let us hear the voice which says, “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord,” and let each believer here prostrate himself in reverence before the throne of the great King, and thank Him with heart and soul for all the mercy and goodness which He has made to pass before us. With one united heart let us ascribe unto the Lord honor and glory, and dominion and power. This grateful waiting upon the Lord will renew our strength in such a manner, that though we run, we shall not be weary, and though we walk, and the walk is long and the road is rough, we shall not faint. Waiting upon the Lord does not give us a merely spasmodic energy with which we may begin and continue for a little season, and then grow cold; but waiting upon the Lord gives a constant flow of vigor, so that we go from strength to strength until in Zion we appear before God.

This topic seemed to thrust itself upon me as most suitable for our consideration during our present special efforts. My intention is, as God shall help me, to magnify the name of the Lord our God by directing your devout attention to the fact that without the Lord there is nothing good, nothing strong, nothing effectual; but where He works nothing can stand against Him—no powers of evil can impede the workings of his royal hand.

Our entire dependence upon God, who is our all in all—that is the thought of the morning, and that thought the text illustrates in two ways. We are made to see the all-sufficiency of God to us, and our dependence upon Him—*first, in His effectual working*, “When He gives quietness, who then can make trouble?” *Secondly, in His sovereign withdrawals*, “When He hides His face, who then can behold Him?” And, *thirdly, we are reminded that this is true not only upon the small scale of the individual, but upon the great scale of nations*, “Whether it is done against a nation, or against a man only.”

I. First, then, the eye of faith beholds the all-sufficiency of Jehovah, and our entire dependence upon Him, as she marks HIS EFFECTUAL WORKING. “When He gives quietness, who then can make trouble?”

This unanswerable question may be illustrated by the Lord's works in nature. The world was once a tumultuous chaos—fire and wind and vapor strove with one another; contention and confusion ruled the

day. Who was there who could bring that heaving, foaming, and boiling, raging mass into quietude and order? Who could transform that sea of molten lava into rock solid as granite, fit to become the foundations of a habitable globe? Who could cool that boiling surface into an Eden where God might walk with man at the cool of the day? Who could calm that ocean of fire, lashed into terrific tempest by whirlwind and tornado, and make it into a *terra firma*, fixed and stable? The Holy Spirit brooded upon it, and by His mysterious energy before long He brought order out of confusion; and now this fair round world of ours, with all its matchless beauty of landscape and rolling flood, fixed and firm, has become a standing proof that when *God* gives quietness, none can disturb it. Only let the great Preserver of men relax the command of quiet, and there are fierce forces in the interior of the earth sufficient to bring it back to its primeval chaos in an hour; but while His fiat is for peace, we fear no crash of matter and no wreck of worlds. Seed time and harvest, summer and winter, cold and heat do not cease; the economy of man's era remains beneath the calm radiance of sun and moon unmolested by the fear of returning chaos or the rebellion of terrific elements. Passing on to the age of man, we see the Lord in the day of His wrath pulling up the sluices of the great deep, and at the same moment bidding the clouds of heaven discharge themselves, so that the whole world became once again a colossal ruin; the proud waters went over the abodes of men and even the tops of the mountains were covered by the imperious billows. The Lord had but to will it, and the waters were eased from off the face of the earth, and once again the dry land appeared while the world bloomed with joyous springs, blushed with fairest summers, and with glad ripening autumns, while overall, the covenant rainbow was seen in the clouds, the token that the Lord had given quietness to the earth, and that none again should be able to disturb her. Have the proud waters prevailed since that day? Has the sea dared to leave its appointed channel? Do not the waves in their greatest fury pause when they reach the boundary appointed by the Most High? Tempest and storm obey the voice of the Lord who sits upon the flood, the Lord who sits King forever.

Further down in history the Red Sea asks of us the same question, "When He gives quietness, who then can make trouble?" He led His people forth from Egypt's bondage, but Pharaoh said, "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil." He had, however, reckoned without the Lord of Hosts; and when the pillar came between the two armies, turning its black dark side to Pharaoh's horsemen, and its side of brightness and of comfort to Israel's ranks, then there might have been heard a voice, "When He gives quietness, who then can make trouble?" When down into the depths of the sea the ransomed flock descended, the floods stood upright as a heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea, the rattling chariot was heard and the horse hoofs sounded on the pebbly bed of the frightened sea. Will not Pharaoh break the peace of the chosen flock, and drive them back to slavery? Hark to the cracking of whips and the shouts of the horsemen! How is it now with Israel? Wait, O Unbelief, and see the salvation of God! When the mighty waters cover all the hosts of Egypt there comes up from the depths where the proud warriors sleep with the waves as their winding sheets, "When He gives quietness, who then can make trouble?"

Glancing far on in history, and passing by a thousand cases which are all to the point, we only mention one more, namely, that of Sennacherib and his host. The marbles which are preserved to us, and have been excavated from the heaps of Nineveh, are more than sufficient proofs of the power and of the ferocity of the Assyrian monarch. He came even to Lachish, destroying the nations with fire and sword, and then he sent his Lieutenant, Rabshakeh, to Jerusalem, to overthrow it. Rabshakeh scarcely thought that little city to be worth the toils of battle—he thought to conquer it with his blasphemous tongue, and leave the sword in its scabbard; he thought to swallow it as a dog swallows his meat; to devour it as an ox eats grass. How scornfully, he asked—"Who is Jehovah?" How he boasted of the easy overthrow of the gods of the heathen. "Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? And have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who are they among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" But the Lord had heard his blasphemies and answered the prayers of Hezekiah, and all the force of Assyria could not cast a single mound against Jerusalem, nor shoot an arrow there, but in the stillness of the night God put a hook into the enemy's nose and thrust a bridle between his jaws, and sent him back with shame to the place from where he came. "When He gives quietness, who then can make trouble?"—

*“There is a stream whose gentle flow
Supplies the city of our God,
Life, love, and joy, still gliding through,
And watering our secure abode.”*

“Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: your eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes there shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords there be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; where shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass there. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; He will save us. Your tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail: then is the prey of a great spoil divided: the lame take the prey.” They who hoped to spoil Jerusalem are spoiled themselves, and the robbers who thought to destroy the peace of the Church of God, have their own peace and their own lives taken from them.

All history declares the truth of God that when God determines to set a hedge around any people, it is not possible for any power, human or infernal, to break through that hedge. “I will be a wall of fire round about you, and a glory in your midst,” is a blessed promise which ensures quietness to those who dwell within its glorious protection.

1. We shall reflect upon this truth of God as it applies, first, *to God’s people*. My beloved, if your gracious Lord shall give you quietness of mind, who then can cause you trouble? Some of us know what it is to walk in the light of Jehovah’s countenance. Let us now bear our experimental witness to this fact. You have had, my dearly beloved in the Lord, stern *tribulations*; you have seen wave after wave rolling up and threatening to go over you; and all these billows have gone over your head; you have been deserted by friends—they have been unfaithful; you have lost kindred—you have wept over their tombs; you have lost property—your gold and silver have taken to themselves wings and fled away; you have been broken in health, and you have been broken in spirit too; but when the Lord has lifted up the light of His countenance upon you, were you not of the same mind as Habakkuk, that—“Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be on the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls,” yet still you could rejoice in God? Beloved, a glimpse of our heavenly Father’s face even sweetens affliction—

*“The bitterest tears,
If He smiles but on them,
Like dew in the sunshine,
Grow diamond and gem.”*

We have found it sweet to be afflicted when we have enjoyed the presence of God in it, so that we have counted it all joy when we have fallen into different temptations; because, in our hour of extremity and peril, the Savior has been unspeakably the more precious—in the absence of all other joys, the joy of the Lord has filled the soul to the brim. You know very well, dear friends, that if the Lord is withdrawn, no comforts can make up for His absence; but if all earthly comforts are taken, you will not utter so much as a single murmuring word if the Lord will but fill the vacuum with Himself, you will say, “Lord, I thank You that there was more room for You—more room for Your fullness—when the creature failed me.”

Added to this, when the Lord gives quietness, *slander* cannot give us trouble. It has always been the lot of God’s people, the more they have served God, the more falsely to be accused of men. And I doubt not, that when the dog is barking, he imagines that the good man who rides by is sorely troubled by the noise; and yet, if the Lord does but smile, it little matters though every tongue in the world should be set a-lying against us, and every mouth should be black with curses, we may then say as David did—“They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city,” and then he adds, “Let them return, and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.” So would the Christian give a license to those who slander him. If it were not for the sin of it on the part of his enemies, he could even rejoice to be evilly spoken of for Christ’s sake, and count it all joy when he was shamefully treated for his Master’s cause. The face of God sheds such a holy light into the soul that the clouds of slander cannot hide it. Yes, and at such times you may add to outward troubles and to the slanders of the wicked man, all *the temptations of the devil*; but if the Lord gives quietness, though there were as many

devils to attack us as there are stones in the pavement of the streets of London, we would walk over all their heads in unabated confidence. Let satanic temptations come; let them fly about as thick as hailstones, if God but lifts up the shield, they shall be but as hailstones that rattle on the roof while the man is safe beneath. Perhaps you think Luther's expressions, when he speaks about the temptations of Satan, to be too highly drawn; and so they may be in your experience, but they were not in his, and he stands as a monument, in his biography, of the power of the comforts of God to keep a man calm when all earth and all hell are against him. There was Luther. It did not matter that the enraged Pope issued a thousand bulls; that every priest gnashed his teeth at Luther; that most of men cried, "Away with him! It is not fit that he should live." What cared Luther any more for all they said than for the chirping of so many grasshoppers in the field, or the croaking of so many frogs in the pond? Let them say what they will, "if God gives quietness, who then can make trouble?"

I know that I am now touching the experience of many of God's people, but I will go a little further. Even *inbred sin*, which is the worst of ills, will cause the Christian no trouble when the light of Jehovah's countenance is clearly seen. "Oh," says the soul, "I cried but yesterday, 'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'" And there I stopped. But now, my God has whispered in my ear, 'You are Mine,' and I will not stop at that verse any longer, but I will go on to the next. 'I thank God, through Jesus Christ my Lord.' 'Thanks be unto God who gives us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ,' I will no longer look upon my enemies and say, 'They are many and strong,' but I will look to my strong helper, 'and in the name of the Lord I will destroy them.'" "I am as a wonder unto many; but You are my strong refuge," said David; and so will the Christian say. Beset with all sorts of temptations from within, yet he overcomes through the blood of the Lamb. And God gives such a quietness in resting in the finished work of Jesus, and in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit that, imperfect as we are, we yet have power by His Might to seize the crown of righteousness and to be raised up to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, even before the day of glory shall dawn, and the shadows of mortality flee away.

2. Beloved friends, I thank God that my text is equally true of the *seeking sinner*. If the Lord shall be pleased to give you, poor troubled heart, quietness this day in Christ, none can make trouble in your soul. What a mercy it is for you that God can give you peace and quietness! Some of you have been, during the last fortnight, much troubled. The arrows of God are sticking fast in you; your very flesh faints as though it could not much longer bear the strain of your spiritual griefs. Now the Lord can bind you up. He will bind up the broken in heart, and heal their wounds. He can do it effectually, so effectually that no wound ever bleeds afresh after He has bound it up. "Ah," you say, "but there is His *law*, that dreadful law of ten commands—I have broken them a thousand times." But if the Savior leads you to the cross He will show you that He fulfilled the law on your behalf; that you are not yourself under the law any longer, but under grace. The law is a taskmaster; but the taskmaster can only rule his own slaves; and when you believe in Jesus, you are no more a slave, but a child, and the taskmaster has no further power over you from now on and forever. To see the law fulfilled by Christ, what a sight is that! It is a vision which gives such joy and grace that you could stand where the seer of Horeb stood, and need not say as he did, "I do exceedingly fear and quake," but rather say, with our hymn-writer—

***"Bold shall I stand in that great day,
For who at all to my charge can lay?
Fully absolved through Christ I am
From sin's tremendous curse and blame."***

"Yes, yes," you say, "well, I thank God for that, but my conscience, my conscience will never let me be in quietness." Oh, but my Master knows how to talk with your conscience! He can say to it, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins." He can take His precious blood, which is better than the balm of Gilead, and He can apply it to the wounds of your conscience; and as soon as conscience feels the power of the blood, all its wounds close up directly, and the heart rejoices, saying, "If Jesus paid my debts, then paid they are; if Jesus died for me, then God will never make me die and Jesus too; for payment He will never demand twice—first at my bleeding Surety's hands, and then at mine." When conscience enters into the wounds of Christ, how happy it is! It is like the dove that dwells in the cleft of the rock, and builds its nest there, and sits all day uttering its soft

turtle notes for very joy and gladness. O poor heart, Mr. Conscience and you will shake hands well enough if you will stand at the foot of the cross and do it. Conscience is a dreadful thunderer to a sinner unreconciled; but, to a sinner who has seen the great atonement, and felt the power of the blood, conscience becomes a generous friend.

And let me say, dear friend, if the Lord gives you quietness so the law and conscience will be at peace with you, so will that *Book of God* be. Some of you, whenever you turn the Bible over, can find nothing but threats in it. Each page cries out against you, "I bear a curse for you." Oh, but if you can only come to Jesus and rest in Him, then the page shall glisten with blessings, and glow with benedictions; you shall find that it utters peace to the men of peace, and good tidings of great joy to those who look alone to the Redeemer's blood! Still I think I see you shake your head and say sorrowfully, "Oh, but I shall never get much quietness at home, for I have *ungodly friends*, and they tell me I am religion-mad." Ah, my dear friend! If the Lord gives you quietness, your ungodly friends will give you very little trouble, for you will have grace to bear with them. If they shall revile you, you will turn their reviling into joy, thanking God that you are accounted worthy to be reviled for Jesus' sake; and in the midst of it you will sometimes take an opportunity of speaking a good word for your Master, and so be thankful that you are placed where you are needed. We ought to be glad to be cast as a pound of salt amid the corruption which salt destroys; and we should be thankful that we are set as a light in a dark place, where a lamp is most required. In this light the persecuted believer may even look upon his painful position as a desirable one, for the practical usefulness which it puts in his way.

If Jesus Christ is your companion, you may walk unharmed through Vanity Fair, if your path should lie through it, and you need not care for all the fools that pluck at your garment. Through a shower of mud it is safe and blessed traveling if Jesus is our companion. I hope you are not one of those who would choose to walk with Him in silver slippers, but who would leave Him if He came in poverty and shame! If so, you do not know the love of Jesus at all. Through briars and thorns lies the path of love, and yet that thorny road is paradise if Jesus does but tread it with us and permit us to lean upon His arm. The more severe the troubles of life become, the higher shall your comforts rise if Jesus is with you. Tried soul, rest in Jesus! Only cast yourself on Him, confide entirely in Him, and you shall find that the peace which He gives you none can take from you.

3. Now this text, which thus belongs to the saint and to the seeking sinner, I think is equally true, on the larger scale, to the *Christian Church*. I could not omit saying this out of thankfulness to God for the quietness which He has for years been pleased to give to us as a Christian community. During 13 years and more we have been knit together as one man, while we have lived to see certain sects that were "the one and only church"—that railed almost with the mouth of a Sanballat and Tobiah at all other Christians as worldly schematics, while they themselves were Scriptural, immaculate, *the "brethren," the "perfect ones"*—we have seen them torn to pieces till there is scarcely a remnant of them left, with all the elements within them of internal discord, which will dash them yet more completely into shivers. By the grace of God we who, as a single Church, are almost as numerous as some of their parties, have been kept in holy peace and quietness, working incessantly for the cause of God without dissension and without strife; and though we are not free from thousands of faults, yet I have often admired the goodness of God which has enabled us to hold with a hearty grip each other by the hand, and say, "We love each other for Jesus' sake, and for the truth's sake, and hope each of us to live in each other's love till we die, wishing, if it were possible, to be buried side by side." I do thank God for this, because I know there is more than enough of evil among us to plant a root of bitterness in our midst. We who bear office in the Church have the same nature as others; and therefore, naturally, every man of us would seek to have the supremacy, and every man, if left to himself, would also indulge an angry temper, and find many reasons for differing from his brother. We have all been offended often, and have as often offended others. We are as imperfect a band of men as might be found, but we are one. We have each had to put up with the other, and to bear and forbear; and it does appear to me a wonder that so many imperfect people should get on so well for so long. I read over the door of our Tabernacle this text—"When the Lord gives quietness, who then can make trouble?" When some of our members were first taken into the Church, the pastor was greatly criticized by some. It was said, "Well, if Mr. Spurgeon receives such a man who has been so great a trouble in *our* Church, then he will be the beginning of wars at the Taber-

nacle.” But those very persons who came with that doubtful character have become the most zealous of our working community, and instead of differing and disagreeing, have felt that there is so much to do that it would be a pity to spend one grain of strength in quarrelling with other children of God! How good it is to use our swords upon the devil and his allies, and not to blunt their edges upon our fellow Christians! Possibly, my brethren, many of you do not sufficiently prize the peace which reigns in our Church. Ah, you would value it if you lost it! Oh, how would you prize it if strife and schism should come in! You would look back upon these happy days we have had together with intense regret, and say, “Lord, knit us together in unity again; send us love to each other once more,” for in a Church, love is the essential element of happiness; and if any of you have violated it, or sinned against it, ask for grace to repent of your mistake, and let us “love one another with a pure heart fervently,” walking in love, “as Christ also has loved us and gave Himself for us.” Let us have that fervent charity which is the perfect bond, abounding in our hearts yet more and more by Jesus Christ.

I shall leave this first point when I have briefly drawn three lessons from it. “When the Lord gives quietness, who then can make trouble?” The first lesson is those who have peace, should this morning adore and bless God for it. O God, when we remember what our trouble was before we knew a Savior; when we recollect what the tempest was when You did hide Your face from us, we cannot but be glad, exceedingly glad, that now You speak kindly and favorably unto us. You who will not thank God for peace, deserve to hear war in your streets again; you who will not thank Him at the place of the drawing of water, because the noise of the archers has ceased, you deserve to have your hearts again plowed up by the hosts of the enemy. Praise Him, then, my brothers and sisters, from your hearts praise Him. Secondly, be hopeful, you who are seeking peace, whether for others or for yourselves. Do not despair of any soul, however near to death and hell it may be; God can make quietness even in the heart that is ready to die. Lastly, give up all other peace but that which the Lord gives to every believer. If you have a quietness which God has not created, implore the Lord to break it; if you have a peace which did not come from heaven, it is “peace, peace, where there is no peace,” and the Lord deliver you from it.

II. Now let us turn to the second point. The all-sufficiency of God is seen, secondly, IN HIS SOVEREIGN WITHDRAWALS.

God does sometimes hide His face from His people, and then, as His saints well know, nothing can enable them to behold Him or to be happy. You know God doctrinally, but what are the doctrines of grace to a soul when God hides His face? You may accept and hold fast the orthodox gospel, but is the purest evangelical truth anything but a cloud without rain unless the Lord Himself shall appear? In vain, dear friends, is all our experience to help us see God if He hides His face, for though we have tried and proved His faithfulness, yet if He does not continue to smile, we grow to be as unbelieving and as doubting as ever we were. At such times outward mercies are all in vain. Though today we can see God’s hand in the loaf of bread and in the cup of cold water, yet if God hides His face, though there should be a stalled ox before us, and a feast fit for kings, yet we should not see our Father’s love in them. Christian, you know well that if God takes Himself away and hides within His secret places, and speaks no more to you, neither earth nor all the sky can afford you one delight.

Now, sinner, this is strikingly true in *your* case. If God shall be pleased to withdraw Himself from you, you cannot behold Him. If He should take the gospel from you, what then? He may do it. He may send you across the seas as an immigrant. He may put you in some country village where there is no gospel preaching. He may make you live in a situation where you cannot get out to hear a faithful gospel preacher, and then what will you do? Still worse may it be with you. The Lord may let you continue under a ministry, and the ministry may be full of blessing to others, and yet be fruitless to you. If God does but leave you to the corruptions of your own heart, dear friend, it will be quite enough to secure your ruin. Then the tears of mothers, the counsels of friends, and the appeals of pastors shall all be powerless to touch your heart; the appeals of the Book of God itself shall never move your conscience, you will go headlong to your own destruction if God withdraws His face from you. Remember, my dear hearer, this is possible! There is a point, we know not when, a place we know not where, where God may end your day of sensibility by saying, “I will leave that sinner alone.” Then the cloud shall rain no more rain upon your desert soul; no more seed shall be scattered upon the highway of your thankless heart. Shall horses run upon a rock? Shall men plow there with oxen? If you will not repent, God will not always waste the

gospel ministry upon you. He shall let that gospel become a “savor of death unto death” to you, till you loathe it yourself, become a Sabbath-breaker, or give yourself up to doubt and sin. O sinner, I long that you may feel how absolutely you are in the hands of God. Should the sun go down, all the candles in the world cannot light up the landscape; and if God shall desert the soul, all human power must fail to give it comfort. What a mercy it is that the Lord has not deserted you as yet; that still does His good Spirit strive and dwell with the chief of sinners; still the cry is heard, “Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” Yet I pray you remember that if you do harden your hearts, the Lord may do with you as He did with His people of old, and swear in His Wrath that you shall not enter into His rest.

I have no doubt, dear friends, that as this is true of the saint and the sinner, it is true of the Church. If God shall hide His face from a Church; who then can behold Him? Let me endeavor to set that truth of God in two or three words before you. If we as a Church prove unfaithful; if we let go of our first love; if we do not plead in prayer, and seek the conversion of souls, God may take away His presence from us as He has done from churches that were once His Churches, but which are not now. The traveler tells you that as he journeys through Asia Minor, he sees the ruins of those cities which once were the seven golden candlesticks, where the light of the truth of God shone brightly. What will they now say of Thyatira? Where will they find Laodicea? These have passed away, and why not *this* Church? Look at Rome, once the glory of the Christian Church, her many ministers, and her power over the world for good enormous—and now she is the place where Satan’s seat is, and her synagogue is a synagogue of hell! How is this? She fell; she departed from her integrity; she left her first love, and the Lord cast her away. Thus will the Lord deal with us if thus we sin. You know that terrible passage—“Go you now unto My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel.” God first of all had the tabernacle pitched at Shiloh, but Shiloh was defiled by the sin of Eli’s sons; that tabernacle was taken away and Shiloh became a wilderness. So may this flourishing Church become! If justice should thus visit you, you may hold your prayer meetings—probably those will soon cease—but of what use will your formal prayers be? You may get whom you will to preach, but what of that? I know what you would do, if some of us were fallen asleep, and the faithful ones buried—if the Spirit of God were gone, you would say, “Well, we are still a large and influential congregation; we can afford to get a talented minister, money will do anything.” And you would get the man of talents, and then you would want an organ and a choir, and many other pretty things which we now count it *our joy to do without*. Then, if such were the case, all these vain attempts at grandeur would be unsuccessful, and the Church would before long become a scorn and a hissing, or else a mere log upon the water. Then it would be said, “We must change the management,” and there would be this change and that change; but if the Lord were gone, what could you do? By what means could you ever make this Church to revive again, or any other Church? Alas for the carnal, spasmodic efforts we have seen made in some Churches! Prayer Meetings badly attended, no conversions, but still they have said, “Well, it is imperative upon us to keep up a respectable appearance; we must attract the congregation by our singing, by our organ, or some other outward attraction.” And angels might have wept as they saw the folly of men who sought after anything except the Lord, who alone can make a house His temple; who alone can make a ministry to be a ministration of mercy; without whose presence the most solemn congregation is but as the herding of men in the market, and the most melodious songs but as the shouting of those who make merry at a marriage. Without the Lord, our solemn days, our new moons, and our appointed feasts are an abomination such as His soul hates! May this Church always feel her utter, entire, absolute dependence upon the presence of her God, and may she never cease humbly to implore Him to forgive her many sins, but still to command His blessing to abide upon her.

III. The time is gone, but I want just to say these two or three words—namely, that, depend upon it, **THIS IS TRUE OF A NATION** as well as of any one Church and of any one man.

At this particular time, though there is perhaps more Christian effort made in England than has been made for many years, there is also probably as little of the divine blessing resting upon that effort as ever was known. It is a melancholy fact that with all the wonderful increase of accommodations which have been made in London for the worship of God, there is absolutely a greater deficiency now, owing to the increase of the population, a greater deficiency in the means of grace now than there ever was. It is also a notorious fact that of the new Churches which have been erected, you might go into many of them and

not find enough to make a respectable gathering in a vestry, so that, even though tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of pounds have been contributed for mere bricks and mortar, in connection with the Episcopalian Establishment, these have merely been a spurious addition to the spiritual supply, but not a real one. It is easy to raise money, but it is not easy to find men; and while it is easy to get an architect to build a Church, none but God Himself can find a minister who will reach the dense masses of our heathendom around us and compel them to come in and worship. The lack of men is the great crying need of the age, and that need is sent to us because we do not pray to God enough to send us men; we do not pray for men, when God does send them, that they may be helped as they should, and consequently much of the Church's effort is thrown away. Beloved, I want to see something done in this London, and how is it to be done? There are thousands of Christians, tens of thousands of Christians in London, and yet the cause does not spread, or very slowly! What is the cause? Jonah shook Nineveh from end to end, and yet a hundred thousand followers of Jesus cannot do it. Paul, marching along the Apian way at Rome, marked an era in Rome's history; and yet there are many ministers of Christ who thread our streets, and yet what are we all put together for real power? We do not seem to amount in this great city, all of us, to anything more than a mere chip in the porridge; we scarcely affect the population at all. Oh, it is strange, it is passing strange; for it is the gospel which we preach, we know it is the gospel, and some of us do try to preach it with all our might. But if God withholds His face, what can be done? Yet, brothers and sisters, this can be done—we will cry to the Lord until He reveals His face again. We will give Him no rest till He establishes and makes His Church a praise in the earth. O Christian men and women, if you could realize the situation! A city of three millions, not wholly given to idolatry, but still very much given to sin, and we ourselves so weak in the midst of it! If we could but realize this position, and then take hold upon the omnipotent arm, and by an overcoming faith, such as only God could give to any one of us, believe it possible for the Lord Jesus to save this city, and then go forward boldly expecting Him to do it, we might see more than we have ever seen!

And now, what if I prophesy that we *shall* see it! What if I say that if God will but stir up His people everywhere for prayer, He will do a work in our day that shall make both the ears of him that hears it to tingle, not with horror, but with joy! He will yet let the world know that there is a God in Israel. Verily, that which hinders is our lack of faith, for if the Son of man should descend among us, would He find faith on the earth? O unbelieving Church, O thankless generation, you are not straitened in God—you are straitened in your own hearts; and if you could but believe Him, and so prove Him by your faith, He would yet open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, such that you should not have room enough to receive.

This, then, is the matter, and we leave it with you. We are utterly dependent upon God—absolutely must we rest on Him. But this is as it should be, for it would be better to trust in the Lord than to have confidence in man: better to trust in the Lord than to have confidence in princes. Through the blood of Jesus let us rest in divine love, and give the Lord no rest till He makes bare His arm in the midst of this land!

May the Lord give His blessing to our words, for Jesus' sake.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOB 34.

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

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